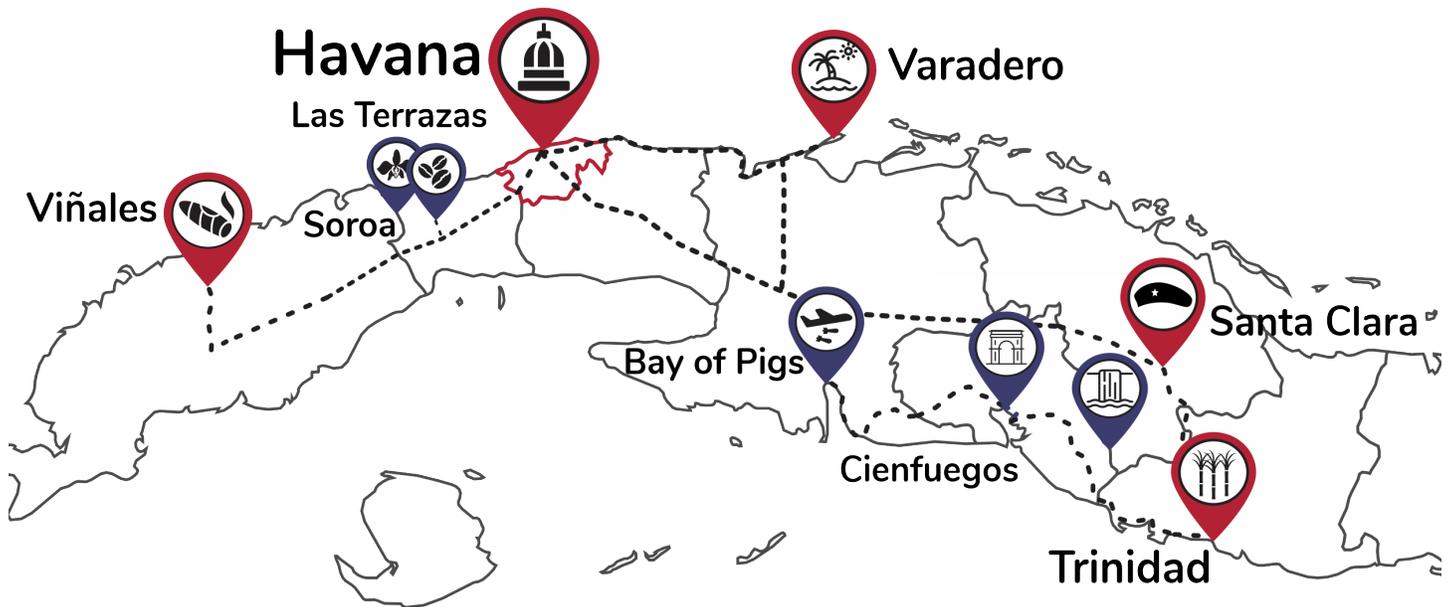


WESTERN CUBA MARVELS

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 HAVANA

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.

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.

Dive into San Jose, this former harbor-side 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 papier-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.

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.

Day 4 HAVANA

THE DAY IS YOURS TO RELAX AND ENJOY IN YOUR OWN WAY. ASK YOUR GUIDE FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES TO DO. SOME OF THE OPTIONS INCLUDE:

- Have a look at the Hotel Nacional and sit in the outdoor patio overlooking the Malecon while having a drink (or two, you are on a holiday after all).
- Take a salsa lesson from one of our virtuous instructors.
- Visit Finca Vigia, Ernest Hemingway's former house.
- Take a cooking lesson at one of Havana's most popular restaurants: Ajiaco Cafe.

Day 5 LAS TERRAZAS - SOROA - VIÑALES

Take a walk around the Las Terrazas Township, a small community and nature reserve hidden by the Sierra del Rosario mountains. Walk around and mingle with the locals and enjoy the nature surrounding you, including a small population of pink flamingos that have made a home of this place. Explore Cafetal Buenavista, Cuba's oldest (now partially restored) coffee plantation, built in 1801 by refugees from Haiti. Much of the property (such as the dormitories that housed the slaves



who worked the plantation) is now in ruin, but this adds to its haunting quality.

CONTINUE TO THE SMALL VILLAGE OF SOROA. Often referred to as The Gate to The Garden of Eden. Visit the orchid garden, which includes the biggest collection of the flower in the island. Have a look at Salto Arco Iris, a magnificent waterfall that forms part of the Rio Manantiades. The great river churns through the rainforest before cascading down 22 meters drop, creating an enclosed pool.

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.

Day 6 VIÑALES

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 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 7 BAY OF PIGS

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 US government took place. Bay of pigs is in Zapata Swamp, the biggest natural reserve in Cuba and a place that boasts with wildlife. Some of the nicest features in the area are hidden underwater, making Bay of Pigs a terrific spot for snorkelling and diving. You can relax for the rest of the day in the local beach, where restaurants have their tables less than 10 meters from the water. Just picture yourself enjoying a mojito or a cold beer under a coconut tree whilst feeling the Caribbean breeze in your face, that'll give you an idea of the magic of this place. Needless to say, seafood in here is as fresh as it gets and most private establishments have a wide selection of it.



Day 8 BAY OF PIGS

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 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 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.

Day 9 CIENFUEGOS

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, economical importance and strategic 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.

