

## Thanksgiving Weekend in Cuba – November 2019



### About Us

Cuba Educational Travel (CET) is a leader in cultural travel to Cuba. CET unlocks the best of Cuba by providing access to the country's top artists, academics, tastemakers, and cultural figures. CET's tailor-made programs enable clients to experience Cuba's vibrant culture and gain a deeper understanding of the island, while ensuring full compliance with all U.S. regulations.

CET has been on the frontlines of cultural collaboration, helping to bring Cubans to the U.S. and Americans to Cuba. From Yoga retreats to concerts to dance performances, CET has wide-ranging experience and contacts. Recent highlights include organizing the Diplo Major Lazer concert in Havana, which drew a crowd of over 500,000 people and bringing Liza Alfonso Dance Cuba, the country's top dance group, to perform at the Latin Grammys.

By leveraging this expertise and curated travel capabilities, Cuba Educational Travel offers a product that is unrivaled. Our strong presence on the island and in important cultural circles gives us unparalleled access and knowledge. This combined with the beauty and intrigue of Cuba and its people make for truly unforgettable experiences.

[www.cubaeducationaltravel.com](http://www.cubaeducationaltravel.com)



# Support for the Cuban People

The U.S. Government permits legal travel to Cuba under 12 different categories that range from professional meetings and sporting competitions to religious and humanitarian travel. One of the broadest and most common categories of travel is “Support for the Cuban People,” which requires travelers maintain a fulltime schedule of activities that involve meaningful interaction with individuals in Cuba and that those activities help Cubans become more independent. There are many ways in which travelers can easily fulfill this requirement while having an incredible experience in Cuba and being thoughtful, respectful and kind with the many Cubans you interact with during your travels.

Cuba Educational Travel (CET) has a long history of working with entrepreneurs, cultural groups, religious organizations, community projects and families and individuals that are involved in interesting and exciting initiatives in Cuba. Our trips have always been aimed at supporting the Cuba people through connecting them with travelers visiting the island, so that all parties can benefit from the friendships and professional relationships that result. Moreover, we believe strongly in supporting innovative and impactful businesses and social and cultural initiatives and make sure there are economic benefits to our partners on the island.

Your program will vary based on your specific interests, number of days on the island and other factors, but will include activities that directly benefit the Cuban people through conversations, knowledge sharing, follow-up initiatives, donations, normal business dealings and a variety of other actions. Excessive free time and recreational activities are not permitted, and travelers are required to work with CET and our local partners to maintain a full-time program that includes incredibly fun and interesting site visits, discussions, performances, tours, happy hours and meals that help our incredible neighbors on the island.



Author: Expert Vagabond

# Thanksgiving Weekend in Cuba – Nov 27- Dec 1, 2019

## Wednesday, Nov 27

- TBD Arrival to Havana. Take a taxi at the exit of the terminal to your accommodations.
- TBD **Check-in at accommodations**
- 6:30 pm **Meet your CET guide for an orientation talk** about transportation, markets, internet, safety and other logistics.
- 7:15 pm **Ride in classic cars from the 1950's.** Classic cars are one of Cuba's first private businesses that emerged after the new economic changes, becoming an important source of income for local families.
- 8 pm **Welcome dinner at Río Mar**, located in the luxurious Miramar neighborhood, it has a whole terrace overlooking the where the Almendares river flows into the sea. Prior to dinner, **we will be joined by Cuban entrepreneur(s)** for an overview of the private sector in Cuba and some of the challenges and opportunities start-ups face. The conversation will provide an interesting look into the Cuban economy and also give you a starting point for thinking about ways that your visit can help support Cuban entrepreneurs.

## *Nightlife Suggestions:*

- **Enjoy a live music performance at Jazz Café**, located in the Galerias de Paseo shopping mall overlooking the Malecón, it is a kind of jazz supper club that attracts plenty of big-name acts.
- **Head out to Casa de la Música Miramar**, since it opened in the mid-nineties, this concert hall has only consolidated as the temple of salsa and Cuban rhythms in the capital. The best bands have passed through its stage and the programming remains irreproachable.

