



MOA Journeys

Cuba's Artistic Pulse — Nov. 20-30, 2014



Thursday, 20 November

Day 1 Arrive in Havana

Arrive in Havana at Jose Marti International Airport. Meet your guide then transfer to your 4-star hotel in the heart of the old city. All transport within Cuba is by private deluxe motor coach.

Upon arrival in the city, the vibrancy of the people is one of the first things you will notice. Also striking is the fact that, day or night, music can be heard and most evenings, somewhere in the city, people can be found dancing in the streets. The rich history of the island is apparent in the faces of the people. They are the descendants of the Spanish conquistadores who colonised the island in the sixteenth century and African slaves brought over to work on the tobacco and sugar plantations.

Overnight in Havana.

Meal plan: Tonight, you'll enjoy a welcome dinner & cocktails*, meet your Adventures Abroad tour guide, mingle with the Museum of Anthropology representatives and members like you, and enjoy an introductory presentation by Without Masks curator, Orlando Hernández. *subject to flight schedules

Friday, 21 November

Day 2 Havana: Centre City Tour

Cuba's cosmopolitan capital was once one of the world's most prosperous ports and the third most populous city in the Americas. As La Llave del Mundo (Key of the World), she saw riches from Mexico, Peru, and Manila pass through her sheltered harbour to Spain. Havana shows evidence of long neglect but her beauty shines through an amalgam of Spanish, African, colonial, communist, and capitalist influences.

Today we have a tour of Old Havana, including a stroll down Prado Avenue, for many years Havana's most important and impressive avenue. Built in 1772 by the government of the Marquis de la Torre, it was originally known as Alameda de Extramuros. In 1928 the avenue was remodeled into its present form. This stately thoroughfare is home to the Capitolio Nacional, the Gran Teatro de la Habana, and the Parque Central (a favourite gathering place for Cubans). It'll become evident why UNESCO declared this region a cultural and natural World Heritage Site in 1982.

Our walking tour takes us along the main streets of Old Havana to visit the Plaza de la Cathedral, the Plaza de Armas, the Plaza de San Francisco de Asis, and stroll the Calle Mercaderes to the Plaza Vieja. We also visit the Plaza de la Revolution and the Cabana Fortress, built after the British invasion of 1762.

After a wonderful lunch of your choice in Old Havana, we will explore the Fine Arts Museum with Orlando Hernández, formerly a curator of the Museum. Witness works in this national gallery from artists featured in *Without Masks*.

Overnight in Havana.

Meal plan: breakfast, dinner

Saturday, 22 November

Day 3 Havana

Today, we will further experience Havana from an insider's view with Orlando Hernández.

We'll visit the Museo de Regla, where you'll learn all about the varied religions formed in Cuba through Cuba's African descendants. We will visit a popular market where ritualistic crafts and objects are showcased and purchased, and experience carvers' studios. Time permitting, we will also take in the works at a new gallery, Fabrica del arte.

We will take in the Sabados de Rumba show (Rumba Saturdays) today, presented by the Conjunto Foklorico Nacional in Vedado, for a taste of Cuba's Afro-Cuban rhythms. Tonight, we'll enjoy a performance in the National Theatre or another of Havana's excellent musical venues.

Overnight in Havana
Meal plan Breakfast, dinner

Sunday, 23 November

Day 4 Havana - Vinales Valley

An early start has us leaving Havana and travelling west towards Vinales and its magnificent valley, partly reminiscent of Guilin in China because of the curious limestone mountains and rock outcroppings.

Along the way we stop in Las Terrazas ecovillage, famous for artists' studios and nature trails, or Soroa to visit a beautifully located orchid garden. We will have a chance to see a tobacco plantation where the tobacco leaf is sorted (despalillo), graded, even fermented, and then stored until the time is right for the leaf to be rolled. In Pinar del Rio we visit a state run tobacco factory where such brands as Cohiba, Montecristo and Romeo y Julieta cigars are made. We will make a stop on this journey to enjoy a sip of the guayavitas liqueur, produced nowhere in the world but this valley.

Continue to Vinales.

Overnight in Vinales.
Meal plan: breakfast, dinner

Monday, 24 November

Day 5 Vinales Valley - Havana

The Vinales Valley is considered a National Park and was recently proclaimed by UNESCO as a Natural World Heritage Site.

