



Tobacco farmers at work in Pinar del Río

Cuba: People to People

10 days priced from \$5,395
25 meals / Limited to 24 guests



Connections at a Glance

Discover your destination through these local connections.

- Immerse yourself in Cuban culture, exploring its architecture, agriculture, music and dining during intimate, one-on-one experiences with residents
- Discover Cuba's and America's great shared passion, baseball, at a game where you meet and engage with the players, and even have the opportunity to play a few innings with them
- Meet the husband and wife team operating the Proyecto de Arte Por la Costa, who are artistically enriching their community
- Engage in a stimulating discussion of the history of U.S.-Cuba relations with a Foreign Service scholar in Havana
- Join a local architect for an educational walk through Havana, discussing its historic styles, ongoing restoration efforts and their impact on the community
- Partake in a one-on-one talk with a Cuban salsa instructor regarding dance in Cuban life and take a short lesson
- Pay an interactive visit to a cigar factory, where residents teach you their craft; then, gain insight into the growing process and economic impact at a tobacco farm
- Explore Las Terrazas eco-community and learn about Cuba's environmental commitments at this unique UNESCO Biosphere Reserve





Meeting with Cuban dancers, post-performance

- Take an informative walk with artist José Fuster or his son to discover his local projects, followed by an authentic dinner in his home
- Experience Cuba's culinary variety with an interactive cooking demonstration at a paladar (family-run restaurant), and talk with the owners about this privately owned Cuban enterprise
- Gain insight into Cuba's well-regarded public health care system during an informal yet engaging conversation with a local physician; discuss everything from physician training to research and production during an exchange of issues on the subject
- Meet with local musicians during a private Buena Vista Social Club-style concert and cultural discussion

DAY 1: ARRIVE MIAMI, FLORIDA

On arrival at Miami International Airport, you are met and transferred to the Hilton Miami Airport Hotel. Meet your accompanying A&K Program Director and fellow guests at your briefing this evening, and attend a reception and dinner at the hotel. This evening's guest speaker shares his perspective on life as a Cuban-American living in Miami. *Hilton Miami Airport Hotel | Meals: D*

DAY 2: SANTA CLARA, CUBA / Community Contact

After breakfast at the hotel, transfer to the Miami International Airport and check in at the dedicated A&K counter for your short charter flight to Cuba. Following a light lunch during your

flight, arrive at the Santa Clara Airport, where you complete immigration and customs formalities and meet your local Cuban guide. After a scenic drive to the quaint fishing village of Caibarién, interact with residents who provide insight into their daily routines. At the centrally located Parque de la Libertad, set amid Neoclassical and Art Nouveau architecture, experience a concert by children in Marcos Urbay Serafin's musical group Banda Infantil de Conciertos de Caibarién. Afterward, meet with the director and the children for a discussion about the organization and its history in the local Cuban community. Continue to La Imprenta, a local print shop, where you meet with the shop manager and employees and discuss their experiences working with the antique presses still being used today. Continue to Cayo Santa Maria for check-in at your hotel, followed by dinner highlighting local cuisine.

Meliá Buenavista | Meals: B L D

DAY 3: CAIBARIÉN & REMEDIOS / Cuban Industries Up Close



Return to Caibarién this morning for a visit to the Proyecto de Arte Por la Costa, and meet with artist Madelin Perez Noa and her husband, Leo. Hear how they work together to artistically enrich this fishing community where they reside. Then, view the works in progress in their home studio and discuss their future projects and community initiatives. Next, engage in a conversation on fishing practices with a local fisherman, an experience revealing the industry's impact



