

Mexico & Cuba

Depart Cairns 08 April at 1.35PM arrive Sydney 4.30PM – Qantas

Accommodation: Mercure Sydney Airport IN: 08 April OUT: 09 April

Depart Sydney 09 April at 9.15AM arrive Houston 9.55AM – United Airlines

Depart Houston 09 April at 11.55AM arrive Mexico 2.10PM – United Airlines

Accommodation: Hotel Emporio Reforma Ciudad de Mexico IN: 09 April OUT: 11 April

Depart Mexico 11 April at 10.20AM arrive Havana 2.10PM – Air Mexico

Commence the following tour in Havana on the 11 April and ending in Havana on the 25 April

Itinerary

Havana

Bievenido a Cuba! Welcome to Cuba! Set to the soundtrack and backdrop of the 1950s, tumbledown Havana is a capital unlike any other. A complimentary arrival transfer is included with your trip.

There will be a welcome meeting at approximately 6pm this evening. Please expect a letter from your leader in the afternoon of Day 1 to confirm the place of your meeting (if by 5pm you cannot locate this letter then please ask your guesthouse owner if one has been delivered, or ask to call our assistance line listed in the "Problems and emergency contact information" section of this document). We'll be collecting your insurance details and next of kin information at this meeting, so ensure you have all these details to provide to your leader. The tour briefing is generally followed by an optional group dinner.

As there's a great deal to do in Havana, we recommend staying a few extra days to make the most of this exciting city. If you need help booking extra accommodation, our reservations team will be happy to assist. If you arrive early, please note most activities in Cuba can only be booked through the tourist desk in the lobbies of the larger hotels or direct with the venue. Otherwise, there are plenty of good museums to check out, including the Museo de la Revolucion and the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes.

Accommodation

- Standard guesthouse (1 night)

Optional Activities

- Havana - Tourist bus day pass - CUC5
- Havana - National Museum of Fine Arts - CUC5
- Havana - Revolution museum - CUC5

Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Special Information

Please see "Joining instructions" for more information about exiting the arrivals hall and connecting with your arrival transfer driver. Please trust that your driver will know the address of your assigned guesthouse.

Some departures of this trip are part of a combination trip. As such, some of your fellow travellers may be continuing on from Havana to start the second part of their trip – Grand Cuba Westbound (QUSRC). Please contact our sales team if you wish to book or know more information on these longer combination trips.

Day 2: Havana

Havana's history is as colourful as its cars and buildings. Today, you will be taken on a guided tour of the Havana vieja. Havana remains one of the great colonial cities of the Americas. An air of faded glory comes through in the peeling paint of some of its grand old buildings. Narrow streets, spacious plazas and Spanish architecture make it a charm to explore on foot. Visit La Catedral San Cristobal de la Habana, the Palacio de los Marqueses de Aguas Claras and the Plaza de Armas. Also visit the Museo de la Revolucion, to learn about the history of the Cuban Revolution Afterwards, enjoy some free time to further explore on your own. Ask your leader to help you book one of the many optional activities such as a Cigar factory tour, the Ernest Hemingway tour, or a cruise around Outer-Havana in a vintage American car. Alternatively you could simply stroll along the Malecon or join the hundreds of locals lining up to eat a Coppelia ice-cream. Heavily subsidised by the government, a whole bowl will set you back about 10 cents.

Accommodation

- Standard guesthouse (1 night)

Included Activities

- Havana - Guided walking tour of Old Havana

Optional Activities

- Havana - Camera Obscura entrance - CUC2
- Havana - Vintage American car tour - USD55
- Havana - Ernest Hemingway tour - CUC70
- Havana - Cigar factory tour - CUC12

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Day 3: Baracoa

Take a one-and-a-half hour flight from Havana to Baracoa. Please note that it is not uncommon for these flights to be delayed. Set on a beautiful bay, this was the first colonial town, and it's one of the most beautiful in Cuba. You'll have a couple of days here to explore and relax. Take a walk around the town to get your bearings, then maybe head to a lovely black sand beach an easy walk from town. As one of Cuba's major agricultural zones, Baracoa is a great place to try local foods. It's one of the best places for chocolate, and street vendors and small restaurants offer local specialties like prawns in coconut sauce and banana-stuffed tamales. One particularly sought-after Baracoa specialty is the cucurucho, a sweet treat of coconut, sugar, and fruit wrapped in dried cone-shaped palm leaves.

