

**Byroads**  
*Inspiring Escorted Journeys*

# MEXICO & CUBA

*Discover two very different countries on this Latin American adventure*

28 DAYS - STARTING MEXICO CITY 11<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2022





# MEXICO & CUBA

## Trip Outline

Discover two very different countries on this wonderful Latin America adventure.

In Mexico City we tour the colonial sites of this ancient Mexica (Aztec) capital before heading to the giant pyramids at nearby Teotihuacan. On our way to Taxco we stop at a museum dedicated to the artist Frida Kahlo and take a boat ride through the narrow canals at Xochimilco. Taxco and Puebla are two of Mexico's best preserved colonial towns whilst colourful Oaxaca is well known for its handicrafts and the ancient ceremonial Zapotec site of Monte Alban. Flying to Tuxtla we then take a boat ride through the impressive Sumidero Canyon and continue to San Cristobal de las Casas where we enjoy the rich indigenous culture of the city and its nearby villages.

Next come the great Mayan archaeological sites of Palenque and Uxmal and following a visit to Campeche and Merida we arrive to explore the world famous Mayan archaeological complex at Chichen Itza. The last of our ancient sites are the spectacular Mayan cliff top ruins at Tulum. The Mexican part of our tour ends at Playa del Carmen where we enjoy spectacular beaches before flying directly to Cuba where our holiday continues.

Our Byroads tour around Cuba is comprehensive and has been crafted to let you experience the many historical and cultural aspects of this island nation. 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 Highlights

- Zocalo & Mexico City Cathedral
- National Palace & Templo Mayor
- Anthropology Museum
- Frida Kahlo House & Gallery
- Teotihuacan Archaeological Site
- Virgin of Guadalupe Shrine
- Puebla & Sierra Madre Mountains
- Monte Alban Zapotec Site
- Oaxaca & Sumidero Canyon
- San Cristobal de Las Casas
- Indian Church of San Juan
- Palenque & Agua Azul Falls
- Uxmal Mayan Pyramids
- Celestun Biosphere Reserve
- Chichen Itza Mayan Complex
- Cenote & Tulum Mayan Site
- Playa del Carmen
- Walking Tour Old Havana
- Revolution Sq & Capitol Bldg
- Classic Convertible Car Tour
- Malecon & Rum Museum
- Cigar Factory
- Baracoa & Yumuri River
- Parra Cross & Guantanamo
- Santiago Walking Tour
- San Pedro Castle
- Cruise to Cayo Granma
- Mausoleum of Fidel Castro
- Camaguey Cyclo Tour
- Trinidad Home Stay
- Che Guevara Memorial
- Palacio de Valle in Barracoa
- Bay of Pigs Museum
- Bay of Pigs Swim or Snorkel

## Tour Host – Steve Mortimer



Steve Mortimer heads up Byroads and will be your host on this tour. Steve has more than 30 years in the travel industry and has travelled to well over 100 countries. He started work in travel as an expedition leader, taking travellers overland across Africa, Asia and South America. He has also worked with a number of well-known Australian travel companies designing and operating holidays to some of the world's most fascinating destinations.

## 2022 ITINERARY STARTS IN MEXICO CITY

**FRI 11 MAR: MEXICO CITY** – Upon arrival you are transferred to your hotel and in the evening we will have a short meeting. Pre-tour accommodation is available (see back page for details).

**SAT 12 MAR: MEXICO CITY** – Today we explore the Zocalo, the largest city square in the Americas which includes the Palacio Nacional, the Cathedral and the Templo Mayor, the outer ruins of the ceremonial centre of the Mexica (Aztec) capital. Following a visit to the Anthropology Museum we end the day with a visit to the museum devoted to Frida Kahlo, Mexico's most celebrated artist. (B)

**SUN 13 MAR: TEOTIHUACAN, MEXICO CITY** – We travel to the outskirts of the city firstly to visit the Basilica de Guadalupe, the spiritual home to Mexico's patroness, the Virgin of Guadalupe. Next to the magnificent site of Teotihuacan where we walk along the Avenue of the Dead to admire the enormous Pyramids of the Sun and Moon. This was once a city of 220,000 inhabitants. (B)

**MON 14 MAR: TAXCO** – This morning we visit Xochimilco known as the 'Venice of Mexico' where we take colourful 'trajineras' on the small canals before driving on to Taxco for our overnight stay. Taxco village is beautifully draped over a mountain side at 1800 metres. The narrow, winding, streets with their colourful houses make it a great place to stroll. We explore the town and its fabulous silver shops. (B)

**TUE 15 MAR: TONANTZINLA, PUEBLA** – We drive on to Puebla passing by the magnificent Popocatepetl Volcano. Along the way we stop off at the 18<sup>th</sup> century Templo de Santa Prisca, a beautiful 'churrigueresque' style church. Puebla is known as the 'city of angels'. In the afternoon we tour the city with its huge churches and convents and many colonial mansions and you will want to sample some of the city's great gastronomy such as 'mole poblano' a rich dark-red sauce made with dried chillies and chocolate and normally served with poultry. (B)

**WED 16 MAR: PUEBLA-MONTE ALBAN-OAXACA** – Today we drive through the beautiful Sierra Madre Mountains to Oaxaca, 4 hours away. In the afternoon we visit the Zapotec ruins at nearby Monte Alban where there are wonderful views and then return to Oaxaca for the evening. (B)

