

# ITINERARY

## Day 1: Havana

WD

Arrival at Havana's International Airport. Welcome to Cuba! A member of Cuba 360 will receive the group at the airport, look for our logo (Deaf Globetrotters). Next, you will be transferred to your accommodation. Welcome dinner at a local restaurant. Visit the Cuban Art Factory (or FAC as locals call it), a space that joins together good drinks with some of the best Cuban contemporary art (Photography, Sculpture, Interior Design, Fashion, Painting, Music, Film, Theatre, etc.). The Cuban Art Factory only opens on weekends and sometimes closes for special events that happen in Havana.

## Day 2: Havana

B, L, D

Visit the Center of Achievement and Development of the Deaf (Centro de superacion y desarrollo del sordo) located in San Miguel del Padron. This place was created with the main objective to support the advancement of bilingualism, in the form of LSC as the native language and Spanish as a second language for deaf people. This center is the main hub in which research about LSC will take place. Learn about the Rum production in Cuba with a visit to Havana Club's Rum Museum. The evolution and history of the whole process will be explained to you in a guided visit, which includes a tasting of a seven-year-old añejo (aged rum) at the end of the tour, along with the opportunity to buy some of the precious liquid. Take a walking tour around the heart of Cuba, Old Havana. Discover the magic that hides in every corner of this audacious city. More than 500 years of history make this the perfect place to unleash your curiosity. Hundreds of buildings from the 19th, 18th, 17th, and even 16th centuries spread around the narrow streets of this romantic city. Walk around this open-air museum and delight yourself with the infinity of amazing views that go around in every direction, making it impossible not to look and try to capture the moment with your camera. Wander around all the main squares, all of them with their own special places you shouldn't miss. Also, have a look at the majestic cathedral that stands as an icon of the city, its history, and architecture. Discover iconic places like the National Capitol, the Paseo del Prado, the Floridita, La Bodeguita del Medio, the Parque Central, etc. Next, we'll show you one of our favorite spots in the whole city, a rooftop terrace in Old Havana. Here, you'll learn how to make a mojito and a canchanchara, two classic Cuban cocktails. There are non-alcoholic options as well. You'll be able to prepare your own and you can drink as many as you like.

## Day 3: Havana

B, L, D

Havana Visit one of Havana's oldest and most famous cigar businesses, the Real Fábrica de Tabaco Partagás was founded in 1845 by Spaniard Jaime Partagás. It was built in response to the increase in demand this industry experienced during the second half of the 19th century. Specializing in full-bodied cigars, today some 400 workers toil for up to 12 hours a day in here rolling such famous cigars as Montecristos and Cohibas. In your visit, you'll learn about the long and refined process of cigar manufacturing.

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Dive into San Jose, this former harborside warehouse was built in 1885 and is considered the oldest depository in Old Havana. Nowadays the largest handicraft market on the island, Havana's artisans have here an ideal place in which to exhibit and sell their items, mostly functional yet beautiful accessories in the form of handbags, wallets, shoes, sandals, and belts; costume jewelry; toys; masks; and ornamental items made of paper-mâché; paintings, sculptures, and ceramic items; clothes; humidors and Afro-Cuban percussion instruments, among others. Don't forget to look out for guayaberas, the traditional Cuban men's loose linen shirt. The Center also has a National Patrimony Office that issues the necessary certifications for exporting certain items, such as artwork. Jump in a convertible car and explore the more modern parts of the city. Drive through different neighborhoods and discover the highlights of Vedado and Center Havana. Have a look at the Revolution Square, where Fidel Castro used to give endless speeches in front of thousands of his supporters. Drive by the Colon Cemetery, one of the biggest and most important in the world. Enjoy the breeze at El Malecon, Havana's evocative 7km-long sea drive, a favored meeting place for assorted lovers, philosophers, poets, traveling minstrels, fishers, and wistful Florida-gazers. Some of the landmarks we'll see include the American Embassy, the Hotel Nacional, Havana's Forest, and many more. Adventure into western Havana and discover Fusterlandia, a huge tilework masterpiece built by local artist Jose Fuster over the last 20 years. If Gaudí reincarnates and decides to go for a tropical spin, this is it. Fuster's work has covered several suburban blocks with whimsical but highly stylized public art. The centerpiece is the artist's own house, which you can explore as you check on the different galleries where some of his art is sold, including ceramic tiles and paintings. Visit El Morro, this wave-lashed fort with its emblematic lighthouse was erected between 1589 and 1630 to protect the entrance to Havana harbor from pirates and foreign invaders (French corsair Jacques de Sores had sacked the city in 1555). Perched high on a rocky bluff above the Atlantic, the fort has an irregular polygonal shape, 3mthick walls, and a deep protective moat, and is a classic example of Renaissance military architecture. We'll make a stop at El Cristo de La Habana, a large marble sculpture representing Jesus of Nazareth on a hilltop overlooking the bay.