## Thursday, Nov 28 \*Thanksgiving Day

- 10 am **Walking tour of the Old City.** Explore the historic center and learn about the history and architectural importance of Old Havana, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1982. **Venture to the side streets to meet and support local families and organizations** (opportunity to donate supplies).  
*Visits include:*
- **A home in Old Havana and discussion with the family** about the ration card and purchasing power, jobs, *el paquete*, transportation, and other social issues and topics of their daily life.
  - **Barrio Habana**, a nonprofit organization that leads a community sports-arts program in Old Havana for children, at-risk youth and elderly people, while also contributing to preserve the heritage of the city.
- \*\*\*Travelers will have the opportunity to make donations, including clothes, sporting equipment and school supplies.
- 12:30 pm **Lunch at Doña Eutimia paladar.** Famous for its *ropa vieja* and frozen mojitos, this cozy paladar made Newsweek Magazine's top 100 restaurants in the world in 2012. Following the meal, we'll be joined by the chef and owner to discuss entrepreneurship in Cuba, and the challenges and opportunities facing the business.
- 2 pm Return to accommodations or stay in Old Havana to explore on your own.

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- Optional* (4 pm) **Boxing with locals.** Take in a training session with amateur and professional boxers. You'll have an opportunity to make donations for the youth, including school supplies.
- 5:30 pm **Rum and cigar tasting at AltaMira art loft.** A local expert will explain the qualities and traits of fine Cuban rum and cigars, pairing them together for the perfect match. **Discussion with the AltaMira family** about art, culture and daily life on the island.
- 7 pm **Discussion and private performance by Victor Campbell and his jazz band.** Victor is one of the most talented pianists in Cuba, having played with all of the island's top musicians, and is currently recording his first solo album.
- 8:30 pm **Special Thanksgiving Dinner and Celebration at La Habanera.** This house was built in 1930 and has been restored and preserved with hydraulic tile floors, French windows, marble staircase and outstanding elements of its elegant architecture. Prior to dinner, take a tour of the kitchen to meet the chef and owner and learn about his experience running a private restaurant in Cuba.
- Suggestions:* **Head out for live music, art and dancing at La Fabrica de Arte Cubano,** the brainchild of Afro-Cuban fusion musician X-Alfonso, this is one Havana's finest new art projects, an intellectual nexus for live music, art expos and fashion shows that has turned into a meeting spot for a young, eclectic crowd of Cubans and foreigners.

### Friday, Nov 29

#### *Morning free – optional activities:*

- (8:30 am) **City bike ride and tour by Velo Cuba,** a women-owned bicycle cooperative focusing on sustainable business. We will enjoy a 2-hour tour, riding a bike and witnessing real Havana first handed.
- (11 am) **Attend salsa lessons with a private instructor** to learn the moves of Cuba's most famous type of dance.
- 12:30 pm **Lunch at Mediterraneo Havana,** a modern, family run paladar in the Vedado neighborhood. This cozy paladar produces much of what it serves at a nearby farm in Guanabacoa Cuba, including the vegetables and dairy products.
- 2 pm **Enjoy a ride in classic American cars from the 1950s.** Not only will we be riding in style, but we'll be taken care of by Nostalgic Cars, the first private car service on the island. Owners Nidialys Acosta and Julio Alvarez have taken advantage of the recent economic opening to put together a fleet of over 20 pristine *clasicos* to provide professional service to their clientele. We'll explore areas of the city we've yet to see, including a **stop at the Nostalgic Cars garage,** to meet the owners and discuss about their private business.
- 4 pm **Visit to the Liza Alfonso Academy, a women-led dance company and school for local youth,** specializing in various types of dance. We will watch a private performance by the adolescent dance group and sit with the dancers afterward to discuss how they came to join the school and the impact it has had on them. The talent and work ethic at this school is impressive.

