

Byroads
Inspiring Escorted Journeys

RHYTHMS OF CUBA

Discover Cuba's revolutionary history and unique culture

14 DAYS - HAVANA 16 FEBRUARY 2019





RHYTHMS OF CUBA

Trip Outline

Change is afoot in Cuba but for now at least it remains a wonderful mix of colourful revolutionary history, faded colonial mansions, vintage cars, glistening Caribbean beaches, incredibly friendly people and everywhere the sounds and rhythms of Afro-Cuban music.

Discovered by Italian explorer Christopher Columbus on his journey to the Americas in 1492, Cuba has at times belonged to both the Spanish and British Crowns and was even briefly ruled by the U.S. military before gaining independence in 1902. Political corruption and a series of despotic rulers culminated in the overthrow of the dictator Batista and so began the Cuban revolution led by Fidel Castro.

Our Byroads tour of Cuba is comprehensive and has been crafted to let you experience the many historical and cultural aspects of this island nation. Along the way we discover the secrets of Cuban rum; roll our own Cuban cigar and enjoy dinners in Paladares – small family run restaurants in the homes of local Cubans. There's time to dance the salsa, enjoy the rhythms of Cuban Son, hike in the hills and lay back on the white sandy beaches of the Caribbean.

Beginning in Havana we explore the colonial streets, discovering the city's colourful culture and learning the compelling history of the country. We then fly to Baracoa, Cuba's oldest and most isolated town at the eastern most end of the island. There's time here to relax and enjoy the natural surrounds before continuing on to Cuba's second city of Santiago de Cuba where we climb to the turrets of San Pedro Fort. A tour highlight is a local ferry ride to the tiny island of Cayo Granma, a tiny fishing village with red-roofed wooden houses. In Camaguey we explore the narrow streets by bicycle taxi before reaching charming Trinidad town. There is time to reflect on the Cuban revolution at the Che Guevara memorial in Santa Clara and from Cienfuegos we stop to swim at the infamous Bay of Pigs before arriving back in lively Havana.

Tour Host – Steve Mortimer



Steve Mortimer heads up Byroads Travel and will be your host on this tour. Steve has nearly 30 years in the travel industry and has travelled to well over 100 countries. He has worked with a number of well-known Australian adventure travel companies including 13 years as a Product Manager and Operations Director for Peregrine Adventures.

Most recently he has been involved in researching and developing holidays in several different regions of the world, including Latin America and the Middle East where he has lived.

Steve likes nothing better than getting out and about with like-minded travellers, sharing his knowledge and introducing participants to some of the world's most interesting places, peoples and cultures. He first went to Cuba in 2003 and has been a regular visitor ever since.

With our itinerary you can be confident you'll visit all the 'must see' attractions – and much more, however there are some days when you'll have time to wander and make some of your own discoveries. Throughout the tour local guides are employed to provide a wealth of background information and share their extensive local knowledge.





ITINERARY STARTS IN HAVANA

SAT 16 FEB: HAVANA – Upon arrival at Havana Airport you are met and transferred to your hotel. Today is simply an arrival day and we will plan to meet up in the evening for a briefing and dinner. Pre-tour accommodation is available if needed (see back page for details).

SUN 17 FEB: HAVANA – We start the day with a walking tour of Havana's 'Old City'. Beautiful colonial architecture, a 16th century fortress and countless churches are waiting to be explored. Later visit the famous Malecon sea boulevard, Revolution Square, the Capitol Building, the Opera House and the Museum of the Revolution. And to end the day, we enjoy a ride through the city in a 1960's Classic Car and take a drink at the famous Hotel Nacional with sunset views over the Malecon. (BL)

MON 18 FEB: HAVANA – Today we investigate Cuba's famous exports with a visit to the Havana Rum Museum and later the Partagas Cigar Factory. You will also enjoy a Cuban Daiquiri at one of Hemingway's favourite bars. (B)

TUE 19 & WED 20 FEB: BARACOA – We have an early morning flight to Cuba's first colonial capital of Baracoa, set amongst a mixture of palm, cacao and banana trees. This old town has remained largely unchanged over the years and is home to several 19th century homes and the Matachin and La Punta fortifications. You have free time here to walk in and explore the bountiful rivers and forests with over 900 species of endemic flora. We will also enjoy a cruise on the nearby Yumuri River. (2B)

THU 21 & FRI 22 FEB: SANTIAGO DE CUBA – It's a 5 hour drive today to Santiago de Cuba with a stop at Guantanamo. Santiago, Cuba's second biggest city is home to the Cuban revolution and its music and dance scene is possibly the best in the country. Our guide will show us some of the best music venues in the city as well as give us a city tour including the Parque Cespedes and the imposing San Pedro Castle nestled on the cliff tops overlooking the bay. (2B)

SAT 23 FEB: CAYO GRANMA & SANTIAGO DE CUBA – Today we have a special excursion by local ferry boat to the tiny island of Cayo Granma at the entrance to the bay. It takes just 15 minutes to walk around the island that is home to a traditional fishing community. You can hike up to the whitewashed San Rafael church but this really is the best place to just hang out and get the feel of the real Cuba. After lunch we return by local ferry to Santiago for our final night in the city of music and dance. (B)