One of the oldest traditions in Cuba is the ceremony of El Cañonazo, a cannon shot that has been happening every day for the last 350 years. Originally meant to be a signal to close the doors of the city wall to defend from pirates and bandits, nowadays a symbolic and impressive performance carried on at 9:00 PM. Go across Havana's Bay and have dinner at a local restaurant, a unique opportunity to try some of Cuba's finest local dishes. Next, head to San Carlos de la Cabaña and wander along the streets and buildings of the fortress until the ceremony starts.

## **Day 4: Day trip to Viñales**

**B, L, D**

Discover Viñales Valley, one of Cuba's most magnificent natural settings. Known for its fertile soil, which along with its natural microclimate, makes the land suitable to grow some of the finest tobacco in Cuba, hence, the world. Our first stop will be at Los Jazmines, a lookout point from where you can enjoy the beauty of Viñales's landscape. In our day around this lovely town, we'll visit the Prehistoric Mural, stunning wall painting on the side of a mountain, and the Indian Cave with a boat trip through a subterranean

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section of the San Juan River. We'll enjoy lunch at one of the local restaurants, where traditional dishes are made with ingredients that go straight from the farm to the table. After lunch, we'll visit one of the local tobacco plantations where farmers will explain the process of (artisanal) cigar production. This visit is a great opportunity to witness how people live in the countryside, and the good impact tourism makes in their lives.

## **Day 5: Bay of Pigs – Cienfuegos – Trinidad**

**B, L, D**

Head to Bay of Pigs, the same place where more than 50 years ago an invasion carried out by Cuban exiles and organized by the U.S. government took place. Bay of Pigs is in Zapata Swamp, the biggest natural reserve in Cuba and a place that boasts of wildlife. Some of the nicest features in the area are hidden underwater, making the Bay of Pigs a terrific spot for snorkeling and diving. We'll head to the Cueva de Los Peces, a 70m-deep cenote (sinkhole) on the inland side of the coast road halfway between Playa Larga and Playa Girón. It's a pretty spot, as popular with swimmers as snorkelers, for spotting tropical fish. The brave can glide into the darker parts of the underwater cave with diving gear. Hammocks swing languidly around the crystal-clear pool, while the beach opposite sparkles with aquatic promise.

Learn about the history of the Bay of Pigs invasion at Playa Giron's museum. This well-kept museum with its gleaming display cases evokes a tangible sense of the history of the famous Cold War episode that unfolded within a rifle-firing distance of this spot in 1961. The museum offers two rooms of artifacts from the Bay of Pigs skirmish plus numerous photos of the combat. Continue south-east to Cienfuegos, one of Cuba's youngest cities, founded in 1819 by French emigrants from Bordeaux and Louisiana, its elegant classical architecture earned it a UNESCO World Heritage Site listing in 2005. Due to its beauty, economic importance, and strategic placement, this city has always been known as the pearl on Cuba's south coast. Have a walking tour around the city and have a look at the local landmarks, including Tomas Terry Theatre, one of Cuba's oldest and best-preserved. Visit Cienfuegos's Cathedral, Palacio de Valle, Muelle Real, Jose Marti Square, and many other iconic spots of the city. Discover Trinidad, a perfectly preserved Spanish colonial settlement where the clocks stopped in 1850 and other than by the watches of tourists have yet to restart.

