

# THE ORIGINAL 7

# CUBA 360°

*tour operator*



## Day 1 ARRIVAL - HAVANA

Welcome to Cuba! A member of Cuba 360 will pick you up at the airport, look for our logo with your name on it (or the name of the person in your party who booked the holiday). Next, you will be transferred to your accommodation.

THERE ARE SEVERAL OPTIONS OF PLACES TO CHECK OUT DURING THE EVENINGS. AFTER ALL, HAVANA'S NIGHTLIFE IS AS UNIQUE AS ITS CULTURE AND HISTORY. WE'LL BE HAPPY TO ARRANGE SOME OF THEM FOR YOU IF YOU WANT US TO. HERE ARE SOME OF THE OPTIONS:

- 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.
- Head to San Carlos de La Cabaña fortress and witness the Cannon Shot Ceremony, a unique and picturesque show that has been happening every night for the last 300 years.
- Enjoy a unique show at world-famous Tropicana Cabaret, one of the few bastions of Havana's Las Vegas-style nightlife to survive the revolution.

## Day 2 HAVANA

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 impossible not to look and try to capture the moment with your camera. Wander around





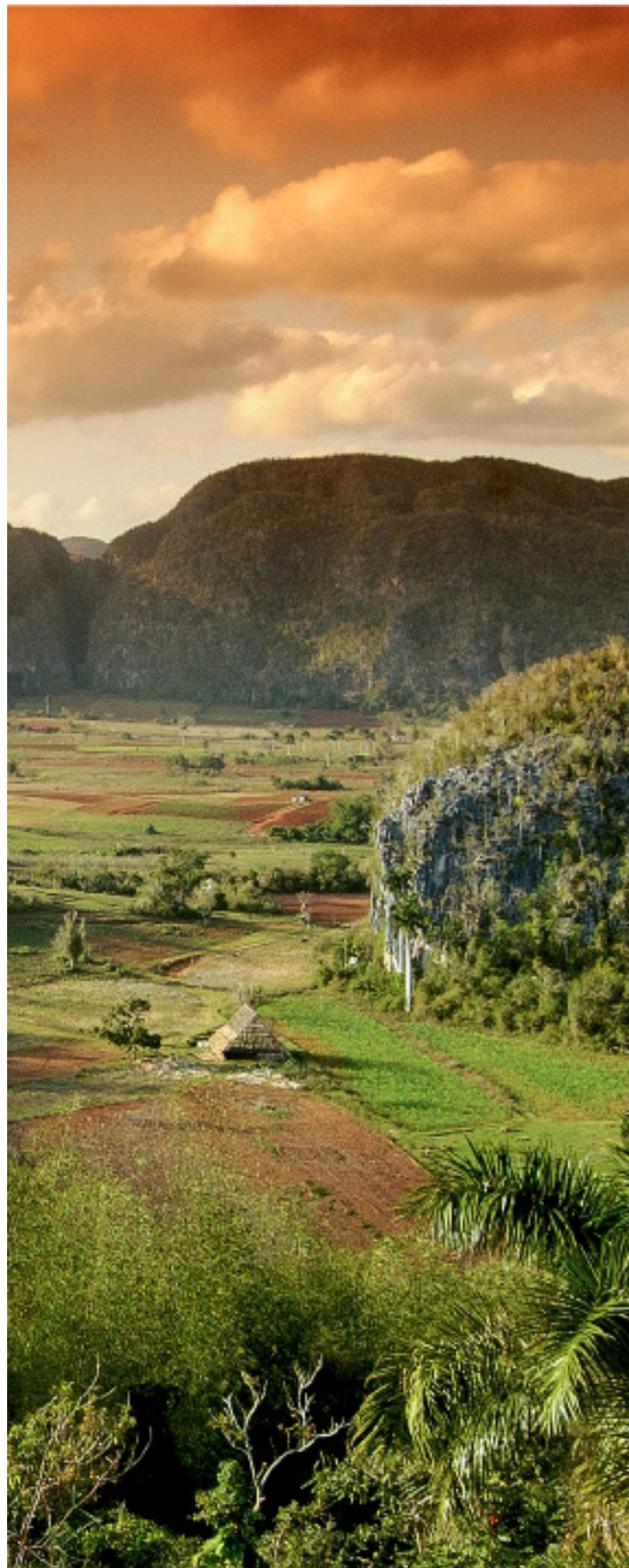
all the main squares, all of them with their own special places you shouldn't miss. Also, have a look at the majestic cathedral that stands as an icon of the city, its history and architecture. Discover iconic places like the National Capitol, the Paseo del Prado, the Floridita, La Bodeguita del Medio, the Parque Central, etc.

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.