Just when you thought Cienfuegos' eclectic architecture couldn't get any more eclectic, you reach the southern end of Punta Gorda where, with a sharp intake of breath, you'll stumble upon the impossible-to-classify Palacio de Valle. Built in 1917 by Acisclo del Valle Blanco, a wealthy Spaniard from Asturias, the structure resembles an outrageously ornate Moroccan casbah, but draws on a mad mix of Gothic, Byzantine, mudéjar and baroque influences. Batista planned to convert this colorful riot of tiles, turrets and stucco into a casino, until the Cuban Revolution sent the gamblers back to Vegas. Enjoy a drink at the rooftop terrace while overlooking Cienfuegos' Bay, there is no better place to enjoy the sunset.

Day 10 EL NICHU - TRINIDAD

Today's adventure will take us to El Nicho, a refreshing waterfall on the mountains of Cienfuegos, reached by a short trail that passes two natural pools (where you can swim). Just beyond the falls is a lookout point offering views over lush mountains and the distant Hanabanilla reservoir.

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. 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.

Day 11 TRINIDAD

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

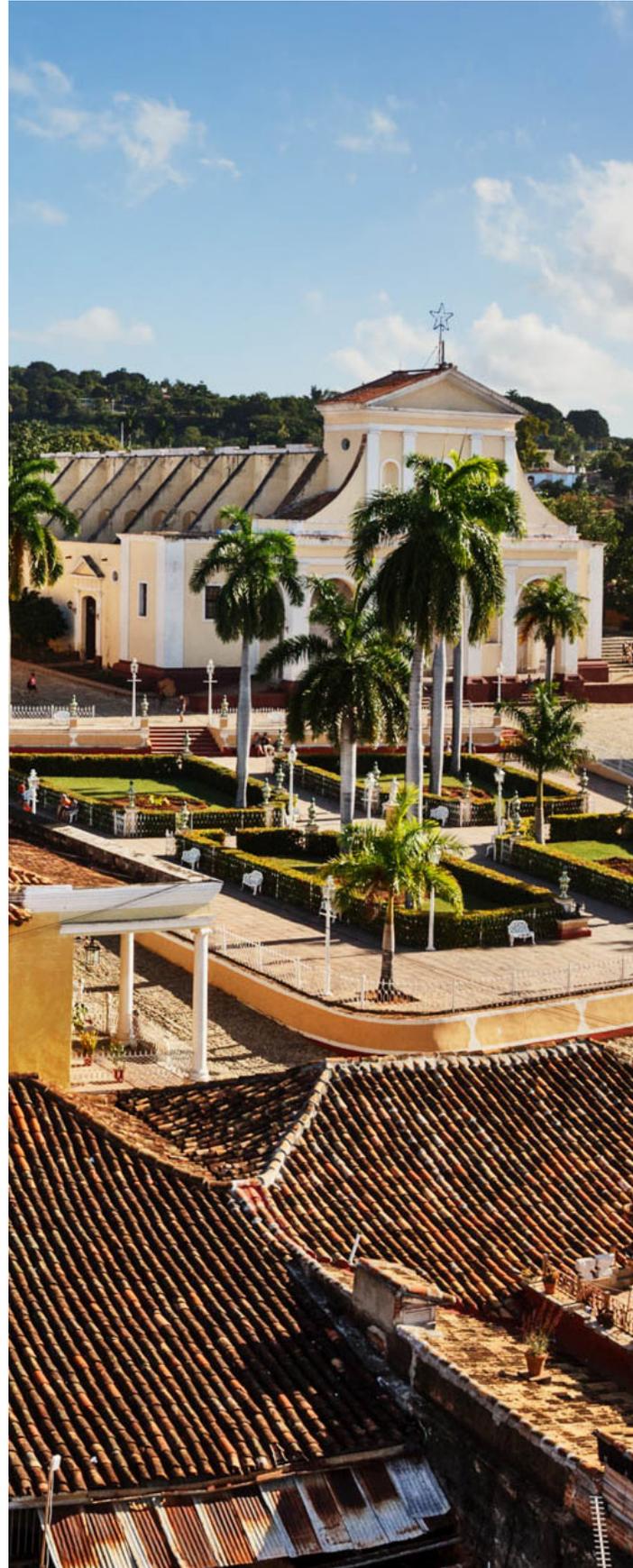
- Take a salsa lesson. If you love salsa, then you sure know there is no place like Cuba to master this contagious rhythm. In a country where people are born with music in their blood, dancing salsa is just part of every day's life. So taking a salsa lesson with one of our virtuous salsa instructors 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.
- 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.

Day 12 SANTA CLARA - VARADERO

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 Varadero, stop at Santa Clara, a city with a very close connection to Che Guevara. At 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.

Santa Clara is also known for being kind of an "edgy" city, with a local cultural scene that contrasts with the rest of the coun-



try. 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 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 13 VARADERO

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.

In the night, visit the Casa de la Musica de Varadero (literally "Varadero's music house") and enjoy some live music, this is also a great opportunity to try some Cuban cocktails and learn some of the basics of Cuban salsa.

PLEASE NOTE: NON OF THESE OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES ARE INCLUDED IN THE ITINERARY YOU CHOOSE, SO THE COST IS NOT COVERED. LET US KNOW AND WE'LL LET YOU KNOW THE ESTIMATE PRICE FOR EACH ACTIVITY IN ADVANCE

Day 14 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.