Authentic interactions and iconic experiences at every turn

on the community. During a visit to the nearby Sugar Museum, housed in the historically significant Marcelo Salado Azucarera (Sugar Mill), participate in a discussion with museum employees on the role the sugar industry played in Cuba's history. Then, board an old steam train (formerly used to transport sugar cane to the factory), and travel to El Curujey for a traditional, authentic Cuban farm lunch. See a typical farmhouse as well as a demonstration of palm climbing, and take part in a discussion with your host about what life is like on a farm in Cuba. Reboard the steam train bound for Remedios and, during the short ride, interact with the steam train crew and the conductor to learn firsthand what it takes to run a steam train and about their former importance to the sugar cane community. Back in Remedios, take a ride by bicitaxi (also known as a pedicab or rickshaw) through the town and into the bustling main square. Join the bicitaxi owners at a local coffee shop, gaining insight into their day-to-day routines and the ways in which they maintain their vehicles. Later, at the Remedios Cathedral, meet with the local priest to talk about ongoing community efforts for all ages. You may have the opportunity to take part in or observe one of these activities, be it a sewing class for young girls, a soup kitchen or even an aerobics class. Continue to the local stadium, where you engage in a shared pastime with Cuban residents: attending a baseball game. During the event, you meet and talk with the players about sports in Cuban life, with the opportunity to play a few innings together. Return to your hotel for dinner.

Meliá Buenavista | Meals: B L D

DAY 4: SANTA CLARA / Cuba's Vibrant Arts

Bid farewell to Cayo Santa Maria this morning, and drive to Santa Clara, stopping en route at Escuela de Arte Samuel Feijóo (otherwise known as the School of Music, Dance, Theater and Art). Gather with school faculty for an inspiring discussion about this special school and meet its talented students, some of whom demonstrate their expertise. Upon arrival in Santa Clara, proceed to the Casa de la Cultura, where members of the Cuban musical group Melodias Antillanas perform traditional music on antique instruments. Listen as your hosts perform Cuban classics, followed by a talk about traditional music and its role in Cuban culture. Here you also meet with members of the local senior citizen community center, who perform a traditional Danzon dance, with an opportunity for you to join in. Its members also share engaging stories about Cuban life and social decorum. After lunch, continue to Havana, Cuba's fabled capital. Check into your hotel before dinner at a local restaurant. *Meliá Habana | Meals: B L D*

"Cuba is a singular destination, one untouched by time. Getting to know its people through immersive, educational travel is a valuable, thought-provoking experience that lasts long after the trip has ended. It leaves you connected to a place and a population in ways more meaningful than words convey."

—Keith Baron, Senior Vice President, A&K

DAY 5: HAVANA / *Cuba's Capital*



Today's introduction to historic Havana begins with a brief presentation by a former Cuban Foreign Services Scholar, during which you're immersed in the history of Cuba-U.S. relations, from the colonial era to the present day. Take part in a thought-provoking question and answer session. Then, visit the Muraleando Neighborhood Community project, meeting members and seeing firsthand the art projects and significant restorations that are underway. Walk through Old Havana with a local architect, discussing the challenges and successes of city reconstruction projects, all the while absorbing the vibrant, extraordinary architecture that surrounds you. In the afternoon, join an Afro-Cuban religions specialist at the Casa de Africa, which reveals the country's religious roots and the ways in which religion is practiced in contemporary Cuba. Upon viewing an important collection of African art and witnessing a ceremonial music and dance performance, get to know the performers during a discussion on this unique practice. Later, meet with a local salsa teacher and discuss the history of this native rhythm and the importance of dance in Cuban life, followed by a lesson under your instructor's attentive eye. *Meliá Habana | Meals: B L D*

DAY 6: PINAR DEL RIO & VIÑALES / *Cigars & Farming*



Set off on a full-day excursion that begins with a visit to the rambling countryside of Pinar del Rio. At the Donatien Cigar Factory, learn to roll one of Cuba's most enduring icons during a lesson with local cigar craftsmen. Continue to an organic farm in Viñales and talk with farmers about their work and the ways farming in Cuba and the United States differ. Later, visit a working tobacco farm, meeting your host family and its workers for a firsthand account of local farming, drying and rolling techniques as well as the challenges of independent Cuban farmers amid a time of agrarian reform. *Meliá Habana | Meals: B L*

DAY 7: LAS TERRAZAS / *Art & Nature*



Today, visit Las Terrazas community, just 45 minutes outside of Havana. At this pioneering eco-village — a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve — interact with resident specialists, learning about its rare, endemic biodiversity and life on the self-sustaining enclave. Engage with members of the local farming community during a reforestation discussion, which explores the positive impact of the ecological movement and the ways in which environmental efforts are similar or different than those in the U.S. Also, visit a coffee plantation with a specialist and meet its staff, who explains the economic role of the coffee industry. After an authentic, home-cooked lunch at a farmer's home, visit local artists and the home of the late musician Polo Montañez. Return to Havana in



local connections
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Experience Cuba's passion for baseball during a one-on-one discussion with local players, followed by a brief game.

