

Cuba Beyond the Beach

December 12, 2025



Destination: Western and Central Cuba

Duration: 10 days

Arrives: 12/12/2025

Departs: 12/21/2025

Deposit Due: 8/1/2025, \$500

Support vehicle: 100%

Tour staff: 1 cultural guide, 1 driver.

Tour Overview

A visit to Cuba for those **not** wishing to ride a bike and desiring to take in the nature and the natural beauty of this beautiful land. Cuba is not simply an island but rather an archipelago of 4,195 islands and cays surrounding the larger island of Cuba.

Focused on flora and fauna, we take in nature walks in both western and central Cuba. Heading west to Viñales, we will encounter the beautiful Mogotes and fertile tobacco growing soil of the Vueltabajo area.

Transferring the central area, we encounter Cienfuegos, known as the Pearl of the South, this city was settled by the French and offers a beautiful bay front Malecon. On to Trinidad, with over 500 year in colonial history, this city has so much to offer not only in its streets but also in its proximity to the Topes National Park, where we will go in search of Cuba's national bird. The Toco-ro-ro, pleasing to the eye this beautiful bird, is both evasive. A photo of this bird will be such a great trophy.

Beyond Trinidad we transfer to Hanabánilla in the north side of the Escambray Mountain. A small village in the mountains this hamlet sits on the shores of a man-made lake, where local children travel to school by the school boat, a unique way of life in the high forest of Cuba. Moving onto Matanzas, the city of bridges (11 of them) with the Bellamar Cave and the old French pharmacy. Matanzas has much to see, as does Cuba on the whole, walk this city and take your camera, there is lots to photograph!

Tour Details

Day 1 - Arrival Friday, December 12th.

Fly into Havana and transfer to Vedado, the one-time red-light district facing the sea that is now the commercial heart of Havana and the site of many famous hotels and monuments. Settle into “casas particulares”, the Cuban equivalent of B&Bs.

If early arrival, we can take a walk to Callejon de Hamel, a colorful narrow alley in Cuba, full of street art and sculptures made of found objects.

Our evening meal at a well-regarded local restaurant, will give us an opportunity to chat and introduce ourselves.

Later in the evening, we will visit the Fabrica de Arte (Art Factory) for a glimpse into contemporary Cuban culture and to show our support for the artists who have infused this dynamic space with creativity. Here, we can dance, dine, and peruse the galleries, all while enjoying a refreshing mojito.

Accommodation: Casas particulares.

Meals Included: Dinner at Restaurant La Torre.

Day 2 – Saturday, December 13th

After breakfast, we will take the bus to the bottom of the Paseo del Prado, a long tree-lined boulevard that leads into the center of Old Havana and its main squares and monuments. We will have time to explore and to have lunch in a quaint part of the old city near one of Cuba’s most famous churches.

After lunch, we will take the bus, and head west to the town of San Diego de Los Baños, famous for its hot mineral springs.

Accommodation: Hotel Mirador de San Diego, in San Diego los Baños

Meals Included: Breakfast/lunch/dinner

Day 3 – Sunday, December 14th

After breakfast, visit Parque La Guira, where you can observe different bird species.

Afterwards, you will visit some caves as Cueva de Los Portales and Cueva del Indio.

Tonight, we will be staying at B&Bs in the town of Viñales.

Accommodation: Casa Particular (B&B) in Viñales.

Meals Included: Breakfast/lunch/dinner

Day 4 – Monday, December 15th

After breakfast, we will do a walking tour in Viñales: Sendero Coco Solo y Palmarito. We will visit Mural de la Prehistoria, and will have lunch there. Then, we will visit a tobacco farm (Benito’s farm). Later we will dine at an eco-farm hilltop restaurant.

Accommodation: Casa Particular (B&B) in Viñales.

