

Sterling Travel with Jill Aikin



7 DAYS • 16 MEALS • HAVANA > HAVANA • SMALL GROUP ADVENTURE

CULTURAL CUBA EXPERIENCE

Operated under the Group People-to-People Educational Travel license

Travel Dates: September 30 - October 7, 2027

Discover the heart and soul of Cuba on this immersive journey with Mayflower Cruises & Tours. From exploring vibrant Old Havana and iconic plazas to visiting artist studios, paladares, and Hemingway's former home, experience Cuba through its people, art, history, and cuisine. Enjoy hands-on activities like salsa dancing and farm workshops, while connecting with locals shaping Cuba's future. This authentic, people-to-people adventure offers rich cultural insight and unforgettable memories.





Ride in a restored antique car

Americans can once again travel to Cuba legally and Mayflower Cruises and Tours has planned an amazing trip for you to this country which has previously been 'off-limits'. Our program complies with the OFAC (Office of Foreign Assets Control) regulations for travel-related activities to Cuba and was specifically designed to qualify under the license #515.565(b), Group People-to-People educational travel. Keeping with the license regulations, the designed itinerary provides a full-time schedule and does not include an excess of free time or recreation. Our journey through Cuba supports individuals and non-governmental organizations that promote travel and independent activities intended to strengthen civil society in Cuba, enhance contact with the Cuban people, support civil society in Cuba, or promote the Cuban people's independence. Our itinerary meets these requirements with the variety of activities we included for you to experience on this educational and interactive program. From the welcoming smile and wealth of knowledge provided by our professional coach drivers and excursion guides to the planned visits to historic and cultural areas, meals taking place in privately-owned paladars, meetings with tradesmen, artisans, dancers, and other people you'll encounter throughout your stay, your program results in meaningful interaction with individuals in Cuba, thereby promoting the goals of the license and giving you an insightful understanding of the Cuban culture.

DAY 1 USA / Havana, Cuba

Depart the USA on your flight to Havana, Cuba. Upon arrival, you will be met at the airport by a local representative of Mayflower, assisted with the arrival procedures then transferred to the hotel. Your local guide will host an orientation session this evening providing an overview of the program, offer insights into Cuba's unique social dynamics, cultural traditions, and everyday life to frame the exciting journey ahead. A meeting will be held with the local guide in the hotel lobby each morning to review the daily activities.

DAY 2 Old Havana Immersion

During a walking excursion through the heart of Old Havana – a UNESCO World Heritage Site, discover the historic importance and architectural beauty of its four iconic plazas: Plaza de la Catedral, Plaza Vieja, Plaza de Armas and Plaza de San Francisco. Your local guide provides details of their significance to the city, while allowing time to engage with local residents, from vendors and artists to workers and community members, to gain firsthand insight into Cuban life today. Next, mix and mingle with the artisans and vendors of the San José Craft Market while discovering their entrepreneurial spirit and learning about their art. Stop by a privately-owned cigar shop to hear how this ancient art is kept alive, is a major contributor to the local economy, and see the craftsmanship involved in creating one of Cuba's most iconic products. Enjoy lunch at Chachacha, a privately-owned paladar, blending flavor and authenticity. This evening, hop into a vintage car for a panoramic ride through the streets of Havana. Travel in style in these restored antique cars while driving along the Malecon (coastal road and seawall), see the 18th-century University (oldest in the Caribbean), the Paseo del Prado and the Capitol building. Chat with the car owners and uncover the secrets behind maintaining these classic vehicles from sourcing spare parts to running a business fueled by passion and preservation. Arrive at Bellaviana, a privately-owned paladar, for dinner where you can relax and enjoy the warm hospitality provided by the staff and get to know them as you dine. Meals: B, L, D

DAY 3 Art, Literature, and Local Life

Visit the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (Cuban Art Building). Housed in restored colonial barracks, the now vibrant cultural space showcases the evolution of Cuban identity. The local art expert explains the social and historical narratives behind the artwork, and how the Cuban artists reflect everyday life, resilience, and national pride through their creations. Discussion with the staff and curators encourages reflection on how art serves as a mirror of society and a voice for the people. Continue to San Francisco de Paula to visit Ernest Hemmingway's former home, Finca Vigia. As you walk around the grounds, local specialists share stories of his love of the rhythms, people and spirit of Cuba as well as the cultural exchange between

him and the Cuban community. His friendships with fishermen, artists and neighbors inspired *The Old Man and the Sea* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. During lunch at Ajiaco Café Paladar, a privately-owned restaurant known for authentic Cuban cuisine, dine on a traditional meal prepared by local chefs using regional ingredients and learn about the entrepreneurial journey of the restaurant's founders and their role in preserving culinary heritage. Back in Havana, visit the surrounding area of the Hotel Nacional, a legendary site holding a pivotal place in Cuba's cultural and political history. The guide provides a rich historical narrative about its iconic status, notable guests, and its role during the Cuban Missile Crisis. This stop offer panoramic views and interactive conversation allowing exploration of the legacy of the Cold War in Cuba and how global tensions shaped everyday life for its people – all from a people-centered perspective. Dinner is at the privately-run paladar Atelier in Vedado. Known for its artistic décor and fusion of Cuban and international flavors, you can interact with the owners and staff to understand the challenges and triumphs of running an independent business in Cuba. **Meals: B, L, D**

