

Cuba: Art and Culture for Students

15 days and 14 nights in the safest and most cultured country in the Americas!

VISIT HAVANA, PINAR DEL RIO, VINALES, CIENFUEGOES, TRINIDAD | DETAILS AT WWW.HELLOCUBA.CA

DAY 1 – SATURDAY – HELLO CUBA

- Arrival at Havana's José Martí International Airport.
- Group welcomed by your CubaNatura Guide and Bus Driver.
- Transfer to **Hotel Saint Johns**, located in Havana's cultural center: Vedado near the Malecón seawall.
- Private group check-in with assistance from your guide.
- Take a refreshing swim in one of two hotel pools.

DAY 2 – SUNDAY – DISCOVERING HAVANA

Guided walking tour of Old Havana, an UNESCO **World Heritage Site** to experience four of its five historic plazas.

Cathedral Square, the most beautiful and private 18th century colonial plaza on the island. Named after the masterpiece of Cuban baroque architecture: the **Cathedral of Havana** built by the Jesuit order.

Square of Arms, an ancient military parade ground for Spanish soldiers, surrounded by impressive buildings such as:

- **Palacio de los Capitanes Generales**, former seat of colonial government. Today the building houses the Museum of the City.
- **Palacio del Segundo Cabo**, seat of the second authority of the island. Today it houses important publishing concerns.
- **Museo de Artesanía** at **Castillo de la Real Fuerza**, the second oldest fortress built by the Spaniards in the West Indies. Today it displays treasures of artistic ceramics by the most prestigious Cuban artists

from the middle of the last century to present. The institution is host to the Ceramic Biennial.

We continue onto **San Francisco Square**, one of the oldest in the historical quarter.

And later to **Plaza Vieja**, the only civic square of colonial times. Absent are churches and government buildings. Here we'll visit an important center for the visual arts.

In each of the plazas we'll stop at key attractions including a visit to the **Scale Model of Old Havana**.

We spend time in Rumba performance at **Callejón de Hammel**, an alley in which the façades of all the buildings display murals inspired by AfroCuban religions themes. We'll meet alley artist **Salvador Gonzales** and visit his studio.

Tonight we have a Cuban band playing for us! We learn how to perform and dance to Salsa, Son, Rumba and other popular Cuban rhythms from **Grupo Dulce María**.

DAY 3 – MONDAY – HAVANA

Meeting with **Mario Coyula Cowley**, Director of the **Group for the Integral Development of Havana**, at its headquarters that also houses Scale Model of the City of Havana. Mr. Coyula has been a leading figure in urban design urban policy and community development for over 45 years, garnering design accolades, awards and public leadership roles.

This will be followed by a panoramic motor coach tour of Modern Havana. We visit places like **The Plaza de La Revolucion** (Revolution Square), **Universidad de La Habana** (University of Havana), **Malecon** (Seawall), Vedado neighbourhood, Miramar neigh-

bourhood, [Hotel Nacional](#), [Cementario Colon](#) (Colombus Cemetery), and many others.

We will also see important examples of Art- Deco style architecture such as Lopez Serrano Building, The House of Catalina Laza, and The America Theatre.

In the afternoon there will be three options (entrance fee not included):

[El Capitolio](#) (The Capital Building) designed by Cuban Architects and built by the American construction company of Purdy & Henderson. This monumental building is one of Cuba's most outstanding architectural heritage sites packed with art work from Cuban and foreign artists.

[The Centro Asturiano](#), inaugurated in 1927 designed by Spanish Architect Manuel del Busto. This building features solid heavy façades constructed in Capellania Stones with clear influences from the Spanish Renaissance. It houses the new Museum of Fine arts inaugurated in 2001.

[The Centro Gallego](#), built in 1915 by Belgian Architect Paul Belau. The façades are richly decorated and inspired by baroque and renaissance styles. Today the centre houses El Gran Teatro de La Habana (The Grand Havana Theatre) and Alicia Alonzo's National Ballet.

In the evening we witness Havana's most impressive and longstanding tradition: The Firing of the 9:00pm Cannons at the [Fortress of San Carlos de La Cabana](#).

DAY 4 – TUESDAY – HAVANA

Morning visit with faculty and students of the [Instituto Superior de Arte \(ISA\)](#) – a center for advanced studies in the fields of theatre, dance, music, visual arts and communication art. ISA's campus and buildings were designed after the Revolution by Cuban [Ricardo Porro](#) and Italians [Roberto Gottardi](#) and [Vittorio Garatti](#). Planned to take the form of five beautiful parkland pavilions, only three were completed. In 1965 the project was put on hold due to the urgent need for housing. Its buildings, described as "magic-realist architecture and landscape," were listed by the World Monument Fund as one of the world's 100 most endangered structures. In December 1999, with renewed funding, the original architects have reunited to complete the most important architectural project of the Revolution.

Lunch hosted by [José Fuster](#), one of Cuba's most important ceramists and painters at his whimsical studio in Jaimanitas, just outside of Havana.

