



# 21st Century Cuba



**Cuba Program**  
**Havana, Pinar del Rio, Cienfuegos & Trinidad**  
**December 2015**

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## WELCOME TO CUBA

Cuba Educational Travel is offering the opportunity to spend a week visiting Communist Cuba. Once considered the forbidden fruit for Americans, our neighbor to the south is now closer than ever. Its fascinating history, breathtaking architecture, warm people, and rich music and art, make it the perfect place to learn about the Cuba of today, and have the time of your life while doing so. Travel to Cuba remains tightly regulated, but Cuba Educational Travel holds a license from the U.S. Treasury Department (CT-2013-300203-1) to arrange educational trips, meaning your memorable visit is fully sanctioned by the U.S. government.

A tropical paradise with a storied past, Cuba offers us a unique view of a world from a place few Americans have been able to see. This trip is geared toward travelers that seek to learn and see a lot on a short visit and prefer to travel in a small group with maximum flexibility.

In line with our mission, we take you behind the scenes of Cuba's tourist veil and connect you with scores of Cubans from different walks of life. CET President Collin Laverty has spent a large part of his life on the island over the last decade, and his knowledge and contacts will provide you with an experience few others enjoy. We firmly believe that by keeping our group sizes limited, and by working with locals, we are able to get off the beaten path and put you in contact with the top artists, chefs, experts and musicians. You will have the opportunity to speak with Cubans about daily life, learning about the country's unique political and economist system, and make many new friends along the way.







## HAVANA

Havana is the capital city, province, major port, and leading commercial center of Cuba. The city proper has a population of 2.1 million inhabitants, and it spans a total of 728 km<sup>2</sup>, making it the third largest metropolitan area in the Caribbean region. It was founded by the Spanish in the 16th century and due to its strategic location it served as a springboard for the Spanish conquest of the continent becoming a stopping point for the treasure laden Spanish Galleons on the crossing between the New World and the Old World. King Philip II of Spain granted Havana the title of City in 1592, and walls and forts were built to protect the fortunes that were held there soon after. The sinking of the U.S. battleship Maine in Havana's harbor in 1898 was the immediate cause of the Spanish-American War.

Contemporary Havana can essentially be described as three cities in one: Old Havana, Vedado, and the newer suburban districts. Old Havana, with its narrow streets and overhanging balconies, is the traditional center of Havana's commerce, industry, and entertainment, as well as being a residential area. It's a main tourist attraction. To the north and west a newer section, centered on the uptown area known as Vedado, has become the rival of Old Havana for commercial activity and nightlife. It is also home to the University and many residential neighborhoods. A third Havana is that of the more affluent residential and industrial districts that spread out mostly to the west, most notably the Miramar zone. Located west of Vedado along the coast, it remains Havana's exclusive area; mansions, foreign embassies, diplomatic residences, upscale shops, and facilities for wealthy foreigners are common in the area.

