



PHOTOS BY KATE PEREZ

CUBA

Exploring Cuba with NRF of Wisconsin
December 3 – 11, 2022



Cuba isn't just home to a vibrant culture with colonial charm, but also to a plethora of natural resources from unique mogotes, wetlands rich in biodiversity, and miles of coastline with pristine water. On this enriching 9-day program packed with exploration and educational tours, travelers will have the opportunity to experience all the alluring aspects of Cuba's cultural, historical, and ecological riches, making it a remarkable and memorable destination.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Roam the cobblestone streets of Old Havana, visiting monuments and landmarks such as Plaza de Armas, Plaza de la Catedral, and Plaza Vieja.
- Meet a specialist from the Cuban Marine Research Center to learn about Cuban turtles and the country's conservation program.
- Visit a tobacco farm and the home of Nils Navarro, an accomplished naturalist and artist.
- Journey to the coast, and discover Cuban life away from the city. Visit Cayo Jutías, a beautiful playa with turquoise water.
- Travel to Zapata Peninsula, and observe a vast variety of flora and fauna in one of the most remote regions of Cuba.

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Expert naturalist guide
- Accommodations
- Activities
- Entrance fees
- In-country transportation
- Meals & beverages
- Travel insurance
- Carbon offset
- Departure tax
- Cuban visa



ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

DECEMBER 3 - HAVANA

Upon arrival at the José Martí International Airport in Havana, transfer to your casa particular. Check-in is at 4 pm; however, early arrivals can store luggage while exploring the area on own. In the evening, enjoy a group welcome dinner and orientation at Café Laurent. *Overnight at casa particular. (D)*

DECEMBER 4 - HAVANA

Explore Old Havana's cobblestone streets, visiting the Plaza de Armas, Plaza de San Francisco de Asís, Plaza de la Catedral, and Plaza Vieja. In the afternoon, visit Organopónico Vivero Alamar, an incredible urban garden located outside of central Havana, widely considered one of the most successful organic farms in the city. After the economic collapse in the early 1990s, Cuba was forced to develop new methods to feed its population without the support of the Soviet Union. Now, the country is filled with more than 7,000 urban allotments of "organopónicos," which cover approximately 81,000 acres. During the tour, learn about the advances Cuba has made with respect to organic farming. Later this afternoon, meet a specialist from the Cuban Marine Research Center at Finca de los Molinos to hear about Cuban turtles and Cuba's conservation program. Continue to the National Aquarium, where you will see the three species of marine turtles nesting in Cuba. *Overnight at casa particular. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 5 - VIÑALES

Before leaving Havana, see the Plaza de la Revolución. Then, depart for Viñales, stopping en route at Cueva de los Portales, a limestone cave set adjacent to hills covered in lush vegetation. The cave is interesting both geologically and historically, famous for being where Che Guevara headquartered during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. The area is renowned for being an excellent place to spot the Cuban Solitaire, a sought-after endemic bird. *Overnight at casa particular. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 6 - VIÑALES

Travel to see the mogotes, which are unusual geologic formations in the area. Also, visit a tobacco farm and the home of Nils Navarro, an accomplished naturalist and artist. *Overnight at casa particular. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 7 - HAVANA

Following breakfast and check-out, you will head to the coast. Your destination, Cayo Jutías, is a lovely playa with turquoise water and beautiful coastlines. En route, you will have the opportunity to view the typical life outside the cities, often seeing horse-drawn carts and interesting homes. Once you get to the beach, you can decide if you'd like to walk to the end of the caye, rest under the palm trees with a cerveza, or enjoy a wonderful swim. After about an hour or two of relaxation, lunch will be served at the seaside restaurant located right at the beach. There are restrooms in this area if you would like to change out of your swimsuit. Later this afternoon, return to Havana for the overnight stay. *Overnight at casa particular. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 8 - ZAPATA SWAMP

Today, travel to the Zapata Peninsula, also known as the Bay of Pigs, which is home to the largest wetlands in the Caribbean. Seventy percent of the area is a Biosphere Reserve and Cuba's largest national park. The Zapata area consists of scrub, mangrove swamp, coastline, and over 200 bird species have been recorded here. This is one of the most remote regions of Cuba; yet, intrepid wildlife watchers will reap the benefits. An incredible diversity of birds and endemic reptile and plant species can be seen on the mangrove-lined waterways here. Zapata's wetlands give rise to more than 1,000 species of plants and 37 species of reptiles including the endemic Cuban crocodile. Upon arrival, embark on a short excursion crossing the Tesoro Lagoon to visit the Taina Village, where Cuban sculptor Rita Longa has depicted the way of life of Cuba's indigenous people through the creation of life-sized statues. After lunch at a local restaurant, receive an introduction and welcome to Zapata National Park. Afterward, continue with a visit to the town of Palpite to interact with the artists' community that is part of the

Korimakao Cultural Project. Continue to Casa Enrique, arriving before sunset for dinner. *Overnight at Casa Enrique. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 9 - ZAPATA SWAMP

Explore the Hatiguanico River, one of the largest and most important in Cuba. Navigate deep into the heart of the peninsula, where you will see several species of mangrove and wildlife, including fish, endemic aquatic birds, reptiles, and mammals. Observe the clear springs at Hatiguanico's headwaters and the river's tributaries—the Guareiras and Gonzalo Rivers. Continue to the Santo Tomás Ditch to observe more aquatic birds and changes in the vegetation. Have lunch at a restaurant with Zapata area conservationists who provide insight about current wetlands preservation projects. This afternoon, observe birds at Las Salinas, home to 165 indigenous and migratory birds, plus mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and invertebrates. Expect to see flamingos, herons, pelicans, Roseate Spoonbill, Glossy and White Ibis, Snail Kite, Peregrine Falcon, Cuban Black Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, and others. Have dinner at the hotel. *Overnight at Casa Enrique. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 10 - HAVANA

This morning, visit the Bay of Pigs Museum. Then, depart for Havana to see more of the city. This evening, attend the famous Opera de la Calle performance. *Overnight at casa particular. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 11 - DEPARTURE

Fly back to Miami in time to connect with flights home. (B)

PROGRAM PRICING

\$3,025 (based on 16 participants)

Price includes accommodations, meals, activities and entrance fees as indicated in the itinerary, in-country transportation, full-time guide for the duration of program, bottled water on the bus, carbon offset, departure tax, Cuban visa, and part of your trip cost goes to support the Natural Resources Foundation.

Does not include international airfare, gratuities, or items of a personal nature.

TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants. These plans help provide coverage once the trip has departed and offer benefits for Baggage/Personal Effects, Accident & Sickness Medical Expenses, Emergency Evacuation and more. Refer to the Plan Document for more details.

Optional additional coverage is available in the form of the Group Deluxe Plan, which offers benefits for Trip Cancellation/Interruption, in addition to many other insurance benefits and non-insurance assistance services. If interested in this optional plan, we can provide you with rates and plan details.

THE FINE PRINT

Price is based on double occupancy; for a single room throughout the trip, add \$270 per person. A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form are required to hold your space on the trip. This deposit is refundable minus a \$100 cancellation fee until August 30, 2022, at which time final non-refundable payment is due.



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

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ENROLL:

Visit holbrook.travel/nrf-cu22 or contact Debbie Jordan at debbie@holbrooktravel.com or 866-748-6146.