**THU 17 MAR: OAXACA** – Nowadays Oaxaca is a huge open-air museum, with colourful colonial mansions and impressive churches. It's famous for its 'artesania' and we enjoy its wonderful markets and visit workshops specialising in 'barro negro' pottery and woodcarvings (B)

**FRI 18 MAR: SUMIDERO CANYON, SAN CRISTOBAL** – To avoid a long drive we fly to Tuxtla Gutierrez where we visit the stunning Sumidero Canyon and take a 2 hours boat ride on the Grijalva River with the canyon walls towering over 750 metres above us. It's a breath-taking sight. We then continue onto the village of San Cristobal de las Casas known for its strong indigenous flavour. (B)

**SAT 19 MAR: SAN CRISTOBAL** – Today we visit the fascinating indian village of San Juan Chamula where we witness in the local church old Mayan rituals mixed with catholic observances. Returning to San Cristobal we take in the local scene and you can shop for beautiful textiles and handicrafts. We also try our hand at chocolate making at the 'from bean to mouth' Kakaw workshop. (B)

**SUN 20 MAR: AGUA AZUL, PALENQUE** – Today is an easy travel day stopping en route at the beautiful Agua Azul and Misol-Ha waterfalls before reaching Palenque in the mid-afternoon. (B)

**MON 21 MAR: PALENQUE, CAMPECHE** – To avoid the heat we start early with our guide to explore the incredible jungle-swathed Mayan ruins of Palenque which flourished in the 7th Century. We then continue our drive to Campeche where we take a short tour of the city's fortified walls. (B)

**TUE 22 MAR: UXMAL, CELESTUN, MERIDA** – It's a busy day with our first stop at the Mayan ruins of Uxmal to see the Pyramid of the Magician. For lunch we visit a local family in the village of Abala whose specialty is tortillas whilst at the fishing village of Celestun we go by boat to view the greater pink flamingo. Our stop this night is in the city of Merida 1 ½ hours away from Celestun. (BL)

**WED 23 MAR: CHICHEN ITZA, PLAYA DEL CARMEN** – Chichen Itza is our highlight for today. This was one of the great Mayan-Toltec centres of the Yucatan peninsula. We also visit the ceremonial pool at Cenote Ik Kil where we can enjoy a swim before arriving at beautiful Playa del Carmen. (B)

**THU 24 MAR: TULUM, PLAYA DEL CARMEN** – Today is an easy day with a visit to the nearby cliff top Mayan ruins of Tulum. We enjoy this beautiful setting before returning to Playa del Carmen. (B)





**FRI 25 MAR: HAVANA** – This morning we are transferred to the Cancun International airport for our flight to Havana. On arrival in the Cuban capital we are met and taken to our hotel where the remainder of the afternoon is free. We will meet up in the evening for a brief meeting and then an optional dinner. (B)

**SAT 26 MAR: HAVANA** – We start the day with a walking tour of Havana's 'Old City'. Beautiful colonial architecture, a 16<sup>th</sup> 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)



**SUN 27 MAR: 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)

**MON 28 & TUE 29 MAR: 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)



**WED 30 & THU 31 MAR: 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)



**FRI 1 APR: 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)

**SAT 2 APR: 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)



**SUN 3 APR: 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)

**MON 4 APR: 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)



**TUE 5 APR: 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)

**WED 6 APR: 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)



**THU 7 APR: HAVANA** – Your Byroads tour of Mexico and Cuba comes to an end 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)

## Prices & Inclusions

### 28 Days Mexico & Cuba

**Provisional Price: US Dollars: USD 8495 (per person twin)**

**Single Supplement: USD 1915**

**Price includes:** Steve Mortimer as Tour Escort, National tour guides in Mexico & Cuba, local guides, arrival transfer, transport as indicated, 27 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, tips and laundry. The flight Cancun-Havana on 25 March 22 is not included and should be booked in conjunction with your international ticket.

**Transportation:** Road travel is by air conditioned bus throughout, small boat, domestic flights.

**Accommodation:** If you are familiar with the Byroads style of touring you will know there is an emphasis on 'boutique' or character hotels. Mexico is such a place however in Cuba this isn't always easy. What you can be sure of is that hotels are always clean and comfortable and well located. Where character hotels are available we use them. In Cuba it's a mix of colonial hotels and we also use 'Casa Particulares' or bed & breakfasts in Camaguay and Trinidad which allows us a more authentic Cuban experience which we think you will love.



Colonial 4\* Mexico City



Hotel Terrace in Taxco



Comfortable Room in Merida



Hotel Telegrafo - Havana



Hotel- Cienfuegos



Room at a 'Casa Particular'

**Food and drink:** Breakfasts are included daily. Bottled water, soft drinks and alcohol are all readily available.

**Group size:** Maximum 16

**Additional Expenses:** For meals in Mexico allow US \$7-10 for lunch and for dinner US \$15-25. In Cuba 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 (Details will be provided in your Field Guide).

**Bookings:** Travel on Q (Sydney) is the sole sales 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](mailto: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 Mexico and back from Havana travel via the USA and Mexico City. Qantas, United, American & Delta Airlines fly to Mexico via the USA and connect with regional carriers. **The flight Cancun-Havana is not included and should be booked in conjunction with your international ticket.** 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 Mexico & Havana:** These can be booked but please advise Travel on Q well in advance to ensure availability.

**Visas & Documentation:** Most visitors including Australians and New Zealanders do not require a visa for Mexico. On this tour a Cuban visa will be obtained on check-in at the airport in Cancun. 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](http://www.byroads.com.au).

**Byroads**

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