DAY 4 Fortresses, Community Art, and Cuban Rhythm

Start the day with a visit to Morro Castle, a spectacular, strategically built monument with an amazing history. Built to defend Havana against pirates, its role in the city's history makes it a symbol of resilience and protection. A local historian shares legends and stories of life at the fortress, the impact of colonial architecture and military history on modern Cuban identity. Interact with the locals working on-site preserving the heritage of Morro Castle. Next visit the neighborhood community project Muraleando, focusing on teaching skills to the younger generation. Meet with community artists and children who participate in visual arts, music and dance, hearing how these activities play an important role in changing their lives. See how a response to social hardship evolved into a thriving cultural center. Today's traditional lunch is prepared by members of the project Muraleando. While visiting a privately-run Cuban dance academy, talk with the professional instructors about the evolution of Cuban dance and learn the challenges of running private schools within Cuba's socio-economic landscape. Participate in a Salsa dance class to experience the local rhythm yourself! Dinner is at Al Carbón, a privately-run paladar in Old Havana, offering rustic elegance and wood-fired Cuban dishes. Learn about culinary innovation and entrepreneurship from the restaurant staff. **Meals: B, L, D**

DAY 5 Havana – Matanzas Province

Departing Havana, journey by coach to the Province of Matanzas. En route, visit Finca Vista Hermosa, a privately-run sustainable agroecological farm. Managed by a local Cuban family, they operate independently and are committed to sustainable agriculture, organic methods and community-based production. During a guided walk by the farm's founders, they share their vision of resilience and self-sufficiency in Cuban agriculture. Participate in practical workshops on organic farming and artisanal cheese-making and share a locally-prepared meal. Engage in conversation about food production as a tool for community empowerment. Continue to the hotel for dinner and accommodations. **Meals: B, L, D**

DAY 6 Matanzas City

The final day begins with a guided walking excursion through the historic center, often called "the Athens of Cuba" and declared a National Monument in 2013. Showcasing neoclassical buildings, public squares and the legacy of Cuban intellectuals and artists, it is home to a vibrant network of independent artists. Residents and historians offer firsthand insights into the cultural pulse of their



TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- 16 Meals: 6 breakfasts, 5 lunches and 5 dinners
- Airport transfers on tour dates when air is provided by Mayflower Cruises and Tours
- Travel aboard a deluxe, air-conditioned motorcoach
- Five-star, air-conditioned lodging
- Interaction with locals throughout the journey
- Immersion into the culture and history of Cuba and its people
- Many meals at Cuban paladars – privately operated restaurants by proud business owners
- Speak with local artisans as they create their art work
- Visit a dance studio and learn the Cuban Salsa
- Ride in a vintage car
- Discover another way of life in a country only 90 miles from the U.S.A.

neighborhoods as you visit Plaza de la Vigia, Parque de la Libertad, and private workshops, community-run spaces and informal cultural centers. The Lolo Studio Gallery, led by Cuban sculptor Osmany Betancourt Falcón, transforms clay, metal and glass into surrealist sculptures and contemporary art. Meet with local artists, observe their creative process, participate in a collaborative art session or sculpture demonstration and discuss the role of art in Cuban society and how it reflects social and political themes. The final visit is to the Pharmaceutical Museum, the only one of its kind in Latin America. Preserving original instruments, medicinal recipes and architectural features from its founding in 1882, the museum staff talk about traditional Cuban medicine and pharmacy practices, while you explore the historical role of health care in Cuban communities. Engage in a discussion with local experts on the evolution of medicine and its cultural impact. The farewell dinner is at Chef Bahia, a privately-owned paladar, where you can have a discussion with the owner and staff regarding entrepreneurship. **Meals: B, L, D**

DAY 7 Matanzas Province – Havana – USA

Bid "Adios" to Cuba as you depart for Havana's Airport for your flight home. Memories of a unique journey to Cuba and the warm hospitality of its people will be cherished for years to come. **Meal: B**

Itinerary subject to change.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

Days 1 through 4 - Iberostar Marqués de La Torre, Havana, Cuba
Days 5 and 6 - Selectum Family Resort, Matanzas Province, Cuba

CULTURAL CUBA EXPERIENCE



Visit Morro Castle in Havana

Cultural Cuba Experience		Tour Code 581CB
2027 Departure Date	Per Person Twin	Single Room add
September 30	\$4,989	+ \$1,199

NOTE: Mandatory health insurance for Cuba is included in the cost of the airline ticket when issued by a U.S. carrier. Mayflower does not offer any additional type of insurance for this program. Additional coverage can be secured independently through other travel insurance companies providing coverage for Cuba.

Please add \$85 per person for visa fee.

Price shown includes roundtrip air out of DEN.

Please call for rates from your city.

Visa is required for this program.

Cancellation Charges Without Traveler's Protection Plan (TPP)

- 91 days or more: Deposit Amount
- 90 days or less: 100% of tour cost
- Early departure from tour: 100% of tour cost
- No refund on unused portions of the tour

Exclusions: Mayflower Cruises & Tours reserves the right to alter its refund and cancellation policy when a substantial amount of cancellation or postponement of travel is attributable to: conditions resulting from an act of God, natural or man-made disaster, fire, government action, civil disorder, war, hostilities between nations, or unavailability of transportation through no fault of Mayflower Cruises & Tours.

TOUR ACTIVITY LEVEL



EASY

ENERGETIC

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