



PHOTO BY MICHELLE KORCZYNSKI



CUBA

FLORIDA MASTER GARDENERS: CUBA GARDENS, HISTORY, ARTS, & NATURE!

November 4-14, 2018

Delve into the natural and cultural history of Cuba, the island nation that boasts nine UNESCO World Heritage Sites, a unique mixture of African, European, and Caribbean tradition, and a population as warm as its climate.

In addition to its dynamic cityscapes and geography, Cuba offers a vast array of flora in lush and varied ecosystems. Join in-country experts and skilled guides in discovering the ways in which Cubans cultivate their crops and organoponic gardens upon tropical and concrete terrains.

Make the most of this unique opportunity to experience the culture of Cuban life and learn from Cuba's leading innovators in greenery and sustainability.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore Old Havana and its rich history, touring the neighborhood's plazas and markets, and artisan fairs.
- Dine at local *paladares*, or restaurants in private homes, as well as a few of Ernest Hemingway's favorite places.
- Meet with representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and learn about initiatives to promote and support urban agriculture.
- Feel the rhythm of Cuban dance and music at the Tropicana and other local venues.
- Explore the ecologically protected area of Mil Cumbres, home to the highest concentration of endemic species in Cuba.
- Relax at Cayo Jutias and enjoy its idyllic white sand and turquoise waters.

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

NOVEMBER 4 - HAVANA

Upon arrival at the José Martí International Airport, meet your guide and driver, and transfer to your hotel. If it is too early to check in, you can exchange money and leave your luggage with the porter. For morning arrivals, travel into Old Havana to enjoy lunch at a typical café, and then have time to explore this iconic part of the city with your guide. Later in the afternoon, head back to your hotel for check-in and time to prepare for dinner at a local Paladar this evening. *Overnight at Meliá Cohiba or similar. (LD)*

NOVEMBER 5 - HAVANA

Today you will meet with representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, (MINAGRI) whom have created a special unit that promotes and supports urban agriculture. Agricultural extensionists from MINAGRI advise and disseminate knowledge based on the principles of organic agriculture, and play a pivotal role in the start-up and functioning of popular gardens and horticulture clubs. MINAGRI also operates eight “House of Seeds” (Casa de Semillas) in greater Havana. Learn how these centers sell, otherwise hard to obtain, agricultural supplies to the public, such as, vegetable and medicinal seeds and seedlings, biological pesticides, organic fertilizer and tools. Eat lunch at La Terraza de Cojímar, one of Hemingway’s favorite Cuban restaurants. It offers a fabulous view of the Cojímar Bay, where Hemingway would fish, and ultimately meet the fisherman who served as the basis for Old Man and the Sea. This afternoon you will meet with Mr. Miguel Salcines from the Alamar Organoponic Gardens. Agronomist, Miguel Salcines is the garden leader of this group of 160 cooperative owners. Learn about the garden’s history, accomplishments, and horticultural practices of organoponics in Cuba. Before returning to the hotel, stop by the eclectic Gallo’s Garden of Affections in Alamar. Dinner will be on your own. This evening, you are free to see the surviving founders of the Buena Vista Social Club perform, or take in another evening show. *Overnight at Meliá Cohiba. (BL)*

NOVEMBER 6 - HAVANA

This morning venture on a guided 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 Asis, and Plaza de Armas. Learn about the restoration projects going on throughout Havana, and see the giant model of the city. After lunch at another of Hemingway’s favorites,

Sloppy Joes -- cruise through the neighborhood of Callejón de Hamel, known for its hundreds of Afro Cuban inspired murals. Continue on to explore the famous Moro Castle, the fortress that guards the entrance to Havana Bay, built in 1589. Dine this evening at the private restaurant La Guarida; esteemed as the location of the Cuban Oscar nominated film “Strawberry and Chocolate.” *Overnight at Meliá Cohiba or similar. (BLD)*

NOVEMBER 7 - SOROA

This morning visit the National Botanical Garden in the outskirts of Havana. Explore the gardens with your guide, following lunch at El Bambú, an ecological restaurant located within the Garden. This afternoon visit Las Terrazas, a self-sustained community named for their 5,000 hectares reforestation project. While at Las Terrazas, visit the Buena Vista Coffee Plantation. Arrive in Soroa late this afternoon. Dinner at your hotel this evening. *Overnight at Horizontes Villa Soroa or similar. (BLD)*

NOVEMBER 8 - SOROA

This morning enjoy a guided tour of the Orchid Garden; run by the University of Pinar del Río. Meet with a staff member for insights about the garden, which features over 20,000 plants and 700 animal species. The garden also hosts a botanical research center affiliated with the University of Pinar del Río. Lunch at El Salto restaurant. This afternoon hit the trail for an short, interpretive trekking adventure (2 km) on the trail “Maravillas de Soroa,” accompanied by a local expert on native flora and fauna. This evening enjoy dinner at a local paladar. *Overnight at Horizontes Villa Soroa or similar. (BLD)*

