



CUBA

Historical Cuba and Botanical Countryside Gardens Tour

Led by Jeffrey S. Block, M.D.

Option 1 (full program): June 11-20, 2016 | Option 2 (partial program): June 11-15, 2016

Despite the revolution and economic hardships endured by the people of Cuba, its botanical gardens, organic farms, private gardens, and agriculture have thrived. Experience the best of Cuba's gardens, culture, and natural beauty during this unique journey with your expert leader, Dr. Jeffrey S. Block.

NOTE: This is a two-part program; participants can enroll for the full program as listed in the itinerary (June 11-20), or may choose to return to the U.S. on June 15. Please contact Holbrook Travel for more details.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit a selection of Cuba's public and private gardens, including the National Botanical Garden of Cuba (home to hundreds of palm species), the National Institute for Research on Tropical Agriculture, and an urban cooperative garden, among others.
- Experience Cuba's many cultural offerings, including jazz and dance performances, art museums, a walking tour of historical Old Havana, and meals in paladares (restaurants run in private homes).
- Be on the lookout for the endemic palm species of *Gaussia princeps* (Palma de Sierra) and *Copernicia macroglossa* (Petticoat Palm) while in the Viñales area.
- Meet with a staff member and tour the Soroa Orchid Garden, which has more than 20,000 plants representing 700 orchid species.
- See the critically endangered *Microcycas calocoma*, endemic to a small area of the Pinar del Río province, the most ecologically diverse region of Cuba.
- Take guided hikes in the ecologically protected area of Mil Cumbres (Thousand Peaks), home to the highest concentration of endemic species in Cuba, and in Viñales National Park, the valley of the limestone formations known as mogotes.

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

JUNE 11 - MIAMI

Following arrival in Miami, if by plane, you can take the hotel shuttle to your hotel. It is recommended, due to an early check-in time at the Miami International Airport the next day, that you stay overnight at the airport hotel, even if you live in Miami or have concluded the APGA conference. If you feel you do not need to be close to the airport the night prior to the charter flight, a credit will be given to you for the cost of this night's stay. The charter flights require that you check in four hours prior to departure, which is why we recommend the airport hotel. You will have the remainder of the afternoon and evening at leisure. *Overnight at Comfort Suites.*

JUNE 12 - HAVANA

This morning you will be escorted by your Miami host to the airport via the complimentary hotel shuttle service. You will be assisted with check-in, as it is more complicated than with normal air travel. You will then be directed to the gate for departure. There will most likely be time for you to have breakfast in the airport before your flight departs for Havana. Upon arrival, after clearing customs and collecting your luggage, you will be met by your Cuban guide and driver, who will transfer you to your hotel where you can leave your luggage with the concierge. You will then be taken to Old Havana for lunch at a typical café. After lunch, take a walking tour of Old Havana, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Discover the four "plazas" in Old Havana: Plaza de la Catedral, Plaza Vieja, Plaza de San Francisco de Asís, and Plaza de Armas. After your tour, you will be transferred back to your hotel to check in and freshen up for dinner at the paladar (private restaurant) La Guarida, which was the location of the Cuban Oscar-nominated film "Strawberry and Chocolate." *Overnight at Meliá Cohiba. (LD)*

JUNE 13 - HAVANA

Following breakfast, you will be transferred to the Jardín Botánico Nacional de Cuba (National Botanical Garden of Cuba). You will be given a special guided tour and if possible, meet with the director of the garden. This garden is famous for its numerous palm species, as well as other endemics. Enjoy lunch at El Bambú, an ecological

restaurant on the grounds of the garden. This afternoon, visit Santiago de las Vegas, a town south of Havana of about 22,000 citizens, where you will visit the National Institute for Research on Tropical Agriculture. Enjoy the lovely grounds and learn about the research being done at this location. This evening, enjoy dinner and the show at Jazz Café. *Overnight at Meliá Cohiba. (BLD)*

JUNE 14 - HAVANA

This morning visit Alamar Organoponic Gardens, an incredible urban garden located outside of central Havana. Here you will meet with one of the cooperative owners of the garden, discuss how this garden functions as a cooperative, and learn about the techniques that have been utilized to minimize the use of pesticides. A special spot for lunch will be at La Terraza de Cojimar, one of Ernest Hemingway's favorite Cuban restaurants. It offers a fabulous view of the Cojimar Bay, where Hemingway went fishing and where he met the fisherman on whom "The Old Man and the Sea" is based. In the afternoon, visit the Wilfredo Lam Center of Contemporary Art, an institution dedicated to the promotion of contemporary visual arts from developing countries. There are permanent exhibits as well as regular traveling exhibits. After dinner at a local paladar, you will be treated to a performance by Danza-Teatro Retazos. *Overnight at Meliá Cohiba. (BLD)*

JUNE 15 - SOROA

Some of the group will depart this morning. You will be transferred to the Havana International Airport for your flight to Miami. For those staying on in Cuba, you will begin your travels to Soroa, west of Havana. En route, visit Las Terrazas, a self-sustained community named after their 5,000-hectare reforestation project. You will have lunch here and receive an informal discussion of the residents' everyday lives and sustainability. Continue on to Soroa and your hotel. After check-in, you will have time to explore the grounds with your guide. Dinner is at your hotel this evening. *Overnight at Horizontes Villa Soroa or similar. (BLD)*