Wander along the Callejon de Hamel, Havana's high temple of Afro-Cuban culture. A whole street full of mural paintings and shrines. The project started back in the 90's, when artist Salvador Gonzalez decided to repair the deteriorated facades of houses in the alley and covered them with murals related to the Afro-Cuban syncretism. Sunday is the best day to visit it, since it's when the alley shows its true spirit. That day, the neighbors, dressed up as ancient gods of Yoruba Pantheon, Orishas, welcome visitors and drums go aloud. 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.

### **Day 3 DAY TRIP TO VIÑALES**

Discover Viñales Valley, one of Cuba's most magnificent natural settings. Known for its fertile soil, which along with its natural micro-climate, make 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. 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 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.

**TODAY, YOU CAN ALSO CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

- Zip-lining around the beautiful landscape of Viñales.
- Take a horse ride around the Mogotes and get in touch with the real spirit of this land and its people.

## Day 4 CIENFUEGOS - TRINIDAD

Head 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, economical importance and strategical placement, this city has always been known as the pearl in 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 5 TRINIDAD

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.

**TODAY, YOU CAN BUILD YOUR OWN DAY BY CHOOSING ONE OF THE FOLLOWING SETS OF ACTIVITIES:**

- Take a horse ride around the countryside of Trinidad, making stops for some coffee, a dip at a crystal-clear river and later for lunch at one of the local farmers' improvised restaurants. The duration of the trip depends on the phase and the duration of the stops, you should expect no less than 3 hours total. Adventure into Playa Ancon, less than 15 min away from Trinidad. Ancon is known as the best beach in Cuba's south coast. Actually, the Cuban government in partnership with Spanish hotel chains Melia and Iberostar are heavily investing in the construction of resorts in the area, so now is a good opportunity to enjoy it before it gets too crowded.
- Discover Topes de Collantes, a heavily protected 200 square kilometers area straddling three provinces (Cienfuegos, Villa Clara and Sancti Spiritus). Topes boasts the best network of hiking trails in Cuba, these jungle-clad forests are full of vines, ferns and eye-catching epiphytes. Take a hike to Sal-





to del Caburni, a 62m waterfall that cascades over rocks into cool swimming holes. The total length of the hike is around 6km (round-trip), make sure to bring good walking shoes since some slopes are steep. Relax in Ancon beach for the rest of the day.

– Enjoy a salsa lesson. If you love salsa, then you sure know there is no place like Cuba to master this contagious rhythm. In a country where people are born with music in their blood, dancing salsa is just part of every day's life. So taking a salsa lesson with one of our virtuous salsa instructors is a must if you are in Havana. It doesn't matter if you are a beginner or you already know how to dance, the lesson will be personalized to your skill level. Relax in Ancon beach for the rest of the day.

**PLEASE NOTE:** THESE OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES ARE INCLUDED IN THE ITINERARY YOU CHOOSE, SO THERE IS NO EXTRA COST FOR THEM.

## Day 6 SANCTI SPIRITUS - CAMAGUEY

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.

In your way to Camaguey, stop at Sancti Spiritus, the fifth oldest city in Cuba. Founded in 1514 by the Spanish crown, was moved to its present site on the Río Yayabo in 1522. Yet audacious corsairs continued to loot the town until well into the 1660s. An elegant and well preserved city, in many aspects very similar to its neighbor Trinidad. Thanks to that similarity, the city has remained practically free of the effects that mainstream tourism brings with it.

Welcome to the maze! Camaguey (originally named Puerto Principe) was the 4th village founded by the Spanish crown on the southern coast of the region where it's settled now. It was relocated in 1528, after some native rebellions and pirate attacks, being the last the reason why the city was designed like a maze, in order to confuse the attackers. Today, Camaguey is the third biggest city in the island. With some of the best art galleries in the country and also the largest amount of churches, this place gives the visitor the idea of being somewhere else in Europe, rather than Cuba.

## Day 7 CAMAGUEY

Cuba's third-largest city is easily the suavest and most sophisticated after Havana. The arts shine bright here and it's also the





bastion of the Catholic Church on the island. Well known for going their own way in times of crisis, its resilient citizens are called agramontinos by other Cubans, after local First War of Independence hero Ignacio Agramonte, coauthor of the Guáimaro constitution and courageous leader of Cuba's finest cavalry brigade. Walking tour around the city, including stops at the many churches this city has. We can't miss the opportunity to take a bicycle tour and check out the main spots and art galleries of this beautiful city.

### **Day 8 BAYAMO - SANTIAGO**

On the way to Santiago de Cuba, we'll stop at Bayamo, founded by the Spanish crown in 1513, being the second oldest city in Cuba. Bayamo is well known around the country for being the start point of the independence war against the Spanin. The national anthem of Cuba, "El himno de Bayamo" was written and first singed in here.

