

EXPERIENCE
JAZZ
IN

Cuba



Discover Cuba with WDCB host René Avila Featuring the Havana Jazz Fest! January 26 – February 2, 2025



Join me, WDCB host René Avila, and friends of public radio on an unforgettable journey to sun-soaked Havana! Get ready to groove to vibrant music, soak up rich history, and marvel at stunning art. We'll visit life-affirming social projects, salsa dance like never before, and attend the legendary **Havana Jazz Festival**. Plus, we'll tour the famous Havana Recording Studio and feast on mouthwatering dishes at charming paladars. Picture yourself strolling the lively Malecón, exploring Havana's historic center, and cruising in a classic convertible, while basking in the irresistible rhythms of Cuba. Don't miss out on this ultimate Cuban jazz adventure—book your space now before it's too late!

Note: Earthbound Expeditions (est. 1997) has been organizing custom public radio and museum trips to Cuba for more than ten years.

TRIP AT A GLANCE

7 Nights Havana at the ****Hotel Grand Aston



**EARTHBOUND
EXPEDITIONS**

Earthbound Expeditions Inc.
P.O. Box 11305, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 USA
Tel: 206.842.9775
www.EarthboundExpeditions.com

“What is interesting in this is the exchange of music that occurred between New Orleans and Cuba, I mean, they had ferries that would go from one port to another.”
Ruben Blades

IT'S INCLUDED

- ❖ With WDCB host **René Avila!**
- ❖ An expert bilingual Cuban guide
- ❖ Salsa dance lessons
- ❖ Visit to the leading music school of Havana
- ❖ Private Jazz Concerts
- ❖ Daily curated activities
- ❖ Havana Jazz Festival tickets and one-week pass
- ❖ Four-star hotel accommodations at the new ****Grand Aston Hotel
- ❖ Multi-course traditional meals highlighting Cuban cuisine in Havana's hottest private paladars! (all meals included except 1 dinner)
- ❖ Bottled water daily and national drinks (local beers and mojitos)
- ❖ All entrances as listed in your itinerary
- ❖ Private airport transfers while in Cuba
- ❖ Special insider “Support for the Cuban People” experiences
- ❖ Gratuities for luggage handling at hotel, drivers, guides and restaurant servers
- ❖ Travel with like-minded public radio guests who share your passion for music & culture!



TRIP FACTS

8 Days/7 Nights

\$4,495 per person double occupancy land

\$995 single supplement (*waived if you are willing to share & a roommate is found*)

Trip begins: Sunday January 26, 2025 in Havana, Cuba

Trip ends: Sunday, February 2, after breakfast

****Save \$300 details below***





WAYS TO SAVE \$300

WDCB and Earthbound travel alumni save \$100 * Pay your final balance by check and save \$100 * Reserve by November 1, 2024 and save \$100

NOT INCLUDED

Cuban Tourist Card (aka visa) fee of \$100 * Travel Insurance (in addition to included \$1,000 mandatory medical coverage) * International Airline tickets and luggage fees * Beverages with meals (other than those mentioned in itinerary) * Meals not mentioned * Laundry/room/mini-bar service * Gratuities for housekeeping staff * Items of a personal nature and anything not listed in the “It’s Included” section above

WHERE YOU WILL STAY:

Hotel Grand Aston La Habana ****

(OFAC US Treasury Department Authorized Hotel)

Set one block back from the famous Malecón, this upscale hotel is in the Vedado district. The modern rooms have spectacular views of the ocean, the city and the majestic Malecón ocean drive. There are multiple restaurants and several bars including a Cuban cigar and rum sampling bar for connoisseurs. Hotel amenities include an outdoor pool, gardens, a fitness room, a sauna and a beauty salon.



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YOUR WDCB JAZZ ADVENTURE BEGINS!