This morning we take a leisurely walk through the countryside passing by crops of tobacco, yucca, and corn before joining up with our vehicle again. We may be able to visit a tobacco farmer's house; the inhabitants of the valley will readily invite visitors in.

Later we'll visit the Jardin Botanico de Caridad, the Botanical Gardens of Caridad, a local woman who started growing native tropical plants on her small property and now accepts visitors. Tamarinds, oranges, grapefruits, guava, starfruit, bananas, cocoa, lemons, cinnamon trees, and a variety of decorative plants and ferns can be found in her gardens. After a guided tour of the garden, we have a chance to try some of the fruits in season.

We then go around the corner to the State-run rationing store where our guide will explain to us what the state supplies, how much, and how the system works.

Today, we'll also visit La Cueva del Indio where we will have an undeniably exciting experience to sail in traditional boats along an underground river that passes through the interior of some of the Haystack Hillock Mountains.

Return to Havana.

Overnight in Havana.

Meal plan: breakfast, dinner

Tuesday, 25 November

Day 6 Havana - Bay of Pigs - Cienfuegos

Today is a full day of travel, with some interesting things to see and do along the way. The Zapata Peninsula juts out into the Caribbean within a huge biosphere reserve, and is an idyllic playground for ecotourists and bird-watchers, and teeming with wildlife.

We travel via the Zapata swamp, named after the unfortunate first landholder to hold title to the area in the 1600s. This area was very poor before the revolution but has benefited greatly with the introduction of electricity, schools, roads, and clinics where none had existed before. Lake Tesoro is said to have gotten its name from the indigenous people who are said to have thrown all their treasures into the lake rather than give them up to the Spanish. Fidel Castro used to spend much of his vacation time here.

We continue after lunch to a stop at the cenote (limestone cave) just after Playa Larga. This is an inland sea-water aquarium with an amazing array of fishes that one can observe during a refreshing swim.

Also along our route are numerous stone markers, memorials to the people bombed on the road during the US invasion. The road was the only access to the beach, so most of those killed were approaching to either bring supplies or help in the fighting. We stop at the Playa Giron (Bay of Pigs) Museum where we will learn about the US/CIA involvement in the anti-Castro movement. Playa Giron was one of the two main landing beaches during the abortive US invasion.

We continue to Cienfuegos, affectionately known as La Perla del Sur (the Southern Pearl), an inviting port town settled by French colonists more than 150 years ago, and a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2005.

Overnight Cienfuegos.

Meal plan: breakfast, dinner

Wednesday, 26 November

Day 7 Cienfuegos - Sierra de Escambray - Trinidad

Today, our journey takes us to Cuba's second highest mountain range - the Sierra de Escambray, reaching 1100 m (3,700 feet) and home to small mountain villages. The Escambray is a delight for birders and walkers alike. Slopes are swathed in Caribbean pines, ancient tree ferns, bamboo, and eucalyptus. Upon arrival we take a 60-minute truck ride in Russian trucks through mountains, into the forest to begin a walk from La Codina, an old Spanish hacienda, once part of a large Spanish coffee plantation.

We begin our easy walk with a talk on the various plants in the area and their medicinal uses, originally used to treat the plantation's slaves. We continue to the Orchid Loop, with over 25 endemic species, and then through a cave en route to La Cueva del Altar, with stunning views over the mountains to the Caribbean Sea. We finish back at the Hacienda where we have a specially planned lunch at La Codina House.

Later, we continue to Trinidad and check in to our hotel, with some afternoon free time to enjoy Trinidad's charms or its nearby beautiful beaches.

Overnight in Trinidad.

Meal plan: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Thursday, 27 November

Day 8 Trinidad: Town Tour

This morning we tour colonial Trinidad (pop: 60,000). This is a perfect relic of the early days of the Spanish colony: beautifully preserved streets and buildings and hardly a trace of the 20th century anywhere. It was founded in 1514 by Diego Velazquez as a base for expeditions into the New World and Hernan Cortes, conquistador of the Aztecs, set out from here for Mexico in 1518. The five main squares and four churches date from the 18th and 19th centuries and the whole city, with its fine palaces, cobbled streets and tiled roofs, is a national monument and since 1988 has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In 1797 there were 56 sugar mills and 12,000 slaves imported to work in the sugar cane fields. With the Industrial Revolution and the increase in sugar grown in Europe, Trinidad went into decline in the second half of the 19th century.

