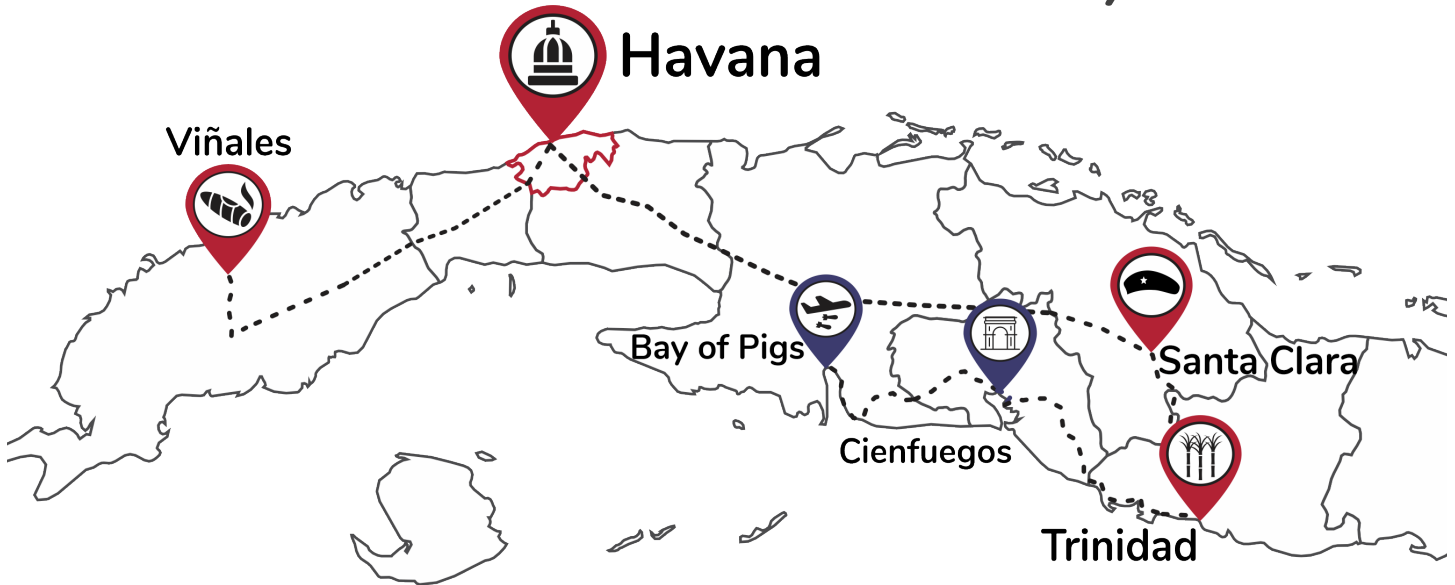


# BELLA CUBA

# CUBA 360°

tour operator



## Day 1 ARRIVAL - HAVANA

Welcome to Cuba! A member of Cuba 360 will pick you up at the airport, look for our logo with your name on it (or the name of the person in your party who booked the holiday). Next, you will be transferred to your accommodation.

THERE ARE SEVERAL OPTIONS OF PLACES TO CHECK OUT DURING THE EVENINGS. AFTER ALL, HAVANA'S NIGHTLIFE IS AS UNIQUE AS ITS CULTURE AND HISTORY. WE'LL BE HAPPY TO ARRANGE SOME OF THEM FOR YOU IF YOU WANT US TO. HERE ARE SOME OF THE OPTIONS:

- Visit the Cuban Art Factory (or FAC as locals call it), a space that joins together good drinks with some of the best Cuban contemporary art (Photography, Sculpture, Interior Design, Fashion, Painting, Music, Film, Theatre, etc.). The Cuban Art Factory only opens on weekends and sometimes closes for special events that happen in Havana.
- Head to San Carlos de La Cabaña fortress and witness the Cannon Shot Ceremony, a unique and picturesque show that has been happening every night for the last 300 years.
- Enjoy a unique show at world-famous Tropicana Cabaret, one of the few bastions of Havana's Las Vegas-style nightlife to survive the revolution.

## Day 2 HAVANA

Take a walking tour around the heart of Cuba, Old Havana. Discover the magic that hides in every corner of this audacious city. More than 500 years of history make this the perfect place to unleash your curiosity. Hundreds of buildings from the 19th, 18th, 17th, and even 16th centuries spread around the narrow



streets of this romantic city. Walk around this open air museum and delight yourself with the infinity of amazing views that go around in every direction, making impossible not to look and try to capture the moment with your camera. Wander around all the main squares, all of them with their own special places you shouldn't miss. Also, have a look at the majestic cathedral that stands as an icon of the city, its history and architecture. Discover iconic places like the National Capitol, the Paseo del Prado, the Floridita, La Bodeguita del Medio, the Parque Central, etc.