Day 1: Sunday, January 26 - Arrive in Historic Havana

After clearing Cuban immigrations and customs, you will be welcomed by your Cuban national guide outside the terminal, who will assist with a private transfer to your hotel. Enjoy a stroll on the waterfront or relax by the pool with a mojito before meeting your guide and WDCB host **René Avila** for a welcome dinner at one of Havana's best known, privately-owned paladars. *Sleep in Havana (D)*



Day 2: Monday, January 27 - Havana Old Town

The story of Spain and Cuba began with Christopher Columbus setting foot on the island in October 1492. It wasn't until 1511, when Diego Velázquez de Cuéllar founded a lasting Spanish settlement in Baracoa, that a new chapter of history unfolded. During this era, native populations suffered greatly, with many enslaved by the Spanish after surviving initial waves of disease and conquest.

Fast forward to today, strolling through Havana's old town feels like stepping through a living history book. Every cobblestone whispers tales of conquest and colonization, where the clash and fusion of African, European, and Central/South American cultures birthed a vibrant new identity.



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After exploring Old Town, we'll make our way to the iconic Hotel Nacional de Cuba, a historic gem that's "seen it all" during its 92-year history. From pivotal moments in Cuban history to hosting stars like Gary Cooper, Johnny Weissmuller, Buster Keaton, Errol Flynn, and even the Dukes of Windsor, this hotel is brimming with stories. Let's cap off our visit with a trip to the rooftop for an unparalleled bird's-eye view of Havana!

Later, return to the Grand Aston to recharge before we head out for an evening of culinary delights at a private residence. **This evening, attend the legendary Havana Jazz Festival!**

Your day in Havana promises to be both enriching and unforgettable!

Sleep in Havana (B, L, D)



Day 3: Tuesday, January 28 - A Day with Hemingway and

Cars: After breakfast, we'll depart for a full-day excursion. Our morning stop is to visit the social-cultural project, *Proyectongo*. This project emerged 7 years ago, due to the artistic concerns of the community of San Francisco de Paula, San Miguel del Padrón. Its founder, Joan Barrios, will receive us with a welcome cocktail and a delicious Cuban coffee. We'll learn how this project has positively impacted people of various age groups and see some artists in action while enjoying good traditional Cuban music! You can taste some delicious homemade sweets, made by a local entrepreneurship project, and also observe where workshops such as Plastic Arts, Dance, Music and Literature, Horticulture and Martial Arts are taught.

We'll continue on for a late morning visit to Ernest Hemingway's estate, *Finca Vigia* (Lookout Farm). Hemingway lived in this house for 20 years, where he wrote some of the most relevant books of his Nobel Prize winning career. His typing machine, hunting trophies and beloved *Pilar* yacht are included among the belongings at the museum. (The Hemingway House can only be visited from the outside with a view through the large panoramic windows and doors to the inside of all rooms).

We'll have lunch together in the village of Cojimar - the inspirational backdrop to Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*.

In the afternoon, we'll visit "Nostalgicar." Vintage cars are a big part of the urban scenery in Cuba, particularly in Havana and Nostalgicar will give us a glimpse into this fascinating world of car restoration.

Later, return to the hotel to recharge before we head out for an evening of culinary delights at a private residence. **This evening, attend the legendary Havana Jazz Festival!** *Sleep in Havana (B, L, D)*



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Day 4: Wednesday, January 29 - Las Terrazas UNESCO biosphere and the Orquesta Vocal Clave de Sol: Experience the tranquility of Las Terrazas, an ecological haven nestled just 95 miles west of Havana. This sustainable tourist community offers a unique connection with nature. Designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1985, Las Terrazas arose from efforts in the late 1960s to restore an area once ravaged by intensive coffee cultivation.

Spanning 5,000 hectares, Las Terrazas features millions of trees planted, terraces carved for cultivation, and a small village built with strict environmental guidelines. Today, it stands as a natural paradise where land is nurtured rather than exploited, fostering harmony with nature's cycles. Las Terrazas is also a thriving eco-village attracting a vibrant community of artists. Their workshops and studios are open for exploration, yet the true allure lies in the lush natural surroundings.