SUN 24 FEB: CAMAGUEY – Leaving early we drive via the historical town of Bayamo into the centre of the island to Camaguey where we have the afternoon to explore the intriguing winding streets by bicycle taxi. If you love history and wonderful old architecture you will absolutely love Camaguey. (B)

MON 25 FEB: TRINIDAD – Today we drive to the village of Trinidad – one of Cuba's most loved destinations where upon arrival we take a walking tour of the town. (B)

TUE 26 FEB: TRINIDAD – You decide what to do today. Take a swim at Playa Ancon or walk to the ruined sugar mills in the Valle de los Ingenos. Go further afield and hike in the Sierra del Escambray mountains, or perhaps take a pony ride or enjoy the coffee shops and bars in the main plaza. (B)

WED 27 FEB: SANTA CLARA & CIENFUEGOS – This morning we drive into the hills to the city of Santa Clara, the site of the last battle in the Cuban Revolution in 1958. Here we visit the Che Guevara Memorial to reflect on the revolution and pay a visit to the trendy La Casa de la Ciudad to see progressive young artists at work. In the afternoon we continue on to Cienfuegos where we take a walking tour of the town centre. This can be followed by a drink at the yacht club or at the ultimate in kitsch; the Palacio de Valle built in 1917. (B)

THU 28 FEB: BAY OF PIGS - HAVANA – Heading west we travel by road back to Havana. En route we make a stop at the infamous Bay of Pigs, site of the failed American sponsored invasion of Cuba in 1961. Here we enjoy a swim and snorkel and visit the local museum. In the evening we have a special roof-top dinner over-looking Havana as a special farewell treat. (BD)

FRI 1 MAR: HAVANA – Your Byroads tour of Cuba ends today after breakfast. Taxis can be easily arranged at the hotel to the airport or we can arrange a transfer for you. Extra nights are also available (see back page for details). (B)

***** This tour combines perfectly with our 15 Days Mexico & the Yucatan tour.**



Prices & Inclusions

14 Day Rhythms of Cuba

Price: US Dollars: USD 4150 (per person twin)

Single Supplement: USD 925

Price includes: Steve Mortimer as Tour Escort, local tour leader, local guides, arrival transfer, all transportation, 13 nights accommodation, meals as indicated.

Not Included: Visa fees, travel insurance (compulsory), international flights, additional meals, drinks, departure transfer, optional tours, spending of a personal nature, laundry and tips.

Transportation: Road travel by air conditioned bus throughout. Flight Baracoa to Havana.

Accommodation: If you are familiar with the Byroads style of touring you will know there is often an emphasis on 'boutique' or character hotels. In Cuba this isn't always easy, but our preference is for small hotels, in good locations. In Havana we stay in a colonial hotel close to historical 'Old Havana' and likewise in Santiago de Cuba. In Trinidad and Camaguey we stay in Cuba's popular 'Casa Particulares' or bed & breakfasts which allows us a more authentic Cuban experience which we think you will love.



Hotel Tejadillo - Havana



Hotel La Reunion - Cienfuegos



Entry to a 'Casa Particulares'



Typical Room of a 'Casa Particulares'



Casa Grande - Santiago de Cuba



El Castillo Hotel - Baracoa

Food and drink: Breakfasts are included daily. There is not a lot of variety in Cuban cuisine. Meals are generally simply prepared and wholesome. Seafood is particularly good value. Bottled water, soft drinks and alcohol are all readily available.

Group size: Maximum 16

Additional Expenses: Meals are surprisingly expensive in Cuba. You should allow US\$ 10-15 for a light lunch and around US\$20-\$25 for dinner. You should budget for any personal shopping you may wish to do and for additional drinks. Please also allow extra funds to tip your local tour leader, driver, local guides and porters (full details will be provided in the pre-trip Field Guide).

Bookings: Travel on Q (Sydney) is the sole booking agent for this tour. Please register your interest ASAP in order to secure your place and note there are a limited number of single rooms available. A non-refundable deposit of AUD 750 per person is required, to secure your place, with final payment due 60 days prior to tour commencement.

Travel on Q (Carole Grassby and Tina Briggs)

Tel: (02) 9357 6800

Email: travel@travelonq.com.au

Currency: Due to the volatility of global currencies the tour price has been quoted in US Dollars (USD) however you will pay for your tour in Australian dollars based on the buying rate set by Westpac Banking Corporation on the due date of your final balance.

Flights & Transfers: Most flights from Australia to Cuba travel via the USA and Mexico City. Qantas, United, American & Delta Airlines fly to Cuba or connect with regional carriers. There are other alternatives via South America with LATAM. An arrival transfer is included; however the departure transfer is not and can be arranged on request. Travel on Q will be able to assist with your flights and advise you on your best options.

Extra nights in Havana: These can be booked but please advise Travel on Q well in advance to ensure availability.

Visas & Documentation: Most visitors including Australians require a tourist card which can be obtained from a Cuban consulate or, depending on your flights, you may be able to purchase this at the airport. Travel on Q will be able to advise you on this. Upon receipt of your final payment, a comprehensive field guide will be sent to you and you will be sent the relevant tour and accommodation documentation well prior to departure.

What next? Contact Travel on Q to discuss your travel plans and to make your booking. Further information is also available at www.byroads.com.au.

Byroads

www.byroads.com.au



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