Jump in a convertible car and explore the more modern parts of the city. Drive through different neighborhoods and discover the highlights of Vedado and Center Havana. Have a look at the Revolution Square, where Fidel Castro used to give endless speeches in front of thousands of his supporters. Drive by the Colon Cemetery, one of the biggest and most important in the world. Enjoy the breeze at El Malecon, Havana's evocative 7km-long sea drive, a favored meeting place for assorted lovers, philosophers, poets, traveling minstrels, fishers and wistful Florida-gazers. Some of the landmarks we'll see include the American Embassy, the Hotel Nacional, Havana's Forest and many more.

Wander along the Callejon de Hamel, Havana's high temple of Afro-Cuban culture. A whole street full of mural paintings and shrines. The project started back in the 90's, when artist Salvador Gonzalez decided to repair the deteriorated facades of houses in the alley and covered them with murals related to the Afro-Cuban syncretism. Sunday is the best day to visit it, since it's when the alley shows its true spirit. That day, the neighbors, dressed up as ancient gods of Yoruba Pantheon, Orishas, welcome visitors and drums go aloud. Adventure into western Havana and discover Fusterlandia, a huge tilework masterpiece built by local artist Jose Fuster over the last 20 years. If Gaudí reincarnates and decides to go for a tropical spin, this is it. Fuster's work has covered several suburban blocks with whimsical but highly stylized public art. The centerpiece is the artist's own house, which you can explore as you check on the different galleries where some of his art is sold, including ceramic tiles and paintings.

### **Day 3 DAY TRIP TO VIÑALES**

Discover Viñales Valley, one of Cuba's most magnificent natural settings. Known for its fertile soil, which along with its natural micro-climate, make the land suitable to grow some of the finest tobacco in Cuba, hence, the world. Our first stop will be at Los Jazmines, a lookout point from where you can enjoy the beauty of Viñales's landscape. In our day around this lovely town, we'll visit the Prehistoric Mural, stunning wall painting



on the side of a mountain, and the Indian Cave with a boat trip through a subterranean section of the San Juan river. We'll enjoy lunch at one of the local restaurants, where traditional dishes are made with ingredients that go straight from the farm to the table. After lunch, we'll visit one of the local tobacco plantations where farmers will explain the process of (artisanal) cigar production. This visit is a great opportunity to witness how people live in the countryside, and the good impact tourism makes in their lives.

#### **Day 4 BAY OF PIGS - CIENFUEGOS - TRINIDAD**

Head to Bay of Pigs, the same place where more than 50 years ago an invasion carried out by Cuban exiles and organized by the US government took place. Bay of Pigs is in Zapata Swamp, the biggest natural reserve in Cuba and a place that boasts with wildlife. Some of the nicest features in the area are hidden underwater, making Bay of Pigs a terrific spot for snorkelling and diving.

We'll head to the Cueva de los Peces, a 70m-deep cenote (sinkhole) on the inland side of the coast road halfway between Playa Larga and Playa Girón. It's a pretty spot, as popular with swimmers as snorkelers, for spotting tropical fish. The brave can glide into the darker parts of the underwater cave with diving gear. Hammocks swing languidly around the crystal clear pool, while the beach opposite sparkles with aquatic promise. Learn about the history of Bay of Pigs invasion at Playa Giron's museum. This well-kept museum with its gleaming display cases evokes a tangible sense of the history of the famous Cold War episode that unfolded within rifle-firing distance of this spot in 1961. The museum offers two rooms of artifacts from the Bay of Pigs skirmish plus numerous photos of the combat. Continue south-east to Cienfuegos, one of Cuba's youngest cities, founded in 1819 by French emigrants from Bordeaux and Louisiana, its elegant classical architecture earned it a UNESCO World Heritage Site listing in 2005. Due to its beauty, economical importance and strategic placement, this city has always been known as the pearl in Cuba's south coast. Have a walking tour around the city and have a look at the local landmarks, including Tomas Terry Theatre, one of Cuba's oldest and best preserved. Visit Cienfuegos's Cathedral, Palacio de Valle, Muelle Real, Jose Marti square and many other iconic spots of the city.

Discover Trinidad, a perfectly preserved Spanish colonial settlement where the clocks stopped in 1850 and other than by the watches of tourists have yet to restart.



**Day 5 TRINIDAD**

Have a walking tour around the city with the opportunity to visit local museums and art galleries. Wander around the Plaza Mayor, one of Cuba's most charming squares and the center of the town. Stop at the Canchanchara House, a place dedicated to this local drink, very popular around Cuba.