We'll return to Havana in the late afternoon, stopping to visit the Orquesta Vocal Clave de Sol. The school has achieved remarkable growth by nurturing a vibrant children's guitar orchestra. Founded in 2009 by art teachers Nuria Garcia Reyes and Yamile Garcia Zurita in Havana's San Agustin neighborhood, the orchestra has grown to include 250 children and teenagers from various parts of the city.

Independent dinner this evening - there are restaurants and cafés at the hotel. Nearby, Casa Mia Paladar is on the sea and within walking distance of the hotel. Or for a lovely paladar with character, we can recommend, Atelier, about a 5-minute cab ride away. Your guide can help you make reservations. **This evening, attend the legendary Havana Jazz Festival!** *Sleep in Havana (B, L)*



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Day 5: Thursday, January 30 - Havana Dance Queens and Rumba

This morning we depart for Casa Miglis for a salsa lesson with one or more of the dancers of the "Havana Queens," directed by Rosario García Rodríguez, a graduate of the *Escuela Nacional Del Arte* and the *Universidad de las Artes*, and also the stage director, Balbina Aspron Chávez (of Cuban TV Ballet).

Enjoy lunch in a private residence.

In the afternoon we set out to learn about and discover the world of Rumba and Santería. In Havana, the currents of Santería weave through the urban landscape like a vibrant tapestry waiting to unfold. The colorful beaded bracelets and necklaces worn by locals are more than mere accessories - they symbolize a deep mysticism. These patterns of color represent a spiritual dedication to the Orishas, the gods and goddesses of West African origin in Santería.

Often described as a "Latin-African country" by Fidel Castro, Cuba's unique cultural blend of African, Latino, and native Taino influences gave birth to Santería's supernatural worldview. The homes of Havana, adorned with an array of saints and sacred relics, reflect a belief system that merges Catholicism with the Yoruba religious traditions of West Africa.

Return to your hotel and relax and freshen up before heading out to dinner with your host and guide.

This evening, attend the legendary Havana Jazz Festival! *Sleep in Havana (B, L, D)*

Day 6: Friday, January 31 - Museum of Fine Arts and Studio Tour

This morning enjoy a guided tour of the Museum of Fine Arts. The Cuban Arts building features galleries covering art from the 17th century to the present, showcasing themes such as religion, landscapes, and everyday life scenes known as "costumbrismo." Artists highlighted in this building include René Portocarrero, Rita Lonja, Wilfredo Lam, and many others. The building itself is an architectural masterpiece, boasting a grand staircase, a large mural, and an eclectic Spanish Renaissance-style design from 1927.

Enjoy another delicious lunch together.

This afternoon's highlights include private receptions and intimate exchanges with renowned Cuban artists at their own studios and personal residences. As a participant, you'll enjoy a unique opportunity to purchase Cuban art directly from the artists themselves! It's a special chance to engage with the local art community and acquire authentic pieces straight from the creators.

Return to the hotel and relax and refresh before heading out for a farewell dinner with your host and guide.

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Day 7: Saturday, February 1 – Cuban Art and Beyond Roots Project

After breakfast, stroll through the waterfront Arts Market, where you can witness the incredible creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of Cuba! (And maybe purchase a few gifts for your envious friends and family back home).

Enjoy an included lunch, followed by a walk to a neighborhood that is home to the Beyond Roots project – a platform to promote Afro-Cuban culture. We'll visit several amazing small businesses owned and operated by Cuban women, including *Ciclo Papel*, an ecological project that transforms recycled paper and *Zulu*, a leather bag line.

In the afternoon, return to your hotel. Rest and relax before joining your host and guide for a farewell dinner all together at a local paladar! **This evening, attend the legendary Havana Jazz Festival!** *Sleep in Havana (B, L, D)*

Day 8: Sunday, February 2 - Depart Cuba for the US

Transfer to Havana's José Martí Airport and check in for your return flight to the States. *Buen Viaje! (B)*

Please Note: Earthbound has been leading fun, life-enriching tours to Cuba since 2012. We have learned over time that to best enjoy Cuba, it is essential to bring a spirit of adventure, a high degree of flexibility, and a keen sense of humor. Tour details are subject to change.