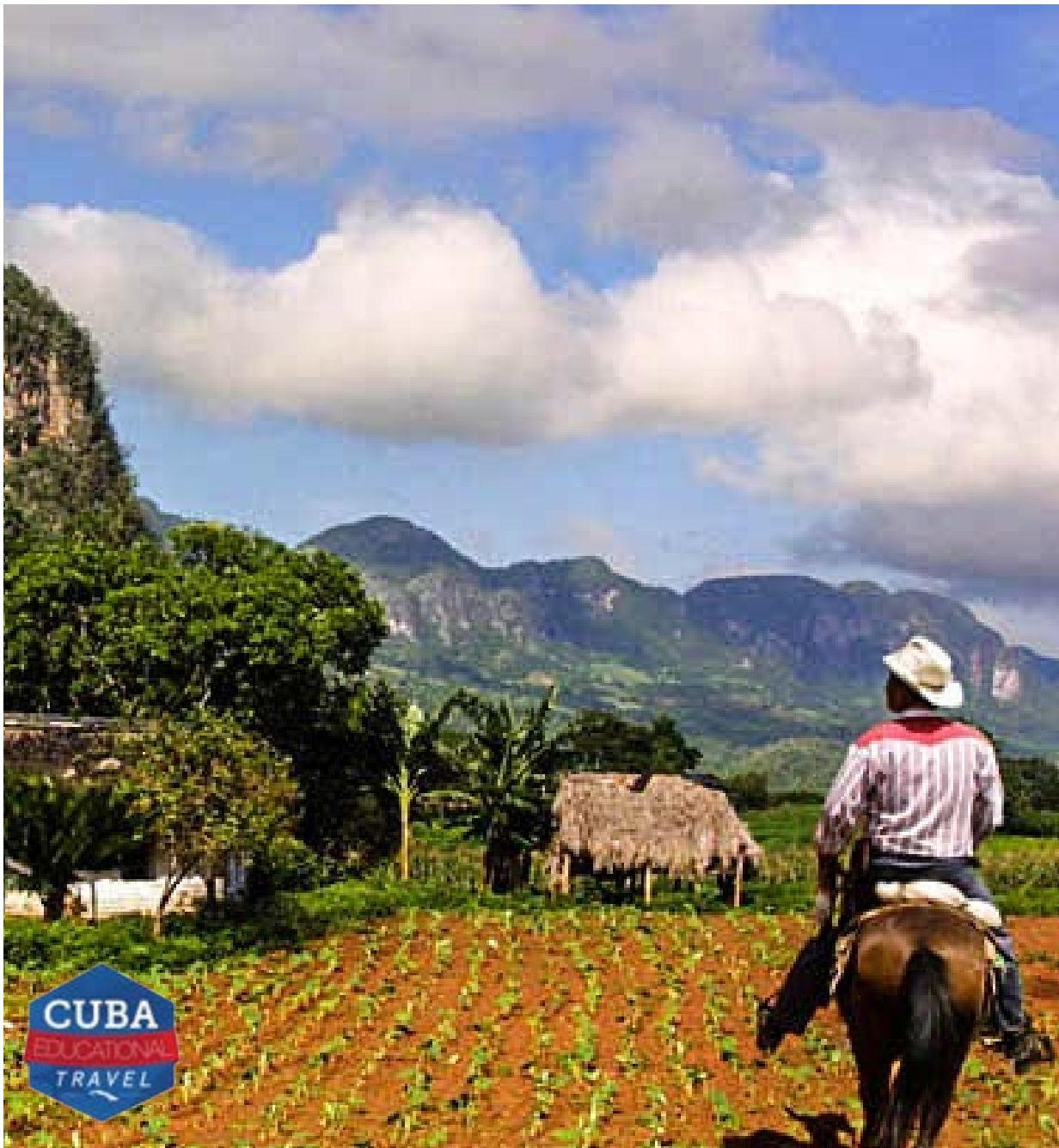


## HAVANA

In the 1980s many parts of Old Havana, including the Plaza de Armas, became part of a projected 35-year multimillion-dollar restoration project, for Cubans to appreciate their past and boost tourism. In the past ten years, with the assistance of foreign aid and under the support of local city historian Eusebio Leal, large parts of Habana Vieja have been renovated. The city is moving forward with their renovations, with most of the major plazas (Plaza Vieja, Plaza de la Catedral, Plaza de San Francisco and Plaza de Armas) and major tourist streets (Obispo and Mercaderes) near completion. Due to Havana's almost five hundred year existence, the city boasts some of the most diverse styles of architecture in the world, from castles built in the late 16th century to modernist present-day high-rises, encompassing Neoclassical, Colonial and Baroque, Art Deco and Eclectic and Modernism.

Residents of Havana have by far the highest incomes in the country, and a higher percentage of relatives living abroad. There is considerable inward migration in search of economic opportunities, especially from the poorer eastern provinces. Santiago de Cuba rivals it in some art, music and dance, but Havana is hands down the cultural and economic center of the country.