Accommodation

- Standard guesthouse (1 night)

Included Activities

- Baracoa - Orientation walk

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Special Information

Due to safety concerns with Russian-made planes used by some domestic Cuban airlines, Intrepid groups only uses French-made ATR planes. If French-made ATR planes are not available or if the flight is delayed or cancelled, alternative arrangements will be made, and occasionally this may not be known to us right up until boarding time. Alternatives include, completing the entire leg from Havana to Baracoa by land, flying to a nearby airport and travelling the remainder of the journey by land, or in some cases, it will be run in reverse.

Day 4: Baracoa

Today is a free day to explore Baracoa. The town was only accessible by sea until 1960, and even after a road linking Baracoa to Guantanamo was built, the settlement maintained a small-town colonial feel. Uncover its individuality as you wander along its beautiful malecon or ramble over various forts that were built to withstand pirate attacks. The Catedral de Nuestra Senora de la Asuncion boasts a bust of the indigenous leader Hatuey, who was burned at the stake for refusing to accept the Spanish and their Catholicism. You might prefer to chill on a beach or get active with a hike to El Yunke – the famous table-top mountain sighted by Columbus during his first voyage to the island.

At some point while you're here, you will undertake an informal salsa class. Cuba has a hugely rich and varied dance and musical tradition that draws its roots from Africa and France.

Accommodation

- Standard guesthouse (1 night)

Included Activities

- Baracoa - Informal Salsa lesson

Optional Activities

- Baracoa - El Yunque mountain hike - CUC25
- Baracoa - Yumari river tour - CUC15
- Baracoa - Bar and nightclub entries - CUC1
- Baracoa - El Yunque waterfall hike - CUC18

Meals Included

- Breakfast

[Day 5: Baracoa](#)

Today is another free day in Baracoa. Why not head out on a hike through the rainforest to explore nearby caves and waterfalls. Perhaps pay a visit to Humboldt Nation Park, looking out for colourful parrots, lizards and hummingbirds. Take a boat tour down a nearby river, spotting wildlife along the way, or maybe stop in at a farm to learn about life on the land. After the sun goes down, enjoy a cocktail near the beach or check out the town's nightlife.

Accommodation

- Standard guesthouse (1 night)

Optional Activities

- Baracoa - Duaba Finca tour - CUC15
- Baracoa - Maguana beach (return taxi) - CUC25
- Baracoa - Duaba Finca river tour - CUC8
- Baracoa - Humbolt park hike - CUC25

Meals Included

- Breakfast

[Day 6: Santiago de Cuba](#)

A spectacular five-hour journey to Santiago de Cuba winds through verdant mountains, then along the dramatic Atlantic coastline, before taking you through the dry region surrounding Guantanamo, dotted with cacti and wiry goats. Time dependent, on the way you might get the chance to visit the Mirador de Malones for a pretty good view of the Guantanamo Naval Base and surrounding bay. At present the base is not open to the public. If you are keen to see this, please ask your leader, and they will tell you if visits are currently allowed. Continue on to Santiago de Cuba, picking up some Spanish during an informal Spanish lesson from your leader – set between the indomitable Sierra Maestra mountain range and the azure Caribbean,

this city's historical centre and colonial architecture retain a timeworn air ideal for photographers. Santiago is the hottest place in Cuba – in terms of both temperature and the vibe of the city!

Accommodation

- Standard guesthouse (1 night)

Included Activities

- Guantanamo Bay - Viewpoint & Tower (Time & weather dependent)
- Informal Spanish lesson with leader
- Santiago de Cuba - Orientation walk

Meals Included

- Breakfast

[Day 7: Santiago de Cuba](#)

Today your leader will take you on a three-hour city tour of Santiago. You'll visit El Morro Castle, Ifigenia cemetery and the Moncada barracks and learn about the city's rich history. For nearly a century, the city was the island's seat of power and it also played a vital role in the Revolution. The people of Santiago were the first to rise up in arms against government troops in 1956, and it was in Santiago on January 1st 1959, that Fidel Castro declared the triumph of the Revolution. With a strong Afro-Cuban heritage it's no surprise that Santiago has a vibrant music scene, and is seen as Cuba's capital of music. It's the home of son music, which is a mix of Spanish guitar and African percussion. Santiago's half million residents are proud of their cultural traditions, so you'll find many museums and cultural clubs around the city. The city is also famous for its energetic Carnaval celebrations and lively Festival of Caribbean Culture. All this will entice the shyest, most left-footed dancer and the non-musically inclined to get involved. Kick off the evening with an informal salsa lesson tonight, then party the night away at one of the town's live music venues.

