



CUBAN MUSICIAN IN TRINIDAD BY LUCASH

CUBA

Exploring Culture and Community in Central Cuba

9 DAYS | Choose your dates

About this trip

Over the course of centuries, Cuba has been shaped by a blend of indigenous, European, and African influences. This program examines different aspects of the country's cultural heritage, from the 19th century sugar trade and its lasting impact, to the incorporation of various religious identities, to more recent history, like the 1959 revolution and Bay of Pigs invasion. Interact with Cuban people as you meet with modern-day artists, craftsmen, and engineers in their workshops. Plus, explore natural areas like Zapata National Park – a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Ramsar wetland – and go snorkeling to experience Cuba's marine biodiversity.

Your students will...

- Examine colonial architecture in Old Havana and discuss how the capital has been shaped by its history.
- Learn about the country's native inhabitants during a visit to a traditional Taína Village, where the indigenous way of life is depicted through life-sized statues.
- Hike through caves, swim under a waterfall, and look for native flora and fauna in the mountains of El Nicho.
- Visit the Castillo de Jagua fortress, restored main square, and the Malecón promenade in Cienfuegos, the "Pearl of the South."
- Stroll the cobble streets and view the colorful houses of Trinidad.

Educational Connections



Natural History



Social Sciences



History &
Archaeology



Interdisciplinary
Studies

What's included?

- Bilingual local guide
- Driver
- Accommodations
- Activities
- Private transportation
- Meals
- Beverages with meals
- Carbon offsetting



CIENFUEGOS BY GUILLAUME BAVIERE

Itinerary

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

DAY 1 - HAVANA

Arrive in Havana. After clearing customs and immigration, a process that takes about an hour, a Cuban representative will welcome the group and transfer you to your accommodations. Stop by the Plaza de la Revolución along the way. As the country's center of government, this area contains most of the offices of the main ministries and is often used for massive rallies, including when the Pope visited in 2012. This evening, enjoy a welcome orientation and dinner at a local paladar (a restaurant in a private home). *Overnight at Hotel Sevilla. (D)*

DAY 2 - HAVANA

After breakfast, take a walking tour of Old Havana. Please make sure to wear comfortable shoes! Thanks in part to its history and ideology, Cuba—and especially Havana—is a treasure trove of architectural styles spanning six centuries. With buildings dating from the 16th through the 19th centuries, Havana is perhaps one of the most authentic colonial cities in the Americas. Since 1982, when the city became a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the government has embarked on an ambitious preservation and restoration program concentrated in the Old City. However, a severe lack of funding and materials has hampered efforts. Therefore, the decay and neglect of the past 40 years, coupled with the destructive tropical weather, continues to claim buildings every year. Stroll through the Plaza de Armas, a scenic, tree-lined plaza formerly at the center of influence in Cuba. It is surrounded by many of the most historic structures in Havana, as well as important monuments. Continue to the Plaza de San Francisco, a cobbled plaza

surrounded by 18th century buildings and dominated by the baroque Iglesia and Convento de San Francisco. Visit the Plaza Vieja, one the oldest in Havana, dating from the 16th century. Learn about the massive historic preservation program, which began in this plaza under the leadership of City Historian Eusebio Leal. Visit Fototeca, Cuba's leading venue for photographic exhibitions, and the Escuela de Taller, where you will learn about the restoration project that is underway in Old Havana. This urban rehabilitation project is preserving the architectural history and cultural heritage of this beautiful city. Meet students, engineers, builders, woodworkers, and other craftsmen utilizing traditional handcrafting methods to preserve these once-resplendent structures. For lunch, enjoy traditional Cuban food at Paladar Doña Eutimia, a restored home in Old Havana. *Overnight at Hotel Sevilla. (BLD)*

DAY 3 - HAVANA

Head to the outskirts of the city this morning to visit Finca Vigía, the former house of Ernest Hemingway.



FINCA VIGÍA BY MICHELLE KORCZYNSKI

After lunch at a paladar, visit western Havana to view some of the architectural highlights in this incredibly diverse area. Explore the Vedado district—the city’s modern political and cultural center—and the Miramar district to the west, Havana’s most elegant quarter, whose main tree-lined avenue, Quinta Avenida, is flanked by splendid villas. Visit the iconic Hotel Nacional de Cuba, which overlooks the Straits of Florida, and stroll along the Malecón boardwalk before dinner at a paladar. *Overnight at Hotel Sevilla. (BLD)*