#### *Evening free*

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7:15 pm **Dinner reservation at Al Carbon paladar.** Created by the owners of the immensely popular Iván y Justo, this private restaurant strikes out in a different but equally successful direction, specializing in traditional Cuban dishes cooked over charcoal. [Aguacate 9 | Esq. A Chacon. Habana Vieja](#) (dinner not included – to be paid on the ground)

### Saturday, Nov 30

8:30 am **Day trip to Viñales.** Considered by many to be the most beautiful place in Cuba, the **Viñales Valley** is a National Monument and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is encircled by mountains and its landscape is interspersed with spectacular dome-shaped limestone outcrops (*mogotes*). Traditional techniques are still in use for agricultural production, particularly tobacco, which makes Viñales famous for being the premier tobacco growing area in the world.

11 am **Take a stroll through tobacco fields** to learn about the Valley's most important crop and meet with farmers and their families. Learn about life in the countryside, and how the local tourism development has helped them improve their lifestyle and family incomes.

12:30 pm **Visit to a private farm in the valley owned by the large family of Concha and Paco Hernandez.** The descendants of Concha and Paco have farmed the same plot of land for many generations and their land is involved in the production of a multitude of fruits, vegetables, grain and tobacco. Members of the family will give us a tour of this beautiful 40-acre farm before bringing us back to the farmhouse. **Enjoy lunch at the farm.**

2 pm **Explore downtown Viñales.** Visit the central plaza, walk through the main street and **meet with local entrepreneurs** including private restaurant owners and Airbnbs hosts.

3:30 pm *On the way back to Havana, stop by one of the following community projects:*

- **Love and Hope community program in Pinar del Rio.** This program, offering art and other courses for community members with down syndrome, has had an important impact locally.
- **Pelegrin's Patio.** Impactful neighborhood project in a small country town that features youth art programs and workshops in the areas of music, dance, theatre and art. (lunch included)

8 pm Arrival to Havana.

### *Evening free*

9:30 pm **Dinner reservation at La Guarida paladar,** famous not only for its delectable dining, but also as the location for the film *Strawberry and Chocolate*. It is housed on the third floor of a large, old town house carrying the charming ambience of the early 1900s. [Concordia e Gervasio y Lealtad, no. 418 altos, Centro Habana](#) (dinner not included – to be paid on the ground)

### Sunday, Dec 1

TBD Check-out and depart for the airport (2 ½ hours before your flight departs) or contact CET to discuss options for extending your trip to see another part of the island.



**MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING / SALES AGREEMENT**  
**Thanksgiving Weekend in Cuba**  
**November 27 – December 1, 2019**

*Please carefully read our company policies listed below. It is your responsibility to inquire about, and fully understand, change and cancellation policies regarding your travel arrangements.*

**GROUND PACKAGE:**

	<u>Private Apartment</u>	<u>High-End B&amp;B</u>
<b>Double Occupancy:</b>	\$ 2,245 per person	\$ 2,600 per person
<b>Single Occupancy:</b>	\$ 2,445 per person	\$ 3,000 per person

*\*Please contact CET for pricing & availability at a compliant 4- or 5-star hotel in addition to the options above.*

**INCLUDED**

- 4 nights' accommodations in Havana, Cuba
- Daily breakfast
- Meals (as specified on the itinerary)
- Meal reservations (as specified on the itinerary)
- Professional, bilingual guide for listed activities
- Local ground transportation for listed activities
- Pre-trip departure information
- Compliance with U.S. Treasury Department regulations
- Speaker fees
- Admission to all museums and public buildings listed in itinerary
- Coordination of all listed activities

**NOT INCLUDED**

- Round-trip airfare
  - Cuban Visa (*visas for non-Cuban born travelers are available for purchase from U.S. airlines. In some instances, CET can process your visa for \$100 per traveler*)
- Meals and activities other than listed on itinerary
- Individual house or hotel expenses (*mini bar, room service, laundry fees, etc.*)
- Tips for local guides, drivers, restaurant service, etc.