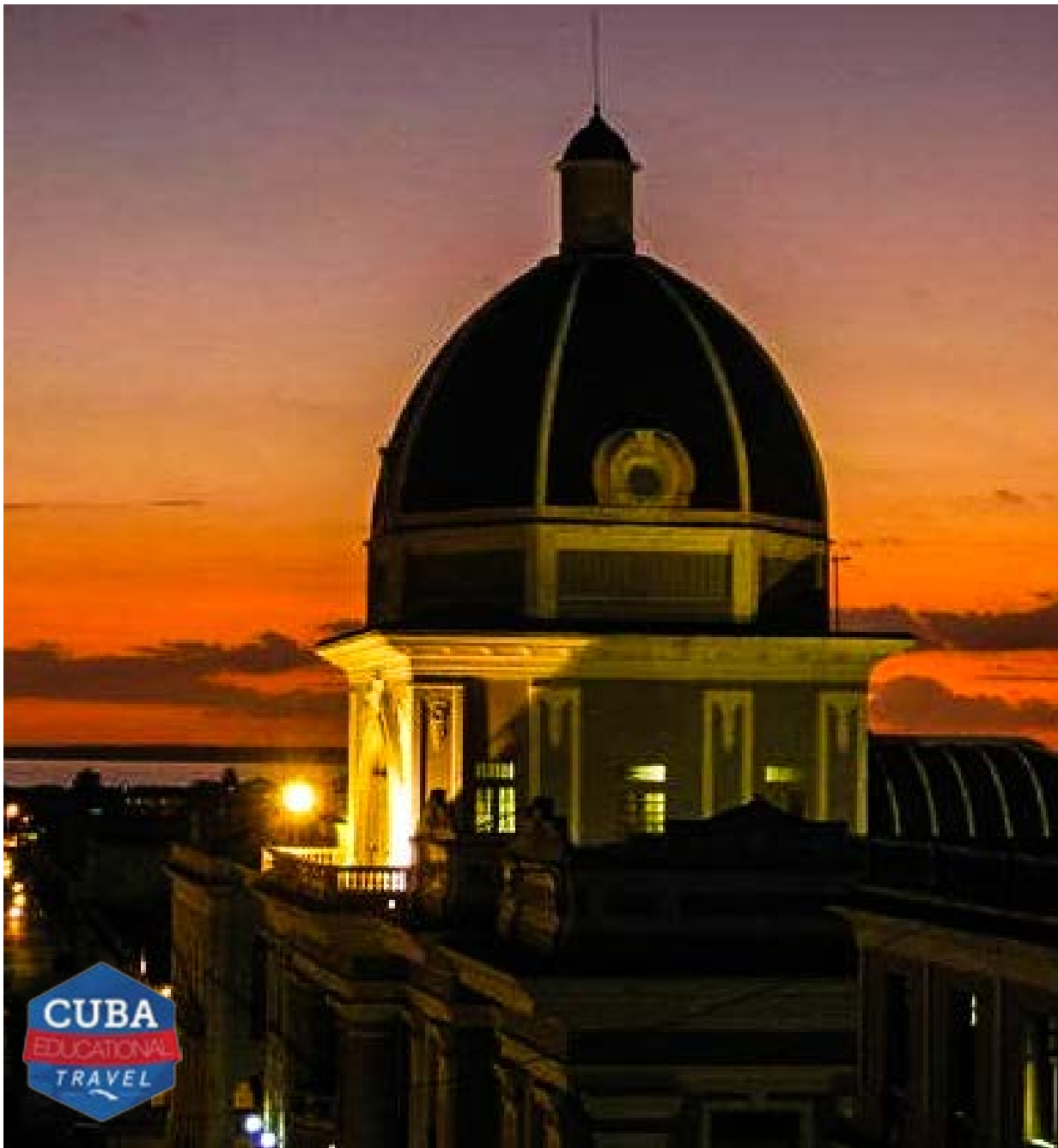




## VIÑALES

Viñales is a small town and municipality in the north-central Pinar del Río Province of Cuba. The municipality is dominated by low mountain ranges of the Cordillera de Guaniguanico such as Sierra de los Órganos, and the town consists mostly of one-story wooden houses with porches. Beautiful limestone formations known as Mogotes line the scenic valley, providing a stunning landscape. Before European settlement, the area was the home of a remnant Taíno population swelled with runaway slaves. The area was colonized at the beginning of the 1800s by tobacco growers from the Canary Islands, who settled in the Vuelta Abajo region, and the first settlement in Viñales is documented in 1871, in the form of a ranch belonging to Don Andrés Hernández Ramos. The actual town was established in 1878 as a typical community, with church, school, hospital and recreational park.