Accommodation

- Standard guesthouse (1 night)

Included Activities

- Santiago de Cuba - half day city tour

Optional Activities

- Santiago - Use of a Hotel Pool - CUC5
- Santiago - Tropicana Cabaret Show - CUC35
- Santiago de Cuba - Music instrument lesson - CUC12

Meals Included

- Breakfast

[Day 8: Camaguey](#)

Today, head west along the Carretera Central to Camaguey with a stop in Bayamo. Today is the longest travel day of the trip. Depending on how many stops are made, this usually takes six to seven hours. Despite its size, Cuba's third largest city has managed to retain much of its colonial heritage. Exploring the city's winding streets is half the fun. The city was planned in a deliberately confusing pattern to disorient any would-be assailants. As you walk through the city you may still see tinajones – large clay pots used for collecting water. On your explorations, stop by the Iglesia de Nuestra Senora de la Soledad to see its baroque frescoes. Camaguey has a rich tradition of cultural and technological leadership within Cuba. It is the birthplace of poet laureate Nicolas Guillen and home of the Ballet de Camaguey. Cuba's first radio and television emissions were broadcast from Camaguey, and the country's first airport and commercial flights were planned and executed here.

[Accommodation](#)

- Standard guesthouse (1 night)

[Included Activities](#)

- Camaguey - Orientation walk

[Meals Included](#)

- Breakfast

[Day 9: Camaguey](#)

Today you'll take a tour of Camaguey by bicycle taxi. Cycling is a popular form of transport in Cuba, and bicycle taxis are very common. In the confusing streets of Camaguey, it's a particularly good way to get around. On the tour, you'll visit a local market, parks, plazas and an art gallery. Each taxi carries two passengers and the tour is led by an English-speaking local guide. Your leader may suggest visiting a local farmers' market, where you'll get a fascinating insight into daily Cuban life and the local economy. This is where farmers can sell their produce after meeting the quota they have to sell to the state. Camaguey's is a particularly busy and colourful market. There are separate areas for produce sold by the state and produce sold by farmers directly to the public. There are plenty of interesting tropical fruits, vegetables and herbs available. This is where the locals come to buy their food once their monthly food ration runs out.

[Accommodation](#)

- Standard guesthouse (1 night)

[Included Activities](#)

- Camaguey - Bicycle taxi city tour
- Camaguey - Rum tasting in a local bar

Optional Activities

- Camaguey - Casa de la Trova - CUC3
- Camaguey - Ballet performance - CUC5

Meals Included

- Breakfast

[Day 10: Trinidad](#)

Today travel through the centre of the country to Trinidad (approximately 5-6 hours), which sits on the scenic Caribbean coast. For many visitors to Cuba, Trinidad is a standout destination. No other colonial city in Cuba is as well preserved, and the local residents are extremely friendly and festive. Trinidad is steeped in religion, including the Afro-Cuban religion of Santeria, which has connections to Voodoo. On an orientation walk today, see the former wealth generated by the sugar industry in the town's once-grand mansions, colourful public buildings, wrought iron grill-work and cobble-stoned streets. You'll then have over two days to explore the area and soak up the atmosphere.

Accommodation

- Standard guesthouse (1 night)

Included Activities

- Trinidad - Orientation walk

Optional Activities

- Trinidad - Santeria Priest Visit - CUC2

Meals Included

- Breakfast

[Day 11: Trinidad](#)

Today is a free day in Trinidad. Perhaps continue yesterday's walk into the town's history with visits to the Museo Nacional de la Lucha Contra los Bandidos and the Casa de los Mártires de Trinidad. Both chronicle the struggles of the revolutionary period in the town's history. At some point while you're here, why not take in a folklore show at one of the town's numerous open-air venues. Cuba has a hugely rich and varied dance and musical tradition that draws its roots from Africa and France. Many styles that have greatly influenced music worldwide originated in Cuba, such as Mambo, Cha-cha-cha, son and rumba. There's also a chance to get a hands-on lesson with the musical instruments themselves in a percussion workshop. By now, hopefully you've learnt enough of the local rhythms to join in with the locals – maybe at a local venue hidden within a cave!