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

**PAYMENT:**

- A deposit of \$1,000 per person is due at the time of booking.
- A signed copy of the Memorandum of Understanding must be turned in with the deposit.
- Full payment will be due 90 days prior to departure: August 30, 2019.
- Please inquire if you are interested in purchasing trip insurance from a certified, third party.

Payment can be made with a check, cashier's check, or money order. Credit cards are not accepted. Checks should be made out to Cuba Educational Travel and mailed to:

Cuba Educational Travel  
Attn: Thanksgiving Weekend in Cuba  
42 Fire Island Ave., Suite 100  
Babylon, NY 11702

**CANCELLATION and REPLACEMENT POLICIES:**

- The sale is final.
- Cancellations made before 120 days prior to the trip are eligible for a full refund.
- Cancellations made 119-91 days prior to trip departure are eligible for a 50 percent refund.
- Cancellations made within 90 days of trip departure are not eligible for a refund.
- In some instances, time permitting, a different traveler can take the place of a scheduled participant for a processing fee of \$350.
- ***If U.S. policy is altered to make it so that the trip is not compliant with U.S. law regarding travel to Cuba, a full refund will be granted. This will ONLY be the case if there is no legal avenue for travel to Cuba that would allow for the trip to move forward.***

**UNUSED SERVICES & REFUNDS:**

No refund or adjustment can be made for any portion of the services not used such as voluntary non-usage of hotel accommodations, scheduled meals or any planned activity described in your itinerary.

**PASSPORT AND VISA:**

All travelers are required to carry a valid passport and a Cuban visa. Those without a valid passport and visa will not be allowed to enter. Travelers who were born in Cuba may require a special visa in order to enter the country. Passport should be valid for a minimum of 6 months after departure date. You may obtain a visa from CET or the airline and CET will advise on the process.

**IMPORTANT:**

Your trip is designed and implanted to comply with U.S. regulations on travel to Cuba as well as local laws in Cuba. Cuba Educational Travel is not responsible for violations as a result of travelers ignoring advice, altering programs on the ground or breaking Cuban law.

**RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT**

Cuba Educational Travel serves only to assist in making necessary travel arrangements for its participating members, and in no way represents, or acts as agent for, transportation carriers, hotels, and other suppliers of services connected with this tour. Therefore, is not liable for any injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or other irregularity which may be caused by the defect of any vehicle or the negligence or default of any company or person engaged in performing any of the services involved. Additionally, responsibility is not accepted for losses or expenses due to sickness, weather, strike, hostilities, wars, natural disasters or other such causes. All services and accommodations are subject to the laws of the country in which they are provided. Cuba Educational Travel does not accept liability for any airline cancellation or delay incurred by the purchase of an airline ticket. Baggage and personal effects are the sole responsibility of the owners at all times. Cuba Educational Travel reserves the right to make changes in the published itineraries whenever, in its sole judgment, conditions so warrant, or if they deem it necessary for the comfort, convenience or safety of the tour participants.

Cuba Educational Travel also reserves the right to decline to accept any person as a participant in the tours, or to require any participant to withdraw from the tour at any time, when such an action is determined by the appropriate Cuba Educational Travel representative to be in the best interests of the health, safety, and general welfare of the tour group, or of the individual participant.

The undersigned has read carefully the schedule of activities for this tour. The undersigned recognizes that there is a moderate level of physical activity involved in the tour and the tour may require participants to walk long distances and climb stairs. The undersigned accepts any risks thereof and the conditions set forth therein. The undersigned agrees to release and hold harmless Cuba Educational Travel any of their officers or representatives from any and all liability for delays, injuries or death, or for the loss of or damage to, his/her property however occurring during any portion of the program.

Client Name \_\_\_\_\_

CET Representative \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Client Signature \_\_\_\_\_

CET Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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Trip Date November 27 – December 1, 2019