Viñales is an agricultural area, where crops of fruit, vegetables, coffee and especially tobacco are grown by traditional methods. Some of the best tobacco in the world is harvested and cultivated in Viñales. Over the last two decades the town has been developed as a premiere tourist destination. The Viñales Valley has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since November 1999, for the outstanding karst landscape and traditional agriculture as well as vernacular architecture, crafts and music. Although three nearby hotels offer accommodations, most visitors stay at private b&bs, where they are able to interact with locals.



## CIENFUEGOS

Cienfuegos city is the capital of Cienfuegos province, which lies along the southern coast of Cuba. Located about 250 km from Havana, Cienfuegos has a population of 170,000 inhabitants. The city is dubbed La Perla del Sur (Pearl of the South), and known as a clean, orderly and prosperous city located along the beautiful bay. Cienfuegos is one of the chief seaports of Cuba, hosting cargo shipments and recreational boats, and much of the downtown area located along the water. The city has traditionally been at the center of the sugar trade, which has dwindled over the last 2 and a half decades, as well as coffee and tobacco. Some of the best coffee in the country is produced in the central region of the country.

The area was called the Cacicazgo de Jagua by the early Spaniards, and was settled by indigenous people. It was later settled by French immigrants from Bordeaux and Louisiana, led by Don Louis de Clouet, on April 22, 1819. Its original name was Fernandina de Jagua, in honor of Ferdinand VII of Spain. The settlement became a Spanish Villa in 1829, and later a city in 1880. The city was subsequently named Cienfuegos, which literally means "100 fires in Spanish." The French and Spanish influence makes the city unique culturally and architecturally. The city center contains 6 buildings from 1819–1850, 327 buildings from 1851–1900, and 1188 buildings from the 20th century. There is no other place in the Caribbean which contains such a remarkable cluster of neoclassical structures. The city also happens to be the home of many great Cuban baseball players, including Yasiel Puig, who now plays for the Los Angeles Dodgers.



## TRINIDAD

Trinidad is a small town in the province of Sancti Spíritus, central Cuba. The city was founded on December 23, 1514 by Diego Velázquez de Cuéllar under the name Villa de la Santísima Trinidad. The city went through booms and busts, including the most prosperous years when it was built on the back of the 19th-century sugar and slave trade. At its zenith, in 1827, one of the 56 sugar mills in the region harvested the biggest cane haul in the world — just under a million kilos of white pressed crystals. This enormous, conspicuous wealth shaped the town and no expense was spared in fashioning the finest Spanish colonial mansions, plazas and churches, which still stand testament to the vainglory of this profiteering era. Together with the nearby Valle de los Ingenios, it has been one of UNESCO's World Heritage sites since 1988.

Nowadays, Trinidad's main industries are related to agriculture, including tobacco processing, and tourism. Despite limited infrastructure, including an antiquated water system and limited hotels, the city receives hundreds of thousands of tourists each year. The growing private sector is flourishing in the city, where b&bs and private restaurants have sprung up all over the place. The city is also known for its rich musica, and there are several casas de musica (music houses), including one next to the cathedral in Plaza Mayor.





## Sunday, Dec 6

12:45 pm **Depart Miami on AA9428**, arriving in Havana, Cuba at 1:45 pm

**Orientation driving tour of Havana**, including stops at Plaza de la Revolucion, 5th Avenue and the Capitol Building

**Settle in to the Historic Hotel Capri**, which was one of the first hotel casinos built by the Mafia in Cuba. Owned by mobster Santo Trafficante, and run by George Raft, the hotel was at a time one of the largest casinos in Havana. Located blocks from the University of Havana, Coppelia ice cream, and the Havana seawall, the recent remodeling provides first class amenities, while leaving the history and original charm of "The Capri."

**Discussion with journalist Marc Frank.** The longest serving foreign correspondent in Cuba, Frank writes for Reuters, the Financial Times and the Economist, and is an authority on the Cuban economy. Frank will offer insight into important economic, political and social issues on the island and share colorful stories about being a reporter in Cuba.