Accommodation

- Standard guesthouse (1 night)

Optional Activities

- Trinidad - Live music venues entrance (varies depending on venue) - CUC2
- Trinidad - Disco in a cave - CUC5
- Trinidad - Museo Romantico - CUC2
- Trinidad - Museo Nacional de la Lucha Contra los Bandidos - CUC1
- Trinidad - Musical instrument lesson (guitar, double bass, tres, percussion - per hour) - CUC10

Meals Included

- Breakfast

[Day 12: Trinidad](#)

Trinidad is also the gateway to the Valle de los Ingenios, and a bike is a great way to explore the local area. Be warned however, Cuba's bicycles, like its cars, are vintage. There are also some great treks to be made in the nearby Sierra del Escambray mountains – maybe drive along the legendary twists and turns of the road to El Nicho, then hike to its beautiful waterfall. Playa Ancon is also close by – there's plenty of opportunity for relaxing on its long, unspoilt beaches or snorkelling through the clear waters (just watch carefully for sea urchins, which can be a problem here).

Accommodation

- Standard guesthouse (1 night)

Optional Activities

- Trinidad - Ancon beach shuttle bus - CUC4
- Trinidad - Bicycle rental (full day) - CUC5
- Trinidad - Trek to El Nicho Waterfall (taxi, entrance fee & guide) - CUC27

Meals Included

- Breakfast

[Day 13: Santa Clara - Cienfuegos](#)

On the way to Cienfuegos today, you'll drive north through the Topes de Collantes National Park to the final resting place of Cuba's most famous son. In Santa Clara (approximately 1 hour), you'll visit the Che Guevara mausoleum and memorial. Che's remains were brought here after they were found in a remote corner of Bolivia in 1997, where he was assassinated by the CIA-backed Bolivian army. Check out the impressive bronze statue of Che bearing his rifle and learn about his incredible life.

Then it's a short drive south (approximately 1.5 hours) to Cienfuegos, known affectionately as 'The Pearl of the South'. Part of the city's appeal lies in its colonial centre, which features wide Parisian-style boulevards and elegant colonnades. Drive along the peninsula to see Cienfuegos' architectural pride and joy, the Moroccan-influenced Palacio del Valle.

Accommodation

- Standard guesthouse (1 night)

Included Activities

- Santa Clara - Visit to Che Guevara Mausoleum and Museum
- Cienfuegos - Orientation Walk
- Cienfuegos - Visit to the Palacio del Valle

Meals Included

- Breakfast
- Lunch

Day 14: Bay of pigs - Havana

On the way to Havana today, you'll stop at the peaceful sandy arc of Playa Giron (approximately 2.5 hours), which sits on the eastern side of the Bahia de Cochinos, better known as the Bay of Pigs. It was famously here that the CIA sponsored a failed invasion by exile forces in 1961. It's not just the history that's the attraction here – with crystal clear Caribbean waters, a deep underwater wall, and an outstanding variety of coral and fish, it's a haven for snorkelers. Strap on a hired mask and some flippers and take a dive into sapphire-coloured water teeming with tropical marine life. After arriving back into the capital, head to Plaza de la Revolución for your final taste of Cuban revolutionary history, watched over by the memorials of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, José Martí and Camilo Cienfuegos. Then you'll have the rest of the evening free. Perhaps take a stroll along the malecon (ocean walkway) or soak up the atmospheric vibes of the Old Town. At the end of a long day, perhaps it's time for a mojito or cuba libre and a final night of salsa in Habana Vieja's bars. Hit the streets and celebrate the end of a fantastic adventure.

Accommodation

- Standard guesthouse (1 night)

Included Activities

- Bay of Pigs - Visit and swim
- Havana - Revolution Square

Optional Activities

- Havana - Jose Marti Memorial Tower - CUC2
- Havana - Buena Vista Social Club - CUC30

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Day 15: Havana

Your trip comes to an end this morning after breakfast. Check-out time from the guesthouse is by 10am.

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Depart Havana 25 April at 4.12PM arrive Cancun 4.37PM – Air Mexico

Accommodation: Grand Oasis Cancun IN: 25 April OUT: 30 April

Depart Cancun 30 April at 7.45AM arrive Los Angeles 10.55AM – United airlines

Accommodation: Best Western Plus Hollywood IN: 30 April OUT: 02 May

Depart Los Angeles 02 May at 10.40PM arrive Sydney 04 May at 6.45AM – United airlines

Depart Sydney 04 May at 9.40AM arrive Cairns 12.50PM – Qantas

Cost per person \$7,162*pp and includes the following:

- Airfares
- Airport taxes
- 1 nights accommodation in Sydney
- 2 nights accommodation in Mexico city
- 14-day tour including breakfast and 1 lunch and touring as per itinerary
- 5 nights accommodation in Cancun including all meals and beverages
- 2 nights accommodation in Los Angeles