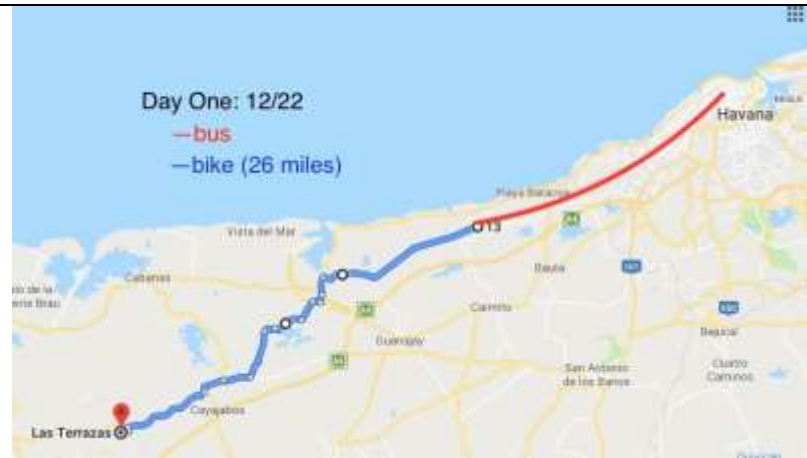


Week One Tour Havana – Viñales – Havana

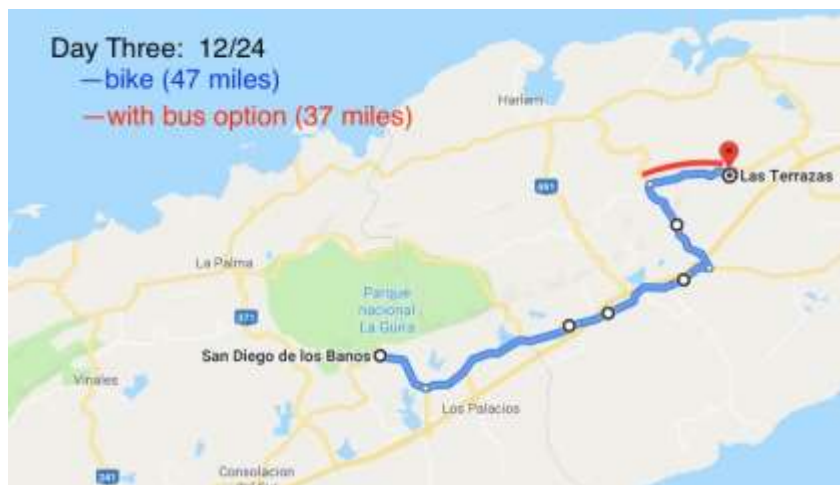
Arrive Havana 12/21/29, B&B in Vedado neighborhood



Two nights in Las Terrazas (12/22-23)



One night in San Diego de los Baños



We will enjoy Havana, the night of our arrival. A nice dinner, a classic American convertible car ride around town, a stroll along the city's famed sea wall, the Malecon.

The next morning, we will avoid Havana traffic and cut our riding time by busing to our bike start point on Day One, 12/22. The ride will be flat-ish for the most part, then involve an ascent into the hills to reach Las Terrazas.

Las Terrazas is a lush jungle-like landscape that was actually a reforestation project dating back to the 1960s and the early years of the Revolution. The area was first developed in the 1700s and 1800s by Spanish and French coffee planters. Available activities include a guided forest hike, and bathing in the beautiful pools formed in the rocks along the path of the San Juan River. If you want to pedal, you bike around the area.

Day Three's ride is the longest of this tour. It begins with some serious hills, heading west out of Las Terrazas, then a nice descent, generally south, down to the flats. The rest of the day is a flat-ish ride through rural Cuba. We'll pass through a few small towns along the way.

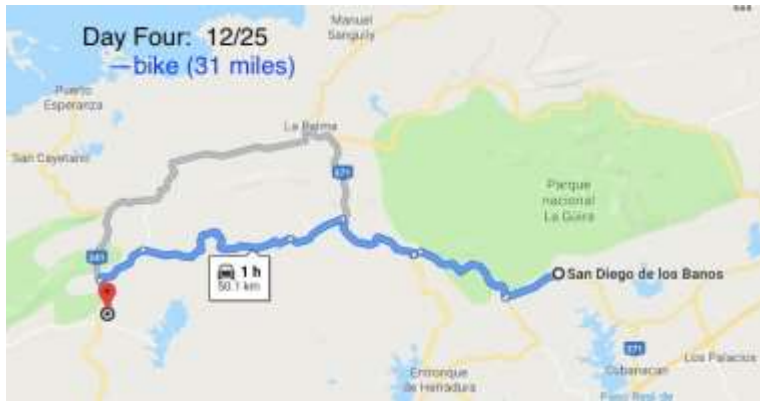
San Diego de los Baños, where we'll stay at the town's only hotel (there just aren't enough B&Bs in this town to accommodate our group), has been famous for its mineral baths for several hundred years. It's also the home of Pedro Digas, one of Cuba's great cigar makers, and a personality worth meeting.

Day Four offers stunningly beautiful landscapes, and mostly hilly terrain, especially early in the day. We will pass through La Guira, the former estate of one of Cuba's richest families in the early 20th century. Today it's a national park, and much of what was built by the Cortines family has been restored—fountains, walking bridges, castle-like houses, lakes, exotic animals—an object lesson in bourgeois decadence.

We'll also visit La Cueva de los Portales, a cave structure that served as Che Guevara's headquarters during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

The last part of the ride involves a choice: shorter ride (in blue) to Viñales, or a 15 miles longer ride that includes "el Americano," one of the steepest roads in Cuba. Definitely worth it for strong riders.

We will spend two full days in Viñales, an area of stunning natural beauty. Activities include horseback riding to one of my friend's tobacco farms, farm-cooked meals, and some quality time at my own little farm, where we'll make guarapo (sugar cane juice), play dominos, and sample Cochinito's own rum/passion fruit cocktail.



Three nights in Viñales (12/25-26-27)



Return by bus to Havana, 12/28

Last night in Havana, including Cuban house party