JUNE 16 - SOROA

Start your day with a guided tour of the Soroa Orchid Garden, which is run by the University of Pinar del Río. Meet with a staff member for insight about the garden, which features more

than 20,000 plants and 700 orchid species. The garden also hosts a botanical research center belonging to the University of Pinar del Río. Lunch will be at El Salto restaurant. This afternoon you will have an interpretive short trekking adventure (2 km) on the trail Maravillas de Soroa with a local expert on the native flora and fauna. This evening enjoy dinner at a local paladar. *Overnight at Horizontes Villa Soroa or similar. (BLD)*

JUNE 17 - VIÑALES

Today starts with a hike with the biological station's expert guide in the ecologically protected area of Mil Cumbres (Thousand Peaks), home to the highest concentration of endemic species in Cuba. You will be given a boxed lunch in order to spend as much time in this area as possible before traveling to Viñales. En route, you will have the opportunity to stop and see the critically endangered *Microcycas calocoma*, endemic to a small area of this province (Pinar del Río). After checking in at your hotel and having time to freshen up, dinner will be in town at a local restaurant, with time afterwards to catch some Cuban music and dancing. *Overnight at Hotel Los Jazmines or similar. (BLD)*

JUNE 18 - VIÑALES

This morning you will have the opportunity to take a guided hike in Viñales National Park, the valley of the mogotes—flat-topped hills dating back to the Jurassic Period that can be found in only four countries in the world. Be on the lookout for the endemic palm species of *Gaussia princeps* (Palma de Sierra) and *Copernicia macroglossa* (Petticoat Palm). You will have a boxed lunch again today so that you are able to spend a good deal of time in this ecosystem. By mid-afternoon, it will be time to return to your hotel to freshen up. On the way to dinner, a stop will be made to visit the home and studio of Nils Navarro, a Cuban wildlife artist. Nils is the project coordinator for The Caribbean Wildlife Art Working Group, which promotes bird conservation in the Caribbean region through art. Enjoy dinner this evening at a local paladar located in the hills surrounding Viñales, called the Agro Ecologico. Savor all the dishes made with produce from the land where the restaurant is located. *Overnight at Hotel Los Jazmines or similar. (BLD)*

JUNE 19 - HAVANA

After breakfast, begin your journey back to Havana. Before leaving the area, stop for a visit with Carmen and Caridad Miranda, who own a unique botanic and herb garden. Learn about the use of herbs in the typical Cuban diet. Continue on to the coast and Cayo Jutías. This beach provides a beautiful place to swim in turquoise waters and enjoy the lovely views. After your swim, you will be taken to a nearby seaside restaurant, where you can change out of your swimsuits and have a seafood lunch. Once your belly is full and you've had enough sun, make your way to Old Havana. This evening, gather for dinner at a paladar where you can enjoy mojitos on the rooftop with magnificent views of the city to celebrate your last night in Cuba. *Overnight at Palacio de San Felipe or similar. (BLD)*

JUNE 20 - DEPARTURE

This morning you will be transferred to the Havana International Airport for your flight to Miami. (B)

ABOUT YOUR LEADER



Dr. Jeff Block is an American Board-Certified physician anesthesiologist, a botanical medicine expert, and an internationally awarded expert tropical horticulturist who owns Block Botanical Gardens in Miami, Fla., a leading Institutional Member of the American

Public Gardens Association (APGA). He is also a Certified Master Gardener and Master Gardener Course Educator through the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) from the Florida Department of Agriculture. As an engaging speaker, Dr. Block's leadership offers tour participants a unique combination of skills applied to both human and earth science education.



This program includes optional carbon offsetting with ClimateSafe. Learn more at holbrooktravel.com/climatesafe

PROGRAM PRICING

\$3,240 (full program/June 11-20)

\$1,355 (partial program/June 11-15)

COST INCLUDES:

- Accommodations, entrance fees, and activities as listed in the itinerary
- Meals as listed in the itinerary
- Private vehicle transportation unless otherwise noted in itinerary
- Non-alcoholic beverages with meals
- Full time guide for duration of program
- Tips/gratuities for guide and driver
- Bottled water on the bus
- Carbon offset
- A credit will be given for those participants not staying at the Miami hotel the night of June 11. (Please note that check-in for the charter flight is at 5:30 am.)

NOT INCLUDED:

- International airfare (estimated at \$600 from Miami; Holbrook can assist with flights from your home city to Miami if desired)
 - Alcoholic beverages
 - Travel insurance
 - Items of a personal nature
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THE FINE PRINT

Cost is based on double occupancy; for a single room add \$725 for the full program or \$395 for the partial program.

A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form are required to hold your space on the trip. Deposit is refundable until April 1, 2016 excluding a non-refundable \$100 cancellation fee. Cancellations after this date will result in loss of full deposit. Final payments are due no later than April 1, 2016.

Travel/trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended. For more information call Travel Insured at 800-243-3174 or visit travelinsured.com. Holbrook Travel's agency number is 15849.



FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ENROLL:

Contact Sandy Schmidt at schmidt@holbrooktravel.com or 877-907-5360

Register online at holbrook.travel/blockcu