Meals Included: Breakfast/lunch/dinner

Day 5 – Tuesday, December 16th

After breakfast, we will have a trip through the mountains that finishes in the chalet where Fidel Castro used to go for relaxing, Milcumbres! At our arrival we will have a walking tour, Sendero Camino al Caimito.

There we will eat the best of Cuban country-style food cooked over a wood burning fire.

After lunch, we will take the bus directly to our destination, the city of Cienfuegos. We will be able to walk the Boulevard, a fun thing to do in Cienfuegos.

Accommodation: Hotel Union.

Meals Included: Breakfast/lunch/dinner

Day 6 – Wednesday, December 17th

We will explore the city, walk the Jose Marti's park, and visit the surrounding buildings such as the Palacio Ferrer, Tomas Terry Theater, and the Cathedral, followed by a city tour by bus along the Malecon to Punta Gorda. Our lunch will be at Palacio del Valle.

On the way to Trinidad there will be a stop to visit the Botanical Garden.

After arriving in Trinidad and settling into our casas, we will have time to explore the city and, after dinner, we will be able to enjoy Cuban music, dancing and mojitos at Café de la Música.

Accommodation: Casa Particular (B&B) in Trinidad.

Meals Included: Breakfast/lunch/dinner

Day 7 – Thursday, December 18th

In the morning, we will take the bus to Topes de Collantes, a nature reserve park in the Escambray Mountains range in Cuba. We will have a walking tour there, Sendero El Caburni, with lunch at the park.

We will dine tonight at a restaurant in the city.

Accommodation: Casa Particular (B&B).in Trinidad.

Meals Included: Breakfast/lunch/dinner

Day 8 – Friday, December 19th

We will depart Trinidad through the scenic Valle de los Ingenios to the Torre Manaca Iznaga. The astonishing view from this imposing tower more than justifies a short visit. We will then board the bus and descend the green lower hills of the Escambray Mountains before climbing to the village of Hanabanilla on the banks of Lake Hanabanilla, right in the Escambray Mountains– the main mountain range in the middle of the island. This hotel is perfect to relieve the stress produced by the hustle and bustle of the city. Its vast natural surroundings are rich in flora, where green semi-deciduous woods predominate, as well as vegetation on carso soil. Its fauna is rich in birds, reptiles and mammals.

At our arrival, we will have a boat trip to the other side of the lake for lunch.

Accommodation: Hotel Hanabanilla.

Meals Included: Breakfast/lunch/dinner

Day 9 – Saturday, December 20th

We will start the day with a guided walk in the morning in Sendero la Montaña Por Dentro, followed by lunch at the resort.

Then we will take the bus and head to Matanzas, known as the city of the bridges. On the way, we will tour the Bellamar Caves (Cuevas de Bellamar), with beautiful stalactites and stalagmites, crystals and an underground stream.

Once in the city, we will walk to Parque de la Libertad, to see the Cathedral, Pharmaceutical Museum, the Sauto Theater, etc.

Accommodation: Hotel Velasco.

Meals Included: Breakfast/lunch/dinner.

Day 10 – Sunday, December 21st

Transfer from Matanzas to Havana airport. **PLEASE NOTE:** The tour finishes in Matanzas, so, there will be a direct bus transfer from Hotel Velasco to Havana airport. When buying your air ticket, you will need to include the drive time from Matanzas to Havana which is approximately 1 and a half hour to the airport, and the 2-hour airport requirement check-in time to your departure time. That is the total of 3.5 hours to include in the departure time OTHERWISE, a separate transfer and cost will have to be arranged.

Accommodation: Hotel Velasco.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Cost:

Double Occupancy: \$2430.

Single Occupancy: Extra \$250.

What's Included:

Accommodations: 5 nights at Casas Particulares and 5 nights at Hotels

Meals Included: 9 Breakfasts; 8 Lunches; 9 Dinners

Transfer to Airport for Departure

Air-conditioned Support Vehicle

Tour Staff: 1 Cultural Guide, 1 Driver, 1 Tour Coordinator.