Afternoon visit to the studios of artists for an

exchange about their work. A unique opportunity to purchase art directly!

In the evening, there will be an optional evening activity at the [Casa de La Amistad](#), a beautifully restored colonial home, to hear live Cuban music.

DAY 5 – WEDNESDAY – PINAR DEL RIO/VINALES

Day excursion to [Viñales Valley](#), containing the most spectacular scenery in Cuba and some of the most interesting and varied geological formations on the island. The valley is particularly famous for its impressive freestanding rock formations called [Mogotes](#).

Visit an agricultural cooperative called Moncada for a discussion and a chance to work with its young members.

We'll visit the [Cueva del Indio](#), used by the [Guanahatabey Amerindians](#) as a burial site in ancient time, and as refuge from the Spaniards for both Indians and Black slaves alike. We'll take a short boat ride on the subterranean river running through the cave.

Visit to [Mural de la Prehistoria](#), a huge painting on the side of a mogote.

Explore Viñales Village at your leisure: its open-air craft market, Parque Marti, town church, and other interesting sites of this charming colonial hamlet.

Visit Carmen and Caridad Miranda's botanical and herb garden, called the [Viñales Botanical Garden](#). The two widows maintain a garden full of fruits, orchids and medicinal plants.

Late afternoon return to hotel in Havana.

DAY 6 – THURSDAY – HAVANA

Free day to explore the city at leisure.

DAY 7 – FRIDAY – CIENFUEGOS

Morning departure to [Cienfuegos](#), otherwise known as The Pearl of the South, for its wealth of 19th and early 20th century buildings.

Your guide will explain the origins of this beautiful cosmopolitan city. We'll explore Cienfuegos' Plaza Martí where the ceremony of foundation of the city took place, and where you'll find a reproduction of the Arch of Triumph of Paris.

Visit neoclassical buildings such as the Cathedral, built with the donation of wealthy families like the Lebrancs, the Albis, the Terrys. Inside are reproductions of the 12 Apostles in stained glass imported from

Paris. Also the original machinery of the clock tower – still in place and working – was built in France. We also visit the Tomas Terry Theatre, built at the end of the 19th century, which still displays original elements of construction including wood works, iron works, paintings, etc.

Check in at the [Guajimico Resort](#), a beach-front hotel with direct access to the warm waters of the Caribbean sea.

DAY 8 – SATURDAY – CIENFUEGOS

The morning will be spent on the beach where we will enjoy snorkeling and other water activities.

In the afternoon we will enjoy a visit to [La Virgen Caves](#) and a hike to [Sendero Los Corrales](#).

Free evening.

DAY 9 – SUNDAY – CIENFUEGOS

Full day work and cultural exchange with high school students in the Cienfuegos area.

After lunch we will participate in a friendly sports game and cultural activities.

Late afternoon return to our Hotel.

Free evening.

DAY 10 – MONDAY – CIENFUEGOS

Enjoy horse-back riding to a beautiful secluded beach.

Lunch in Hacienda de la Vega.

DAY 11 – TUESDAY – CIENFUEGOS

Full day work and cultural exchange with high school students in the Cienfuegos countryside.

Free evening.

DAY 12 – WEDNESDAY – TRINIDAD

Morning departure to [Trinidad](#).

Morning departure to Trinidad. Today we explore on foot one of the oldest cities founded by the Spaniards in the West Indies, Trinidad, declared World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

We will visit a mirador (lookout) over the [Sugar Mill Valley](#), also a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where the sugar barons had their countryside mansions and mills.

Free time to wander the streets of historical center or

enjoy the beach.

Check in at [Costa Sur Hotel](#), and take a swim in the warm waters of the Caribbean Sea.

Evening activity: Afrocuban Performance at Las Ruinas!

DAY 13 – THURSDAY– TRINIDAD

Full day work and cultural exchange with high school students in the Trinidad countryside.

Free evening.

DAY 14 – FRIDAY– TRINIDAD

Free day to enjoy the warm waters of the Caribbean Sea, or explore historic sites of Trinidad. Snorkel equipment rental fee not included in tour price.

DAY 15 – SATURDAY– GOODBYE CUBA

Check out of hotel and transfer to Havana's José Martí International Airport for international departure.

SERVICES INCLUDED

- All breakfasts included and served from 7:00 am to 10:00 am daily.
- Some lunches and dinners as noted in this program's itinerary.
- Clean comfortable safe hotels. Two double beds, daily maid service. Showers and toilet en suite and many enjoyable amenities.
- Modern luxury air-conditioned coach and professional driver for all activities in the program.
- Group in and out airport transfers in Cuba.
- Expert Cuban multilingual guide and translator throughout the program.
- All activities, services, entrance fees and venues unless noted as "not included" or "optional."
- Custom tour website for your school's student/parent orientation and tour administration. See "Schools to Cuba" at www.HelloCuba.ca for examples.

SERVICES NOT INCLUDED

- Cuban airport departure tax 25.00 CUC.
- Gratuities for guide, bus driver, hotel restaurant staff, chambermaids, porters and taxis.