NOVEMBER 9 - VIÑALES

Today you will travel to Viñales. En route, stop to go hiking with the biological station’s expert guide, in the protected area of Mil Cumbres (Thousand Peaks)-- home to the highest concentration of endemic species in Cuba. Lunch at a local paladar and then onward to Valle de Viñales. Dinner at a local paladar nestled in the surrounding hills of Viñales, called the Agro Ecologico. Savor these farm-to table dishes, made from produce freshly picked from the land where the restaurant is situated. *Overnight at Hotel Los Jazmines or Casa Particulares. (BLD)*

NOVEMBER 10 - VIÑALES

This morning take a guided hike in Viñales National Park; the valley of the mogotes, flat-topped hills that date back to the Jurassic period and can only be found in four countries in the world. Lunch today is at a choice spot known as Palenque de los Cimarrones. After lunch, visit a local,

family-owned botanical garden in the heart of Viñales. The garden has quite a collection of unique plants and gnomes—a rare find in an urban area. Next, for an incredibly special visit to the home and studio of Nils Navarro, a famous Cuban wildlife artist, and author of the book “Endemic Birds of Cuba.” Talk with Nils about his amazing work and learn about the life of an artist in Cuba. Enjoy dinner in town at a local restaurant, with time afterwards to catch some Cuban music and dancing. *Overnight at Hotel Los Jazmines or Casa Particulares. (BLD)*

NOVEMBER 11 - VIÑALES

Today embark on a journey by boat to explore Cueva del Indio; a series of caves home to an underground stream. Spend time learning about the site’s natural history, then head back to dry-land for a trip to the Artisan Market in Viñales. Enjoy lunch in town. In the afternoon, visit Raul Reyes’ agro-ecological farm (finca), seated at the entrance of Cave La Vaca, where you’ll see the plants common to the Mogote Vegetation Complex. The Cueva de la Vaca trail goes through Raul Reyes’ farm, here you’ll glimpse some of the various crops grown. Take in views of the “Mogotes triad:” *Bombacopsis cubensis*, *Gaussia princeps*, and *Spathelia brittonii*. Continue to the cave entrance, guided by lamp light, for the chance to see nocturnal bats. The end of the trail leads you into Palmarito Valley, surrounded by palms, sunlight and many bird species. Dinner at your hotel this evening. *Overnight at Hotel Los Jazmines or Casa Particulares. (BLD)*

NOVEMBER 12 - HAVANA

Following breakfast and check-out, it’s now time to hit the beach! Transfer to Cayo Jutias, a lovely playa with turquoise water and majestic coastlines. After your swim and sun, lunch at a seaside restaurant by the beach. There are rest rooms in this area if you would like to change out of your swimsuits. After your meal, return to Havana, this time staying in Old Havana at a centrally located Colonial style hotel. *Overnight at Hotel La Florida or similar. (BL)*

NOVEMBER 13 - HAVANA

This morning you will visit the oldest botanical garden in Cuba, Quinta de Los Molinos Garden. It was founded in 1864, and has a butterfly house as well as a breeding nursery of Polymita spp.; a terrestrial and eastern endemic genus of a very colorful mollusk. The remainder of the afternoon free to explore Old Havana. You may wish to check out the San José crafts market—Havana’s main enclosed local arts and crafts market and cultural fair. The market is housed in the restored, historic San José warehouses, originally built in the 1880’s. Tonight, enjoy

a very special farewell dinner and spectacular show at the famous Tropicana. *Overnight at Hotel La Florida. (BLD)*

NOVEMBER 14 - DEPARTURE

Today transfer to Havana International airport for your flight(s) back to your home city. Depending on departure time, you may have some free time before your transfer. *(B)*

LAND COST

\$3,745 (based on a minimum group of 15 participants)

Includes: accommodations, meals, entrance fees, and activities listed in itinerary, full-time guide for duration of program, private vehicle transportation unless otherwise noted in itinerary, non-alcoholic beverages with meals, bottled water on the bus, tips/gratuities for guide and driver, carbon offset, departure tax, Cuban visa

Not included: International airfare, gratuities for porters, housekeeping, local guides, musicians, and bathroom attendants, travel/trip cancellation insurance, optional activities or items of a personal nature.

THE FINE PRINT

Price is based on double occupancy; for a single room throughout the trip add \$1095 per person. A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form is required to secure your space on the trip. This deposit is refundable until July 7, 2018 excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. After July 7, 2018 deposit is non-refundable. Final payments are due no later than August 1, 2018; cancellations after this date are not refundable. Travel/trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended. For more information call Travel Insured at 800-243-3174. Holbrook Travel’s agency number is 15849.



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



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