



HABANOS IN HAVANA

2023





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Immerse yourself in the vibrant rhythms, colors and tastes of Havana. Savor the best cigars paired with coffee, fine aged rum and conversation with aficionados of Cuba's most famous exports.

Days 1, Thursday: Arrival in Havana

Independent arrivals to Havana Jose Marti International Airport. Once you've cleared immigration, collected your baggage and cleared Customs, you'll be met at the airport exit by your Cuban Host.

We'll head to Alta Casa, a paladar in Nuevo Vedado, for lunch. Enjoy traditional Cuban fare interpreted with a modern twist.

Included meals typically feature three courses, with a limited selection from which to choose. Meals typically include two beverages: House welcome cocktail then a choice of one additional beverage: bottled water, Cuban soft drinks or beer, or a glass of house wine. Coffee (espresso) is not included but may be purchased individually. One of the most enjoyable aspects of dining in a paladar is the personal connection you'll make with the owner and staff, as they share their personal stories. Learn how private enterprise in Cuba functions on an individual level, as well as how the paladar's ingredients are sourced and the chef's inspiration for the food they serve. Each paladar has its own unique story and style of interpreting Cuban cuisine today. After lunch, enjoy a welcome cigar out on the porch. From here, it's a short ride to the hotel. Take some time to freshen up and then we'll begin our exploration of Havana.

Climb aboard classic cars, cruisin' the town in a classic convertible.

The driver shares his story of how he acquired and maintains his marvelously preserved automobile from the 1950's. On an overview of Havana, pass the recently renovated Capitol Building, the Grand Theater, and Central Park along Paseo Prado (the wide avenue separating Old Havana from Centro Havana) and continue along the Malecon, passing the reopened U.S. Embassy. We'll drive through the western neighborhood of Miramar, passing along Fifth Avenue, lined with old mansions. Some are still private houses, but many are now Embassies or Ambassadors' residences. Stop at Revolution Square, where crowds have gathered to hear speeches by Fidel, the Pope and more.

ITINERARY SUMMARY

- Independent arrivals at Jose Marti International Airport, Havana
- 3 Nights in Havana, Grand Aston Hotel
- Independent departures from Jose Marti International Airport, Havana
- Group Size: Maximum 14 guests

HIGHLIGHTS

- Discover the best of Havana while meeting and supporting Habaneros – Cuban people from all walks of life: musicians, artists, entrepreneurs
- Savor fine cigars in the company of Havana's best aficionados
- Enjoy exclusive pairing experiences that highlight the unique characteristics of Cuba's finest cigars
- Cruise through Havana in a classic convertible

We arrive at the **private home and mechanic shop of Fernando Bayerites**. We're invited in to visit his home as he explains the ingenuity needed to maintain American classic cars without access to parts.

Next we have a special invitation to join Vivian Melendez in her Central Havana home. As the former manager of the largest cigar store in Cuba, her expertise was honed over more than twenty years in the business. We're introduced to a master cigar roller, who explains and demonstrates the art of rolling a fine cigar. Stogie in hand, Viviana leads us through **an exclusive cigar experience**, pairing your cigar with a fine, aged Cuban rum.

For dinner this evening, we have a reservation at the iconic La Guarida Paladar, located in a former sugar barons' home. This paladar is one of the oldest and most known to the outside world and where the Oscar-nominated Cuban movie *Strawberry and Chocolate* was filmed. The chefs here are considered the fathers of "nouvelle Cuban cuisine," preparing local ingredients with creative flare. This dinner is left on your own expense, so that you may choose what you like from the menu.

Return to the hotel. **Meals Included: L**

Day 2, Friday: Meet the People of Havana

After an early breakfast we begin our **exploration of Havana** and meetings with Habaneros - the people of Havana. We'll begin in Old Havana at a fresh produce and meat market, where we converse with the market vendors and learn about their products. We continue our walk with our Cuban Guide, to **explore Old Havana's four main plazas** and meet the self-employed entrepreneurs in business along the winding streets.