RESERVATIONS & QUESTIONS

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Your WDCB Host!



René Avila is an educator in both the public and private school systems, as well as a basketball coach for middle schoolers. He is also a band leader and bass player for an Afro-Cuban jazz ensemble in addition to his traditional Cuban Charanga Orchestra "Charanguero." Both of his projects perform at various venues and festivals in the Chicago metropolitan area.

René got his start in playing string bass during his early years and later as a cellist during his musical studies in college. Besides teaching general music, he also teaches violin, cello and guitar at The Puerto Rican Arts Alliance.

As a musician, René was influenced by legendary Chicago radio icon Victor Parra, originator and host of "The Mambo Express" radio program, which focused on traditional Cuban music and its evolution to the US. Since then, René has studied and researched Cuban music, and is a very serious and passionate advocate of this music. He enjoys sharing it with others on Mambo Inn and through his bands' performances, keeping the tradition alive.



Know Before You Go!

This legal Cuba tour is operated under the OFAC (The Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Asset Control) general license, section 31 CFR § 515.572(a)(1) which allows us to provide travel services to U.S. travelers to Cuba, in the category of "**Support for the Cuban People.**" It requires that each traveler utilizing this authorization engage in a full-time schedule of activities that enhance contact with the Cuban people, support civil society in Cuba, or promote the Cuban people's independence from Cuban authorities and that result in meaningful interactions with individuals in Cuba. The traveler's schedule of activities must not include free time or recreation in excess of that consistent with a full-time schedule in Cuba. For a complete description of what this general license authorizes and the restrictions that apply, see 31 CFR § 515.574.

Cuba is a developing country and still lacks many modern conveniences. It's not unusual to experience short power black-outs or to find that your hot water, internet, TV or phone in your hotel room does not work properly (or at all). Further, the Cuban government and incoming Havana agency has the right to change the itinerary without notice (and often does). We'll be travelling under a "Support of the Cuban People" license, which means that our days will be filled with independent activities intended to strengthen civil society in Cuba. Your day will begin around 8:30am and end around 5:00pm. This is not a trip for those looking for a leisurely, five-star beach holiday or a deluxe resort experience. Travelers who arrive in Havana with a sense of humor, an open mind, and are ready to be flexible, will absolutely fall in love with the people and culture of Cuba.

Reservations and Deposits: A \$750 per person deposit is needed to confirm your space on this journey. You can make a credit card deposit online or by phone. Once the deposit is processed, a deposit packet is emailed with pertinent journey details. Deposits are refundable, minus a \$150 per person cancellation fee, for 60 days from the processing date or 90 days prior to departure, whichever comes first. Deposits made 90 days prior to a trip departing are not refundable. Final payment is also non-refundable, which is why we strongly urge guests to purchase travel insurance.

Not Included: Cuban Tourist Card (aka Cuban Visa) fee of \$100 * Travel Insurance (in addition to included \$1,000 mandatory medical coverage which is offered through Delta and American Airlines when purchasing your ticket) *International Airline tickets and luggage fees *Specialty beverages with meals (other than those mentioned in itinerary) *Meals not mentioned * Laundry/room/mini-bar service * Gratuities for housekeeping staff *Items of a personal nature and anything not listed in the "It's Included" section on page two.

Physical Requirements: It is the responsibility of each guest to be aware of their physical abilities or limitations and to be in sufficient good health to undertake the trip. [Click here](#) to read "Is an Earthbound trip right for you?" or call the Earthbound office for more details.

Travel Insurance: Earthbound Expeditions strongly encourages the purchase of travel insurance coverage. We include information on trip insurance in your deposit information.

Events and Hosted Journeys: If a planned event is cancelled for any reason, another event will be included in its place. This is not cause for refund. Events are subject to change. Also, if a host or special guest is unable to attend as planned, Earthbound Expeditions will do its utmost to find another host who has similar interests, talents, and expertise. The inability of a host to participate in a tour is not grounds for a full or partial refund.

Terms & Conditions: Click [here](#) to read the full terms and conditions.



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