the afternoon, stopping at the whimsical studio of José Fuster, renowned Cuban painter and ceramicist. Join the artist or his son for a neighborhood walk showcasing their designs and community projects at work. During dinner at his home, take part in a discussion of the artist's efforts and the role the arts play in contemporary Cuba. *Meliá Habana | Meals: B L D*

DAY 8: HAVANA / *Inside a Paladar*

During a morning visit to a day care center, meet the teachers and interact with students. Then, take part in an interactive cooking experience at a local *paladar* (private, family-run restaurant). Its owners share their passion for Cuban cuisine and discuss what is involved in running a private business in Cuba — an opportunity that, historically, was all but unheard of. After lunch, walk through the on-site botanical farm, as owners discuss their ongoing efforts to educate and enthuse children about organic farming. School schedule permitting, meet with some of the children involved in its efforts.

Continue to Finca La Vigia, Ernest Hemingway's former home, where *The Old Man and the Sea* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* were penned. As you look through the windows and open doors of this remarkably well preserved home, visualize the author's life during the more than 20 years he lived there. Engage in an informative discussion with local Hemingway experts and learn about the community's interaction in the days of Hemingway's stay on the island. Back at your hotel, meet a local physician for an engaging

talk on Cuba's well-regarded public health care system, followed by an informative question and answer session.

Meliá Habana | Meals: B L D

DAY 9: HAVANA / Spiritual Center



On your last day in Havana, embark on a morning walk through the famous Colon Cemetery, founded in 1876 and site of more than 800,000 graves and one million interments. Under the guidance

of a local specialist, gain insight into the cemetery's history and its significance to the local community and pilgrims. Afterward, visit the Callejon de Hamel, a tiny alley that blossomed into an artistic epicenter thanks to artist Salvador Gonzalez, who has dedicated his life's work to enriching the lives of Havana's youth. Hear from Gonzalez or his assistant firsthand, as they reveal the impact of their murals and the ways in which they reflect the culture and religious tenets of the area. Discover, too, how the Afro-Cuban Santeria religion — a fusion of African belief systems with spirit worship and Catholicism — is portrayed through street art and music.

This afternoon, transfer by traditional "Yank tank" (vintage car) to the historic Hotel Nacional for a narrative on its fascinating history by the manager or his staff. Considered a national monument, the hotel was built in 1930 and overlooks the Malecón (seaside promenade) and Havana Harbor. Over the years, the Nacional has hosted many international dignitaries and well-known entertainers, as evidenced by the photographic memorabilia displayed throughout the hotel. Here, enjoy a private concert of Buena Vista Social Club-style music and a traditional dance performance, sponsored by the Cuban Institute of Music, and engage in a post-performance discussion with musicians — a great opportunity to learn the impact music has had on Cuban culture and the ways in which it has influenced music in the United States and beyond. *Meliá Habana | Meals: B L D*

DAY 10: DEPART HAVANA

Transfer to the airport to board your return flight to Miami.

Meals: B



local connections



Soak up the sounds of Buena Vista Social Club-style music and watch a traditional dance demonstration, followed by an informative discussion.

Hotel Spotlight

Take a closer look at this journey's inspiring accommodations.



Meliá Habana

Modern, elegant property with views of the city and sea and tropical grounds.



Meliá Buenavista

Comfortable, modern accommodations, situated west of Cayo Santa Maria.

Dates

All departures are guaranteed to operate.

Mar 14-23 Apr 11-20

Arrives Thursday, departs Thursday. Minimum age 10 years old.

Pricing

	Jan-Mar	Apr-May
Double occupancy	\$6,295	\$6,195
Single supplement	\$895	\$895
Internal airfare	Economy class from \$525	
Miami/Santa Clara, Havana/Miami		

Additional departure dates available.

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