

Classic Cuba

Day 1 Depart UK – Arrive Havana

Your flight is with Virgin from London Gatwick to Havana. Upon arrival in Havana airport, you will be met by your guide and driver and transferred to your hotel. Dinner will be at the hotel.

Day 2 Havana

This morning your guide will lead a walking tour of Old Havana, a UNESCO World Heritage site and very much a living museum with its narrow, shady streets lined with crumbling colonial mansions and churches of varying architectural styles and the Capital building. You will visit Havana's Rum Museum to discover how two of Cuba's most famous products are made, then walk to Plaza de Armas with its second hand book stalls, and the Ambos Mundos Hotel where Ernest Hemingway wrote "For Whom the Bell Tolls". You continue to Plaza Vieja, then on to lunch in Plaza de la Catedral, overlooking the splendidly ornate cathedral and mansions on Cathedral Square. You can finish the tour by browsing the arts and craft market and perhaps visit one of the local artist's studios, ending at Revolution Square before returning to your hotel. How about taking a salsa class in the hotel followed by a visit to a dance matinee (optional)?

Day 3 Pinar Del Rio Province - Vinales Valley Excursion

Today will be a full day excursion to Pinar del Rio province and Vinales Valley, enjoying a pleasant tropical climate and idyllic landscapes. Pinar del Rio is renowned for its uniquely luscious, hazy tropical valleys dotted with mogotes, limestone hills that rise sheer from the tropical landscape below. As in many parts of Cuba, one has a sense of going back in time. At the valley we will visit a cigar factory, a local tobacco farm and have lunch in the valley. In the afternoon you will visit Cueva de los Indios, this cave preserves two pictographs of concentric circles that are intertwined and are similar to two faces of owls. You then return to Havana for an overnight stay.

Day 4 Guama – Cienfuegos

In the morning we will drive to Central Cuba, to Guama for a visit to the Crocodile farm. After the visit, continue travelling into the Cienaga de Zapata for lunch at Cueva de los Peces with a chance to swim in a beautiful cenote, an inland seawater pool fed by an underground tunnel, or on the coast of the Bay of Pigs. After lunch we continue on to Playa Giron, where the Bay of Pigs invasion occurred in April 1961, for a visit to the small museum commemorating the CIA backed invasion of Cuba. From here you will travel on to Cienfuegos for dinner and overnight.

Day 5 Cienfuegos – Ancon Beach

After breakfast we will visit Cienfuegos, a city with plenty of Cuban charm and character nominated as a World Heritage site a few years ago. In the centre of the city is Parque Jose Marti, here you will find locals relaxing and chatting under the shade of a tree. You will visit the Aquarium, with an option to swim with the dolphins. Afterwards we continue on to La Vega for a typical Cuban country lunch. There will be the chance to swim in the Caribbean (Ancon Beach) before checking into your hotel for dinner and overnight.

Day 6 Trinidad Excursion

We will travel to Trinidad and explore one of the best-preserved and enchanting colonial towns in Latin America. The entire city is a national monument, and it is delightful to wander through the narrow cobbled streets, and imagine a time when this city was the capital of sugar production and one of the richest cities in the New World. Nowadays it is a quiet backwater, as if stuck in a time warp with beautiful colonial buildings and horse drawn transportation. Our Walking tour of Trinidad will include the Plaza Mayor with its pleasant park and restored mansions, a visit to Casa Cantero and the arts and crafts market. There will be free time to relax at Ancon beach or stay and shop around the city centre. A school visit can be arranged upon special request.

Day 7 Santa Clara - Havana

This morning we leave Trinidad and head for Santa Clara. Santa Clara was the site of the last battle of the Cuban revolution in December 1958, the turning point which forced Batista to flee the country. We will visit the “Tren Blindado”, which honours one of the city's most significant events. The derailed carriages of an armoured train have lain here since they were toppled from the tracks during the Battle of Santa Clara, in 1958. This clash – between the dictator Batista's forces and a small detachment of about three hundred rebels, led by Che Guevara – was to be one of the last military encounters of the Revolutionary War. We will also see Che Guevara's Monument. After lunch we will then continue on to Havana for an overnight stay and farewell dinner.

Day 8 Depart Cuba

There is some free time for last-minute sightseeing or shopping and after lunch we will transfer to the airport for your flight departure.

Day 9 Arrive Back In Uk

You will arrive back in London the next day.