## **Day 6: Trinidad**

**B, L, D**

Have a walking tour around the city with the opportunity to visit local museums and art galleries. Wander around the Plaza Mayor, one of Cuba's most charming squares and the center of the town. Stop at the Canchanchara House, a place dedicated to this local drink, very popular around Cuba. Head to the Valle de Los Ingenios (literally, Sugar Mills Valley) right outside Trinidad. This area is where the wealth of the city was produced. Most of the mills were destroyed during the War of Independence and the Spanish-Cuban-American War when the focus of sugar-growing in Cuba shifted west to Matanzas. This valley offers one of the most beautiful natural settings in Cuba. Stop at Manaca-Iznaga's plantation and climb the imposing tower that used to serve as a place the overlook the slaves and prevent them from running away. Relax in local Playa Ancon for the rest of the day.

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## **Day 7: Santa Clara – Varadero**

**B, L, D**

On your way to Havana, we'll stop at Santa Clara, a city with a very close connection to Che Guevara. In the final days of the fight for the Cuban communist revolution, back in 1958, a series of combats happened here that decided the course of history. Visit Che Guevara's mausoleum, where his remains are kept, along with the ones of his comrades in arms. We'll also check out the Tren Blindado, a national monument, memorial park, and museum dedicated to the fight that took place here in December 1958, in which Che Guevara was involved. Santa Clara is also known for being kind of an "edgy" city, with a local cultural scene that contrasts with the rest of the country. Santa Clara has the first drag show in Cuba and one of the most prestigious rock festivals in the area. Continue to Varadero, the most popular beach in Cuba and a must for those who visit it specially looking for the sun and the sand. Varadero is a 25 km peninsula, most of it is covered by resorts and white sandy beaches. Don't worry if you don't like resorts, you will be staying in a separated area where the beaches are nicer and less busy.

## **Day 8: Varadero**

**B, L, D**

During your time in Varadero you will be able to organize through your guide various activities including water sports, snorkeling or diving excursions, jeep safaris, catamaran cruises and there is even a golf course to take advantage of. There is also a local township to explore with a burgeoning restaurant scene and lively nightlife.

## **Day 9: Havana**

**B, L, D**

On the way back to Havana, we'll follow the steps of "El Papa" (Ernest Hemingway) and several places made iconic by his presence in Havana. Head to Finca Vigia, his house in Cuba, nowadays a museum. Next, we will venture into Cojimar, a small fishing town east of Havana's Bay. This place used to be one of Hemingway's favorite spots; also, the home of the man who is said to have inspired "The Old Man and the Sea". We'll have lunch at Ajiaco Café, a top-rated local restaurant that serves some delicious local dishes. An institution since its 1939 opening, the world-famous Tropicana was among the few bastions of Havana's Las Vegas-style nightlife to survive the revolution. Immortalized in Graham Greene's 1958 *Our Man in Havana*, the open-air cabaret show here has changed little since its 1950s heyday, with scantily clad ladies descending from palm trees to dance Latin salsa amid bright lights.

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## Day 10: Havana

**B**

Transfer to Havana's International airport. It's time to say goodbye to Cuba, at least for now. It's sad to see you go back to your country, but this adventure together has come to an end. We hope to see you again in our country, until then: Take care, we'll miss you.

### **MEALS:**

**WD** – Welcome Dinner

**B** – Breakfast

**L** – Lunch

**D** – Dinner

**FD** – Farewell Dinner