We begin in Plaza Vieja. Originally laid out in 1559, this plaza is Havana's most architecturally eclectic square, where Cuban



Hemingway's Finca Vigia



Cruise in a classic convertible

Baroque nestles seamlessly next to Gaudí-inspired art nouveau. Continue to Plaza de San Francisco which faces Havana harbor.

This plaza came to importance in Havana in the 16th century when Spanish galleons stopped by at the quayside on their passage through the Indies to Spain. The Plaza is anchored by the Basilica San Francisco de Asis and Cuba's first 'Wall Street.'

We'll interact with small business owners along Calle Obispo. As we meet and support Havana's *cuentapropistas* who sell handmade crafts, books and art, we'll learn about Cuba's dual-sector economy, in which private and government-owned businesses operate.

For lunch today, we'll sit on the patio at Bistro La Bearnesa for a delicious meal, followed by an included coffee and cigar. After lunch we'll meet the individual entrepreneurs at a unique community project, Arte Corte – or the Street of Barbers.

Continuing our stroll through Old Havana, we arrive at Plaza de la Catedral. Notice here the traditional Baroque style in the anchoring Cathedral de la Habana. Outside in the Plaza, local Habaneros dressed in traditional costumes are eager to earn their living by posing for photos in exchange for a few dollars. Continue to Plaza de Armas, Havana's oldest square. Learn about the history and rich heritage of the buildings in this charming plaza - the site where Havana was founded. Our Cuban Guide facilitates conversations with the famed booksellers, some of Cuba's original entrepreneurs, who trade in authentic books and memorabilia that commemorate the Revolution.

Return to the hotel with time to relax before dinner. This evening we are treated to a special **exclusive dinner invitation in a private home**. We head to the Miramar neighborhood, to the residence of Liliana Nunez Velis, president of non-government organization Fundación Antonio Núñez Jiménez de la Naturaleza y el Hombre, who is also the host organization of your tour.

The Antonio Núñez Jiménez Foundation for Nature and Humanity (FANJ) is a Cuban cultural and scientific non-governmental institution, dedicated to research and promotion of programs and projects for the protection of the environment as it relates

to culture and society. Its main focuses are on stakeholder engagement, poverty reduction and land restoration.

Learn about the work of the foundation and her father's legacy. Dinner is a journey through traditional Cuban fare, prepared with amor by Liliana's private cook. Afterward dinner, relax on the terrace while a cigar expert pairs your cigar with your choice of coffee, rum or beer.

If you still have the energy for a late night, take in an optional Jazz Pub Crawl. Jazz is very popular among Cubans, especially on weekends, but the action starts late, with the action starting after 10 p.m. and going until 2 or 3 a.m. Choose one venue or sample several, such as the Jazz Club, La Zorra y El Cuervo, Espacios (where many Cuban celebrities end up late at night) Your guide will know what's hot. Support live music and musicians directly: Cover charges, refreshments and tips to musicians are at your own expense. **Meals Included: B, L, D**

Day 3, Saturday: In the Footsteps of Hemingway

Enjoy breakfast then we begin our day.

Since a cigar isn't complete without a humididor to properly store it, we'll head to the private enterprise workshop, **Humidores Havana**, that creates humidors for the international cigar market. You'll be



Meet friendly locals

amazed by the artistry and craftsmanship of this artform, while conversing with the artisans on what inspires them and how they work.

Continue east of Havana to Cojimar, the small seaside town that served as backdrop in Ernest Hemingway's award-winning novel, "The Old Man and The Sea". We'll stroll the waterfront with our Cuban Guide and learn how locals earn a living today. We continue to an organic farm, where we meet a horticulturist to learn what they produce, their innovative growing techniques and the challenges of distribution.