**Enjoy a traditional Cuban meal overlooking the Straits of Florida at the Hotel Nacional**, Cuba's most famous hotel, with a great view of the Havana sea wall and the old Spanish fortress. Served family style, the rice, beans and roasted chicken are delicious and a perfect match with live music and a beautiful ambiance.





## Monday, Dec 7

**Tour of Callejon de Hamel**, a vibrant community project, featuring a discussion of Santeria and dance performance

**Visit a health clinic** to learn about the health care system. We will receive a tour of a typical neighborhood health clinic and have the chance to ask questions of doctors, nurses and patients

Explore the **Taller de Gráfica Experimental**. The Taller is Havana's printmaking and lithographic workshop. It is a studio, a school and most of all, an art institution that preserves and develops the sophisticated art of print making with relative freedom of spirit and form.

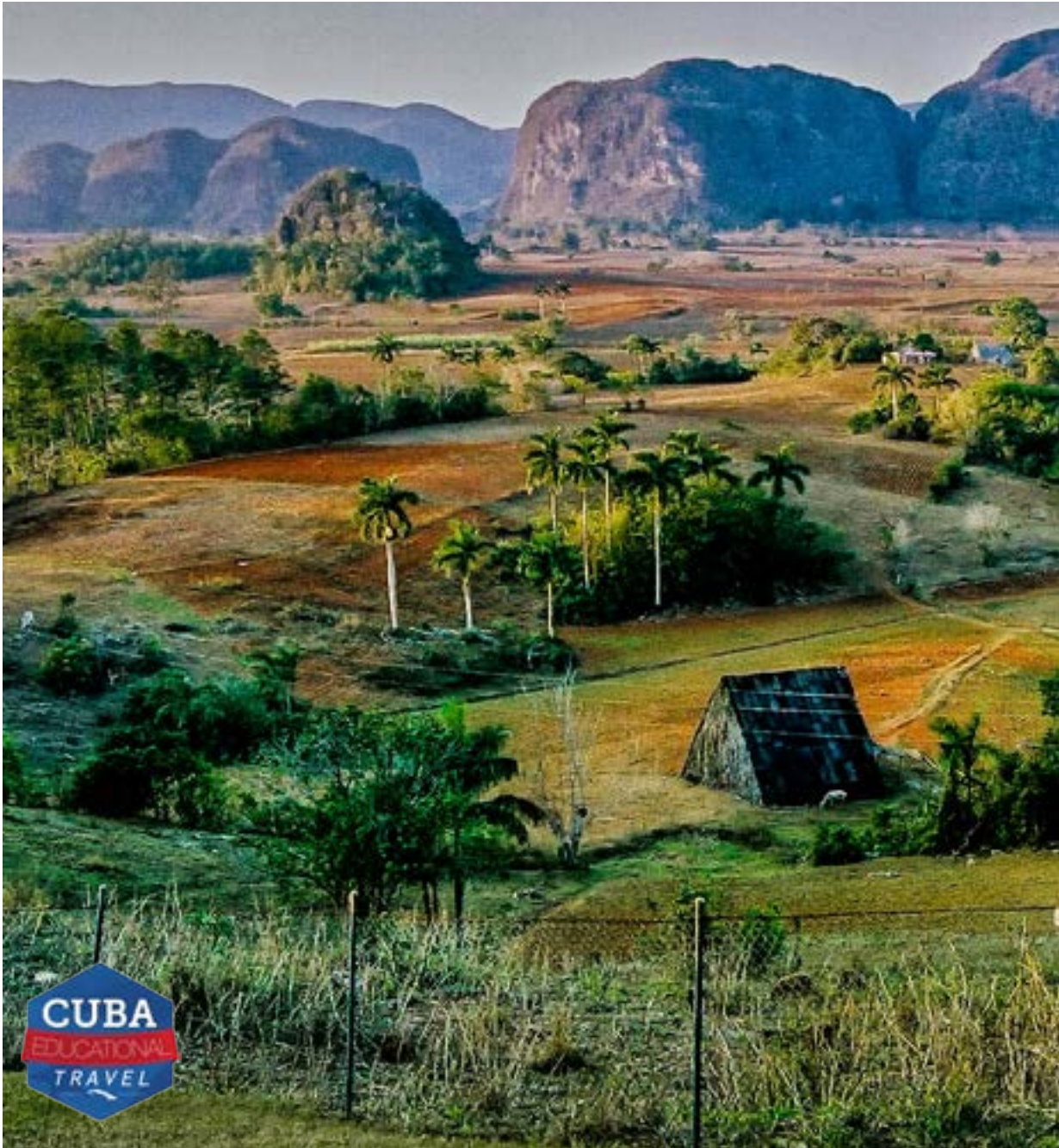
**Lunch at Doña Eutimia paladar**. Famous for its ropa vieja and frozen mojitos, this recently opened paladar made Newsweek Magazine's top 100 restaurants in the world in 2012.

