CUBA: HAVANA AND VIÑALES

FEBRUARY 22–29, 2020

Join like-minded Nation travelers as we visit vibrant Havana and the stunning Viñales Valley.

FEBRUARY 22

- Arrive in Havana by late morning.
- Enjoy a welcome lunch at Paladar Atelier. This restaurant is located in a restored house that was home to a pre-revolutionary senator. The walls are adorned in modern art and create a cozy but modern setting.
- Check-in to the historic Hotel Capri, which was one of the first hotel casinos built by the American mafia in Cuba. Owned by mobster Santo Trafficante, and run by George Raft, the hotel was at a time one of the largest casinos in Havana. Located blocks from the University of Havana, Coppelia ice cream, and the Havana seawall, the recent remodeling provides first class amenities, while leaving the history and original charm of “The Capri.”
- Attend an orientation meeting with staff.
- Visit AltaMira art loft, the home and studio of a family of artists. A few years ago, Edel Bordón and his family embarked on a journey to establish an art collective in their apartment building. He and his wife, Yamilé Pardo, created the art space, which features an exhibition and workspace off its main lobby and displays the couple’s collaborations with their neighbors.
- Enjoy a welcome dinner at Río Mar, located in the luxurious Miramar neighborhood, it has a whole terrace overlooking where the Almendares river flows into the sea.

FEBRUARY 23

- Take a walking tour of the Old City. Wander through the Plaza de Armas, a scenic tree-lined plaza formerly at the center of influence in Cuba. It is surrounded by many of the most historic structures.
in Havana as well as important monuments. See the Plaza de San Francisco, a cobbled plaza surrounded by buildings dating from the 18th century, dominated by the baroque Iglesia and Convento de San Francisco dating from 1719. Visit the Plaza Vieja, surrounded by sumptuous houses of the Havana aristocracy from the 18th and 19th centuries. Visit Plaza de la Catedral and the Catedral de San Cristóbal de La Habana.

- Attend a socio-economic discussion with urban planner Miguel Coyula, whose presentation will touch on housing, infrastructure, investment and restoration programs. It’s bound to leave you with a better understanding of why Havana looks the way it does today and possibilities moving forward.

- Enjoy lunch at Tatagua, a new paladar and art gallery in Old Havana situated on the famous Prado Promenade. This modern restaurant and bar offers delicious international food within a photography gallery.

- Enjoy some free time to explore on your own.

- Depart for a sunset ride in classic cars from the 1950’s along the Malecon and Vedado neighborhood. Stop at the Revolution Square, the most important political meeting place of the capital, surrounded by the José Martí Memorial, and other significant buildings such as the National Theater and the headquarters of the Cuban Communist Party.

- Dinner this evening is at Mediterraneo Havana, a modern, family run paladar in the Vedado neighborhood. This cozy paladar produces much of what it serves at a nearby farm in Guanabacoa Cuba, including the vegetables and dairy products.

**FEBRUARY 24**

- Attend a discussion and Q&A about US-Cuba relations with longtime Nation contributor Peter Kornbluh and former Cuban diplomat Carlos Alzugaray.

- Visit a centuries-old mansion in the Vedado neighborhood. Step inside this stately residence to discover what lies behind the crumbling facades of Havana’s impressive mansions. Josie, who has lived in the house for over 60 years, will show us around and explain its rich history.

- Enjoy lunch at La Moraleja Paladar.

- Visit a health clinic to learn about the health care system. We will receive a tour of a typical neighborhood health clinic and have the chance to ask questions to doctors and nurses.

*Late afternoon and evening free.*

**FEBRUARY 25**

- Depart for Viñales. Considered by many to be the most beautiful place in Cuba, the Viñales Valley National Monument holds stunning landscapes. The area is also famous for being the premier tobacco growing area in the world.

- Visit a private farm in the valley owned by the large family of Concha and Paco Hernandez. The descendants of Concha and Paco have farmed the same plot of land for many generations and their land is involved in the production of a multitude of fruits, vegetables, grain and tobacco. Members of the family will give us a tour of this beautiful 40-acre farm before bringing us back to the farmhouse. Enjoy lunch at the farm.

- Check-in at bed and breakfasts, known as “casas particulares,” or “private homes.” Since the 1990s Cuban families have been permitted to rent rooms out of their family homes to foreigners. Featuring comfortable accommodations and ample privacy, it’s a great way to interact with everyday Cubans.

