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## **Cuba WC Alumni Trip October 9 - October 17, 2020**

### **Havana, Las Terrazas, & Viñales**

*Note: This is a preliminary schedule only, and can change due to logistics, reservation issues, weather, and other events outside our ability to control.*

#### **Day 1 (Friday): Make your way to Miami, FL**

Tour begins in Miami, FL. We will be staying at Holiday Inn Express Miami Springs, just minutes from Miami International Airport. Around 6PM many of us will head out to a local sports bar (Old Tom's) for dinner and get to know one another.

#### **Day 2 (Saturday): Havana - Convertible Tour - Private Concert**

Today we take an early flight to Havana. Once we clear customs, we'll board our coach bus, drive 30 minutes to our homestays, and drop off our luggage. We'll walk two blocks to the iconic oceanfront Malecón where we'll have lunch at a local Paladar (privately-owned restaurant). Afterwards we'll hop in several 1950s classic American convertibles, each privately owned, and enjoy a 1-2 hour tour of the city! We will check into our rooms and enjoy a private performance by some of Havana's great jazz artists. We will end the evening with a welcome drink and a fantastic home-cooked meal. *Lunch and dinner included today.*

#### **Day 3 (Sunday): Havana - Old Town Tour - Museum of the Revolution - Private Concert**

After breakfast in our homestay, we will take a horse and carriage ride (owned by an independent cooperative) into Havana's Old Town (Havana Vieja), where our privately contracted guide will introduce you to Havana's four main squares (Plaza de Catedral, Plaza de San Francisco, Plaza de Armas, and Plaza Vieja). This is the most photographed part of Havana. You'll want plenty of time to explore this area, and its privately-owned museums and shops. After lunch on your own in one of the Old Town's paladars, we will again be joined by a private guide who will introduce us to the Museum of the Revolution (formerly Batista's Presidential Palace). When we return to our homestays, we will turn our patio into a stage. After a short lecture about Cuba's Afro-Cuban folkloric traditions, we'll enjoy a private show featuring the music of Santería and rumba with some of Havana's top dancers and musicians! We'll eat dinner and relax a little. Later tonight, our hosts will happily walk everyone over to some of the night spots along Obispo, to enjoy one of the many bands that will be playing music in bars and restaurants and hotel lobbies. *Breakfast and dinner included today.*

#### **Day 4 (Monday): Havana - Las Terrazas (Eco Village) - Viñales**

This morning we'll board an air-conditioned coach for the start of our three-day excursion to Piñar del Rio province. Our first stop is at the pioneering ecovillage of Las Terrazas, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, burgeoning activity center and the site of the earliest coffee plantations in Cuba. Here we will be accompanied for the next few hours with a very knowledgeable community-employed local guide. Close by, in the picturesque whitewashed village that overlooks a small lake, there's a vibrant art community with open studios, woodwork and pottery workshops. Here, we will have a chance to meet with several of the private artisans and learn about their process and inspiration.\*\* The region's biggest attraction is its verdant natural surroundings, which are ideal for hiking, relaxing and birdwatching. We'll bring with us a Havana-based professional private photographer who enjoys helping clients frame their shots, as well as taking images of our group in this fantastic surrounds. We will enjoy lunch at El Romero, a paladar known for its locally grown vegan fare. In the late afternoon, we will continue an additional 2 hours to the mountain town of Viñales, where we will check into hotel La Ermita and enjoy the sunset as it casts a magnificent light on the mountains and valley. Dinner will be on your own in one of the many private restaurants that have recently appeared on the main street of Viñales. We recommend the Mediterranean fare offered at El Olivo which features a farm to table experience. Tomorrow, you will have an option to visit the El Olivo organic farm on the edge of town.

*Breakfast and lunch included today.*

#### **Day 5 (Tuesday): Viñales - Horseback Excursion - Caves - Organic Farms - Sunset Photography Tour**

Today we will explore Viñales and its environs. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the striking karst landscape of the Viñales Valley is notable for its mogotes, a series of tall, rounded hills that rise abruptly from the flat plain of the valley. It is also significant for its cultural associations, particularly its traditional agricultural practices related to growing tobacco. The valley is home to an original culture, a synthesis of contributions from indigenous peoples, Spanish conquerors and African slaves who once worked the tobacco plantations. Some of you may opt for a 2-hour horseback ride into the valley guided by one of the local cowboys, other's may prefer to use their own two feet to enjoy the views! Everyone will visit a working farm, and learn about tobacco, coffee, and subsistence farming from a local campesino (this is a great time to buy hand-rolled cigars directly from the farmer).\*\* After lunch, some of you may enjoy a short visit to La Cueva de Los Indios, which features a short walk into the regional cave system followed by a subterranean boat ride. In the late afternoon, we encourage guests to either take a sunset photography tour with a local talented photographer, or visit the organic farm connected with

the restaurant, El Olivo. Lunch and dinner will be on your own. Viñales is a lively and easy-to-navigate town with many lovely private restaurants. *Breakfast included today.*