**TODAY, YOU CAN BUILD YOUR OWN DAY BY CHOOSING ONE OF THE FOLLOWING SETS OF ACTIVITIES:**

– Take a horse ride around the countryside of Trinidad, making stops for some coffee, a dip at a crystal-clear river and later for lunch at one of the local farmers' improvised restaurants. The duration of the trip depends on the phase and the duration of the stops, you should expect no less than 3 hours total. Adventure into Playa Ancon, less than 15 min away from Trinidad. Ancon is known as the best beach in Cuba's south coast. Actually, the Cuban government in partnership with Spanish hotel chains Melia and Iberostar are heavily investing in the construction of resorts in the area, so now is a good opportunity to enjoy it before it gets too crowded.

– Discover Topes de Collantes, a heavily protected 200 square kilometers area straddling three provinces (Cienfuegos, Villa Clara and Sancti Spiritus). Topes boasts the best network of hiking trails in Cuba, these jungle-clad forests are full of vines, ferns and eye-catching epiphytes. Take a hike to Salto del Caburni, a 62m waterfall that cascades over rocks into cool swimming holes. The total length of the hike is around 6km (round-trip), make sure to bring good walking shoes since some slopes are steep. Relax in Ancon beach for the rest of the day.

– Enjoy a salsa lesson. If you love salsa, then you sure know there is no place like Cuba to master this contagious rhythm. In a country where people are born with music in their blood, dancing salsa is just part of every day's life. So taking a salsa lesson with one of our virtuous salsa instructors is a must if you are in Havana. It doesn't matter if you are a beginner or you already know how to dance, the lesson will be personalized to your skill level. Relax in Ancon beach for the rest of the day.

**PLEASE NOTE:** THESE OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES ARE INCLUDED IN THE ITINERARY YOU CHOOSE, SO THERE IS NO EXTRA COST FOR THEM.

**Day 6 SANTA CLARA - HAVANA**

Head to the Valle de los Ingenios (literally, Sugar Mills Valley) right outside Trinidad. This area is where the wealth of the city was produced. Most of the mills were destroyed during the War of Independence and the Spanish-Cuban-American War, when the focus of sugar-growing in Cuba shifted west to Matanzas. This valley offers one of the most beautiful natural settings in Cuba. Stop at Manaca-Iznaga's plantation and climb the imposing tower that used to serve as a place the overlook the slaves and prevent them from running away.



In your way to Havana, stop at Santa Clara, a city with a very close connection to Che Guevara. At the final days of the fight for the Cuban communist revolution, back in 1958, a series of combats happened here that decided the course of history. Visit Che Guevara's mausoleum, where his remains are kept, along with the ones of his comrades in arms. Santa Clara is also known for being kind of an "edgy" city, with a local cultural scene that contrasts with the rest of the country. Santa Clara has the first drag show in Cuba and one of the most prestigious rock festivals in the area.

### **Day 7 HAVANA**

**TODAY, YOU CAN BUILD YOUR OWN DAY BY CHOOSING ONE OF THE FOLLOWING SETS OF ACTIVITIES:**

– Let's have a look at one of Havana's oldest and most famous cigar businesses, the Real Fábrica de Tabacos Partagás was founded in 1845 by Spaniard Jaime Partagás. It was built in response to the increase in demand this industry experienced during the second half of the 19th century. Specializing in full-bodied cigars, today some 400 workers toil for up to 12 hours a day in here rolling such famous cigars as Montecristos and Cohibas. In your visit, you'll learn about the long and refined process of cigar manufacturing. Later, learn about the Rum production in Cuba with a visit to Havana Club's Rum Museum. The evolution and history of the whole process will be explained to you in a guided visit, which includes a tasting of a seven-year-old añejo (aged rum) at the end of the tour, along with the opportunity to buy some of the precious liquid.

– Take a salsa lesson. If you love salsa, then you sure know there is no place like Cuba to master this contagious rhythm. In a country where people are born with music in their blood, dancing salsa is just part of every day's life. So taking a salsa lesson with one of our virtuous salsa instructors is a must if you are in Havana. It doesn't matter if you are a beginner or you already know how to dance, the lesson will be personalized to your skill level. Next, we'll show you one of our favorite spots in the whole city, a rooftop terrace in Old Havana. Here, you'll learn how to make a mojito and a canchanchara, two classic Cuban cocktails. There are non-alcoholic options as well. You'll be able prepare your own and you can drink as many as you like.

**PLEASE NOTE:** THESE OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES ARE INCLUDED IN THE ITINERARY YOU CHOOSE, SO THERE IS NO EXTRA COST FOR THEM.

### **Day 8 HAVANA - DEPARTURE**

Transfer to Havana's International airport. It's time to say goodbye to Cuba, at least for now. It's sad to see you go back to your country, but this adventure together has come to an end. We hope to see you again in our country, until then:

**TAKE CARE, WE'LL MISS YOU.**