- Explore downtown Viñales. Walk along the main street and visit the central plaza and local markets.
• **Beers and Cigars with Benito.** Visit a tobacco farm & enjoy beers and fun convo with Viñales most famous cigar maker.

• Enjoy a sunset dinner at Balcon del Valle (Balcony of the Valley). Enjoy the best traditions of rural Cuban cooking from one of the most beautiful lookouts of the valley.

**FEBRUARY 26**

- **B, L**

• Attend a discussion with the town historian Ricardo Álvarez, who can offer detailed information about local development challenges and opportunities.

• Take a guided stroll through tobacco fields to learn about the Valley’s most important crop, and other flora and fauna of the area.

• Enjoy a farm-to-table experience on the grounds of a local farm, Finca Paraíso Agroecológica (the Organic Paradise Farm), where we will learn about Cuban agriculture and tobacco production, while indulging in an organic meal.

• Return to Havana arriving late in the afternoon.

• Dinner tonight is on your own.

**FEBRUARY 27**

- **B, L, T**

• Visit Morro Castle, one of the oldest and most important Spanish forts in the Americas, and the site at La Cabana Fortress displaying Soviet-made Cold War relics, including deactivated missiles from the “October Missile Crisis”.

• Drive to La Finca Vigía. Formerly the home of Ernest Hemingway, today it still houses his expansive collection of books. It was here where he wrote two of his most celebrated novels: *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *The Old Man and the Sea*. The beautiful grounds and bizarre tales from Hemingway’s many years in Cuba are captivating.

• Lunch at Café Ajiaco, located in the little town of Cojimín, where Ernest Hemingway used to go fishing in his boat, El Pilar, and the setting for his story *The Old Man and the Sea*, which won him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954.

• Enjoy some free time before departing for Café Madrigal. Frank Delgado, renowned singer and songwriter, will meet us for a discussion about the *nueva trova* movement in Cuba, followed by a musical performance. Café Madrigal, owned and run by film director Rafael Rosales, is housed in a beautiful colonial mansion with the walls lined with captivating artwork. Enjoy tasty tapas and cocktails.
FEBRUARY 28

- Attend a morning talk with Ricardo Torres, an economist from the Center for the Study of the Cuban Economy. Get an overview of the Cuban economy, reforms, and growth outlook from the leading economic minds in Cuba.

- Visit the Museum of Cuban Art. We will be accompanied by Nelson Herrera, an art historian, who will provide an overview of Cuban art and artists over the last four centuries.

- Enjoy lunch and time on your own.

- Visit the Lizt Alfonso Academy, a women-led dance company and school for local youth, specializing in various types of dance. We will watch a private performance by the adolescent dance group and sit with the dancers afterward to discuss how they came to join the school and the impact it has had on their lives. The talent and work ethic at this school are impress.

- Tonight enjoy a farewell dinner at La Habanera. Located in an historic house that was built in 1930, the property has been beautifully renovated and features stunning architectural details and a lush patio. After dinner enjoy a private performance by Colors, a band of up and coming Cuban musicians. Featuring flute, sax, bass guitar, piano, a top vocalist and DJ, Colors brings live music and mixed beats together to create a fusion of jazz, hip hop, pop & world music.

FEBRUARY 29

- Check-out and depart for airport.
CUBA February 22–29, 2020

**PRICING**

**GROUND PACKAGE PRICING***

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<tr>
<td>Double (per person):</td>
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*Rates are based on standard accommodations. Suites, superior rooms and other upgrades carry an additional fee.

**INCLUDED**

- Six nights in four-star accommodations in Havana and one night in a casa particular in Viñales
- Daily breakfast
- Lunches and dinners as listed on the itinerary
- All local ground transportation
- Speaker fees
- Admission to all museums and public buildings listed in itinerary
- Coordination of all listed activities
- Pre-trip departure information
- Cuban visa
- Compliance with US Treasury Department regulations
- Tips for meals

**NOT INCLUDED**

- Round trip airfare to/from Cuba (we will recommend a flight schedule)
- Tips to guides, drivers and others
- Airline baggage fees
- Individual house/hotel expenses (mini bar, room service, laundry fees, etc.)
- Meals other than those listed on itinerary
- Anything not specifically mentioned as included

*The Nation* purchases carbon offsets to cover the emissions generated by our travel program in order to help mitigate effects on the climate.