### **Day 6 (Wednesday) Viñales - Havana - Fusterlandia - Jazz Club**

After breakfast we will start the 2.5 hour bus trip back to Havana. On the way, we will detour for lunch at a fantastic paladar, El Bicky in Havana. Then go to the small fishing village of Jaimanitas, just west of Havana. Here we will visit the home of José Fuster, who transformed his community through ceramic arts. Fusterlandia is a multi-level, magical art complex straight from a Dr. Seuss book. While here, you'll have plenty of opportunity to purchase crafts from both Fuster's collection, and throughout the neighborhood.\*\* We'll check back into our rooms and get some rest, eat dinner, and then head out to Havana's premier Jazz Club – La Zorra y El Cuervo. *Breakfast, lunch, and dinner included today.*

### **Day 7 (Thursday): Havana - Bella Artes Museum - Art Studios**

#### **Nacional Hotel - Hemmingway House - Nightlife**

This morning we'll tour Museo Nacional Bella Artes, a fantastic museum featuring Cuban art from the past century. We will be joined by a private tour guide whose tremendous ability to connect art with society will transform your understanding of Cuban history. Afterwards we will visit the private studio of an internationally renowned visual artist, and then continue on to lunch at Café Laurent, a hidden gem in Havana's Vedado neighborhood. Afterwards, we will take a short walk to visit the famous Hotel Nacional and enjoy a lecture of its mobster history and beautiful oceanfront views. From here we'll pick up a local guide and head over to Hemmingway House. Dinner will be at the homestay. This evening, we will head out Fabrica de Arte, a multi-level privately owned nightclub in Havana known for its four stories of hip art exhibits, multiple performance stages, and a myriad of bars and eateries bars. We will head over early enough to avoid the crowds. But the most adventurous will be encouraged to enjoy the music late into the night. *Breakfast, lunch, and dinner included today.*

### **Day 8 (Friday): Havana - Beach - Art Studios - Private Performance - Farewell**

Today weather-permitting, we'll visit one of Cuba's beautiful white sand beaches to enjoy some time quality-time with our homestay hosts and their families. The pristine beach of Playas de Estes is about 30 minutes east of Havana. We will head over first thing in the morning so we can beat the crowds and get umbrellas and beach chairs. We'll stay through lunch, which will have been prepared for us by our homestay hosts. For those not interested in the beach, we will offer another amazing art tour, visiting the private studios of at least three internationally renowned artists. Lunch will be on your own. After dinner in the homestays, we will enjoy the music of a local son band, and say our farewells to our hosts. *Breakfast and dinner included today.*

### **Day 9 (Saturday): Havana - Tour Ends**

Today we leave Cuba. We'll have an early breakfast (6:00AM) in our homestays. After breakfast, we leave for the airport to arrive by 7:00AM. Our flight is at 9:00AM. Arriving a little after 10:30AM in Florida, be sure to leave plenty of time to clear customs when making your return arrangements. We suggest at least three hours (but cannot be responsible for any costs associated with missed connections due to delays). *Breakfast included today.*

\*\*In order to ensure compliance with The US Department of Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) expectations for trips identified as "Support for the Cuban People," clients should carry cash and buy items from local artisans. It doesn't matter whether your purchases are small or large. Try to document these purchases with a photo of the transaction.

Ashé Cultural Tours, LLC, operates the "Support for the Cuban People" program under a general license issued by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). As dictated by U.S. law, all participants are required to adhere to a full-time schedule of activities designed to enhance contact with the Cuban people, support civil society in Cuba, or promote the Cuban people's independence from Cuban authorities. Ashé specifically designs its Cuba itinerary in order to comply with OFAC rules and requirements. Pursuant to such regulations, participants agree to adhere to the full-time program established by Ashé. You should expect to have limited personal free time. **We reserve the right to make changes to the published itinerary**, due to inclement weather, lack of accessibility, or other unforeseen circumstances. We will use our best efforts to replace delayed or canceled activities with other qualifying or equivalent activities.