We'll have lunch at a local paladar, and enjoy a cigar on the terrace with our coffee. After lunch, continue to San Francisco de Paula to **Hemingway's former home**, Finca Vigia. Here, we'll meet a Cuban who works as a private interpreter and will provide insights to the interesting memorabilia and stories of the famed writer's life in Cuba. Returning to Havana, we'll stop at the **artisan craft market** at San Jose and meet the entrepreneurs to learn how they source their goods and do business. Return to the hotel to freshen up before dinner.

We'll cap off our stay with a special Farewell Dinner, and a **farewell toast with fine aged Cuban rum, paired with a cigar.**

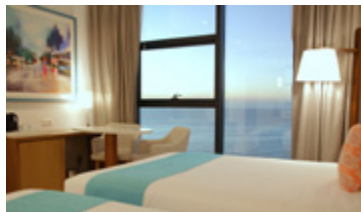
Finally, we'll retrace the history of the Mafia in Havana on a night drive past some of the most famous hangouts of Myer Lansky's crowd. Step inside the Hotel Nacional to view the memorabilia, and take in the view from the gardens, before returning to our hotel for the night. **Meals Included: B, L, D**

Day 4, Sunday: Departure

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for check-in and return flight home. Your transfer time will be confirmed in Havana by your Cuban Guide, and will be scheduled to arrive at the airport approximately three hours prior to flight departure. Please ensure your passport and Cuban visa are in hand for check-in procedures.

Meals Included: B, L

Please Note: This itinerary is preliminary and may be adjusted according to conditions on the day of operation.



Accommodations: Grand Aston Hotel

The Grand Aston La Habana Hotel is a new hotel located in the Vedado neighborhood of Havana. Situated on the Malecón – Havana's famous waterfront promenade, the hotel combines modern design in an urban oasis of lush gardens. The hotel offers an outdoor terrace and garden; swimming pool, restaurant, bar, fitness center, 24-hour front desk and room service. WiFi is available in public areas and costs US\$5 per 24 hours. Spa services at the Ubud Spa are available at additional cost. Check-In: 4:00 p.m. Check-Out: 12:00 p.m.

Conservancy Travel operates OFAC compliant Support for the Cuban People visits in partnership with the Fundación Antonio Núñez Jiménez de la Naturaleza y el Hombre. We engage with individual Cubans who directly benefit from interacting with our groups. Travelers gain a first-hand understanding of how Cubans live today, through personal initiative, entrepreneurial spirit and strong sense of community.

MAY 11-14, 2023

\$2,242 per person based on double occupancy

\$2,527 single rate

A deposit of \$600 is due by March 27th and the balance is due on April 14th.

Register online at www.conservancytravel.org/studiocigars

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Studio Cigar Lounge

Cecilia Townsend

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INCLUSIONS:

- Accommodations and activities as described in the itinerary
- Expert private Cuban guide and vehicle as per itinerary
- Expert Cuban specialist birding guide
- Certification of participation in a pre-planned, fully scheduled program of support for the Cuban people travel to Cuba under the U.S. Department of the Treasury general license
- Meals as per noted in the itinerary (B,L,D)
- 2 drinks per each included lunch and dinner (local beer, bottled water, soft drinks, house wine if offered by the restaurant)
- Bottled water while touring with the guide
- Gratuities for included meals and luggage handling
- Gratuities local specialty guides when required

EXCLUSIONS:

- International airfare
- Passport/visa fees
- Meals not mentioned in the program as included
- Coffee with included meals, cocktails other than welcome drinks, live music venue entrance fees, unless specifically noted as included in the itinerary
- Optional activities that are not stated as included in the itinerary
- Tips for hotel housekeeping and live music during meals
- Other expenses of a personal nature
- Cuban tourist visa, required for entry and departure – \$100 per person additional when issued by Conservancy Travel
- Airline Baggage fees
- Travel insurance
- Any other items not specifically mentioned as included
- Gratuity for Cuban Guide, suggested at \$20 per person/per day