We'll have a walking tour around the center of the city, which was burned by the Cuban independentists in 1869 as a rebellious statement before surrendering it to the Spanish troops.

**AFTER LUNCH, WE'LL CONTINUE TO SANTIAGO DE CUBA.** Santiago was Cuba's capital back in the early 16th century, before being massively damaged by an earthquake and the constant pirate attacks. This is the place where the internationally recognized Bacardi family built their rum empire between 1870's and 1950's.

### **Day 9 SANTIAGO**

Enjoy a walking tour around the city, with stops at spots of interest. Visit Cuartel Moncada, a set of military barracks attacked by Fidel Castro and his supporters back on 26th July 1953, in what's considered the clear start of the communist revolution. Visit Emilio Bacardi's History museum, although it's not dedicated to rum, it boasts a big collection of items related to national and world History. The collection and the museum were both built and donated by Emilio Bacardi itself, who was for some time, the governor of the city and founder of the internationally renowned rum brand.

Visit San Pedro de la Roca's Castle. A Unesco World Heritage site since 1997, the San Pedro fort sits impreguably atop a 60m-high promontory at the entrance to Santiago harbor, 10km southwest of the city. The stupendous views from the upper terrace take in the wild western ribbon of Santiago's coastline backed by the velvety Sierra Maestra.





## Day 10 SANTIAGO

Explore Santa Ifigenia's graveyard. Nestled peacefully on the city's western extremity, the Cementerio Santa Ifigenia is second only to Havana's Necrópolis Cristóbal Colón in its importance and grandiosity. Created in 1868 to accommodate the victims of the War of Independence and a simultaneous yellow-fever outbreak, the Santa Ifigenia includes many great historical figures among its 8000-plus tombs, notably the mausoleum of José Martí and final resting place of Fidel Castro.

Discover the Basílica de Nuestra Señora del Cobre, high on a hill 20km northwest of Santiago de Cuba on the old road to Bayamo, is Cuba's most sacred pilgrimage site. It's the shrine of the nation's patron saint: La Virgen de la Caridad (Our Lady of Charity), aka Cachita. In Santería, the Virgin is syncretized with the beautiful orisha Ochún, Yoruba goddess of love and dancing, and a religious icon to almost all Cuban women. Ochún is represented by the color yellow, mirrors, honey, peacock feathers and the number five. In the minds of many worshipers, devotion to the two religious figures is intertwined. Even for nonbelievers, a visit to the Virgin is a fascinating look in to local culture. The road to the basilica is lined with sellers of elaborate flower wreaths, intended as offerings to La Virgen, and hawkers of miniature 'Cachitas'.

## Day 11 GUANTANAMO BAY - BARACOA

On your way to Baracoa, stop at La Gobernadora, a viewpoint located a couple miles away from the infamous Guantanamo Bay. There is a small watchtower from where you can see the US military base, but you will need a potent lens in order to actually distinguish any building.

Baracoa is the oldest city in Cuba, founded by the Spanish crown on 1511. The city was, for a long time, isolated from the rest of the country because of the absence of any roads since it's surrounded by mountains. One of the main reasons why Baracoa has become a very popular place is the local cuisine. Most of the dishes are fully prepared with local products, such as cocoa, coconut, and large variety of seafood.

## Day 12 BARACOA

Visit a cocoa plantation and enjoy some of the handmade products. Discover Yumuri river and take a boat ride, making a stop to have a swim. Near the bridge over the river is the Túnel de los Alemanes (German Tunnel), an amazing natural arch of trees and foliage. Have lunch at one of the local beaches, and relax for the rest of the afternoon.

## Day 13 BARACOA - HAVANA

FLIGHT BACK TO HAVANA.





## Day 14 HAVANA

TODAY, YOU CAN BUILD YOUR OWN DAY BY CHOOSING ONE OF THE FOLLOWING SETS OF ACTIVITIES:

– Let's have a look at one of Havana's oldest and most famous cigar businesses, the Real Fábrica de Tabacos 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. Later, 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 salsa lesson. If you love salsa, then you sure know there is no place like Cuba to master this contagious rhythm. In a country where people are born with music in their blood, dancing salsa is just part of every day's life. So taking a salsa lesson with one of our virtuous salsa instructors is a must if you are in Havana. It doesn't matter if you are a beginner or you already know how to dance, the lesson will be personalized to your skill level. 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 prepare your own and you can drink as many as you like.

**PLEASE NOTE:** THESE OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES ARE INCLUDED IN THE ITINERARY YOU CHOOSE, SO THERE IS NO EXTRA COST FOR THEM.

## Day 15 HAVANA - DEPARTURE

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.**