On the Plaza Mayor is the cathedral, we will tour the Iglesia Parroquial de la Santisima Trinidad, built between 1817 and 1892. It is the largest church in Cuba and is renowned for its acoustics. On the left of the altar is a crucifix of the brown-skinned Christ of Veracruz, who is the patron of Trinidad. We will also explore Trinidad's Afro-Cuban religious culture at the Casa Templo de Santería Yemayá.

Today's tour also includes visits to The Palacio Cantero / Romantico Museum, which depicts the lifestyle and architectural design of Trinidad's colonial past and La

Canchanchara, an old house dating back to the 18th Century, where we can taste a unique Trinidad rum cocktail, made with sugar cane juice.

This evening, we will explore the music of Trinidad: Salsa, Son, Trova, and the Rumba, the percussion-driven, highly charged dance that was practiced by African brotherhoods, which can be seen at the Palenque de los Congos Reales venue on Calle Echerri. We might take in performances at the Casa de la Musica or Casa de la Trova, based on availability.

Overnight in Trinidad.

Meal plan: breakfast, dinner

Friday, 28 November

Day 9 Trinidad – Havana

After an early breakfast, today we drive back to Havana. On the journey back to the city, we'll have the opportunity to explore Finca Vigia and Hemingway's Country House.

Once back in Havana, you will have some enjoyable free time. You might choose this afternoon to visit the exceptional Cuban Museum of Dance, or the modern Museum of Rum. Perhaps you'll take this opportunity to visit the Museum of the Revolution, located in Old Havana. The museum is housed in what was the Presidential Palace of all Cuban presidents from Mario Garcia Menocal to Fulgencio Batista. It became the Museum of the Revolution during the years following the Cuban Revolution. Portions of the museum are also devoted to pre-revolutionary Cuba, including its War of Independence waged against Spain.

We will meet again in the evening to enjoy one of Havana's most welcoming restaurants for dinner.

Overnight in Havana

Meal plan: breakfast, dinner

Saturday, 29 November

Day 10 – The arts of Havana

Today, we visit the Instituto Superior des Artes, for an exclusive look at arts education in Cuba and her artists of tomorrow. Orlando Hernández will tour the group as well as offer privileged views into artists' studios, familiar from the Without Masks exhibit.

We will then explore the neighborhood to the west of Havana's centre, the beautiful Miramar and charming El Laguito. Other highlights include the University of Havana, the famous "Malecón" seawall promenade, Christopher Columbus Necropolis and the Vedado residential charm.

To celebrate the final night of our tour we'll enjoy a farewell party with cocktails, dinner, and a final chance to say our goodbyes to the new friends we met on the tour, and a chance to once more mingle with Orlando Hernández and the other artists we have encountered.

Overnight in Havana

Meal plan: breakfast, dinner

Sunday, 30 November

Day 11 - Departure

After a final Cuban breakfast, we'll return to Jose Marti International Airport for our departure back to Vancouver.

BUEN VIAJE!

MOA Journeys are available exclusively to MOA Members. Join today:
members@moa.ubc.ca

Details subject to change based on availability. We will update this document if necessary, until November's departure – please check back often to www.moa.ubc.ca/journeys for the most up-to-date information. Itinerary as of 02 May 2014.



INCLUDES:

Return airfare, Vancouver to Havana, Cuba
10 nights accommodation
All in-country transportation by deluxe air-conditioned coach
Dinner and breakfast daily
Entrances to all sites mentioned in the itinerary
English speaking local guide(s) during all parts of the tours
Full-time Adventures Abroad Tour Leader to accompany group at all time
All tips to Cuban guide, driver, hotel, and restaurant staff

Does not include:

Items of a personal nature eg. laundry and beverages
Meals not listed on the itinerary
Trip cancellation, interruption and medical insurance (proof of overseas medical insurance is required for entry to Cuba)
gratuity to Adventures Abroad Tour leader

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\$4460 per person, based on double occupancy

\$540 single supplement

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