DAY 4 - ZAPATA PENINSULA

Today travel south to the Zapata Peninsula, home to the largest wetlands in the Caribbean as well as the Bay of Pigs. Seventy percent of the area is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve making up Cuba’s largest national park. Isolated and serene, the Bay of Pigs is famed for its marine species, coral reefs, and birds. Upon arrival, embark on a short excursion across the Tesoro Lagoon to visit the Taína Village, where Cuban sculptor Rita Longa has depicted the way of life of Cuba’s indigenous inhabitants through life-sized statues. After lunch at a local restaurant, receive an introduction and welcome to Zapata National Park. Next, continue with a visit to the town of Palpite to interact with the community of artists at the Korimacao Project. *Overnight at Hotel Playa Larga. (BLD)*

DAY 5 - ZAPATA PENINSULA

After breakfast, explore Zapata National Park. Afterward, visit the town of Playa Girón and its museum to learn about the famous events of the Bay of Pigs invasion. Have lunch at Caleta Buena, a beautiful inlet in the heart of the bay. After lunch, enjoy snorkeling to explore the marine biodiversity of the area. Later, return to the hotel for dinner. *Overnight at Hotel Playa Larga. (BLD)*

DAY 6 - CIENFUEGOS

Check out and depart for Cienfuegos. Established in 1819, more recently than most major Cuban cities, it’s the only city in the country founded by French settlers. Today, Cienfuegos is an easy-going place, noticeably cleaner and more spacious than the average provincial capital and deserving of its label as the “Pearl of the South.” It is one of the chief seaports of Cuba and a hub of sugar, coffee, and tobacco production. Visit the Castillo de Jagua, a fortress erected in the 1740s for protection against Caribbean pirates. Also visit the restored main square, the Catedral de la Purísima Concepción, the Teatro Terry, and the Paseo del Prado, a promenade marked by monuments and important buildings such as the former Rotary Club building, which today houses the Casa de la Cultura. Afterward,

drive along Punta Gorda on a 1.8-mile-long peninsula, where the Malecón is bordered by imposing villas, vestiges of the American period under General Fulgencio Batista. Have dinner at the hotel restaurant. *Overnight at Islazul Pasacaballo. (BLD)*

DAY 7 - CIENFUEGOS

Visit nearby Trinidad today. Trinidad is the perfect example of a colonial town, which has earned it a position on the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Discover the true beauty of this romantic city atmosphere mixed with the ghosts of past slavery. The cobblestone streets are lined with colorful houses from a bygone era and remain well-preserved, even today. The impressive palaces on the Plaza Mayor, which used to belong to wealthy sugar barons, are a particular highlight. Visit the historic city center and have an opportunity to walk around the town and see the handicrafts for which the city is known, especially embroidery and textiles. After lunch, visit the Plaza de las Tres Cruces and the former Fisher House. Also visit El Cabildo de San Antonio, the first house of worship where enslaved Africans had permission from the Spanish authorities to practice their own religions alongside Catholicism. Stop at a family-



CUBAN TROGON BY ALTON BIGGS

run pottery workshop, where the tradition of making pottery has been passed on for generations. Return to Cienfuegos and have dinner at the hotel restaurant this evening. *Overnight at Islazul Pasacaballo. (BLD)*

DAY 8 - CIENFUEGOS

Today visit the mountains of El Nicho, where you can hike through caves, swim under waterfalls, and observe the region’s flora and fauna. Throughout the reserve, you’ll find picturesque waterfalls inviting you to bathe in the crystal-clear waters of the natural pools at the base. These are probably some of the most attractive natural rock swimming pools in western Cuba. Next, continue to a protected sanctuary to look for the Cuban Trogon, known locally as the Toco-ro-ro, which lives in this mountain region. Originally called guatini by the indigenous people, the Toco-ro-ro was chosen as Cuba’s national bird for two main reasons: the symbolism of its red, white, and blue feathers, which represent the colors of the country’s flag, and its resistance to captivity. Return to the hotel later this afternoon. *Overnight at Islazul Pasacaballo. (BLD)*

DAY 9 - DEPART

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your return flight home. (B)

Program pricing

\$2,295 (21 participants + 3 leaders)

\$2,365 (14 participants + 2 leaders)

\$2,595 (7 participants + 1 leader)

Price includes accommodations, meals, entrance fees, and activities as indicated in the itinerary, private transportation unless otherwise noted in itinerary, local guides in each region for duration of program, and carbon offset.

International airfare, gratuities, and items of a personal nature are not included.

Valid for travel in 2021.

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

Rates are based on double occupancy for participants; complimentary leader accommodations may be single or double occupancy based on availability. International airfare is included for complimentary leaders. Holiday surcharges may apply. A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form is due upon booking. This deposit is refundable until 95 days prior to departure excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. Final payments are due no later than 95 days prior to departure. Cancellations received less than 95 days prior to departure are non-refundable.



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