**Walking tour of the Old City**. Wander through the **Plaza Vieja**, the oldest plaza in Havana, dating from the 16th century. See the **Plaza de San Francisco**, a cobbled plaza surrounded by buildings dating from the 18th century, dominated by the baroque Iglesia and Convento de San Francisco dating from 1719. Visit **Plaza de la Catedral** and the Catedral de San Cristóbal de La Habana. Visit the **Plaza de Armas**, a scenic tree-lined plaza formerly at the center of influence in Cuba. It is surrounded by many of the most historic structures in Havana as well as important monuments.

**Visit to the Liza Alfonso Academy, a women-led dance company and school for local youth**, specializing in flamenco dance. We will watch a rehearsal of the adolescent dance group, and sit with the dancers afterward to discuss how they came to join the school and the impact it has had on them.

**Dinner at Atelier Paladar**, which is equally known for its atmosphere and exquisite cuisine. The lighting and textures of the house, coupled with walls adorned in modern art, create a cozy, romantic setting. The chef boasts international experience, serving a range of cuisine from traditional Cuban dishes, Paella, and seafood.





## Tuesday, Dec 8

Depart for **Pinar del Rio**, the western-most province, famous for its rich soil, tobacco production and spectacular scenery

Our first stop will be at the home of a local tobacco farmer, who will teach us about the cultivation and production process, followed by a rolling demo. He might even light up a cigar or two for the group.

Enjoy lunch on the grounds of **a local farm, where we will** learn about Cuban agriculture and tobacco production, followed by a visit to the Vinales town center.

On the way back to Havana we will visit a local **community project for underprivileged children.**

*Free Evening*





## Wednesday, Dec 9

**Morning discussion with Carlos Alzugaray**, former Cuban diplomat and expert on U.S. – Cuba relations, to learn about the bilateral relationship and Cuban foreign policy

**Light bar fare at Sloppy Joe's pub.** This recently renovate bar-restaurant was once the hangout of Babe Ruth and the likes when visiting Havana.

**Visit to the Museum of Cuban Art.** We will be accompanied by **Nelson Herrera**, an art historian, who will provide an overview of Cuban art and artists over the last 4 centuries.

**Visit to the arts and crafts market in Old Havana.** The largest handcraft market, la feria de San Jose features hundreds of artisans selling art, crafts, clothes and music.

**Spend the evening at Café Madrigal with Frank Delgado**, renowned singer and songwriter, for a discussion about the nueva trova movement in Cuba, followed by a musical performance. **Café Madrigal**, owned and run by film director Rafael Rosales, is housed in a beautiful colonial mansion with the walls lined with captivating art work. Enjoy tasty tapas and cocktails.

*Free Evening*



## Thursday, Dec 10

**Visit la Casa de la Amistad for a discussion with Dr. Miguel Coyula**, who will take us on a visit of modern architecture in Western Havana. Few people realize the important place Havana holds as a treasure trove of 20th Century architecture. Coyula will highlight some of the best examples to be found in this incredibly diverse area of the city, including the Christopher Colon Cemetery & University of Havana.

**Wander the grounds of La Finca Vigía.** Formerly the home of Ernest Hemingway, today it still houses his expansive collection of books. It was here where he wrote two of his most celebrated novels: *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *The Old Man and the Sea*.

**Lunch at El Divino Paladar**, where we will enjoy a tour of the organic farm and a cooking show

**Depart for Cienfuegos**, one of the country's oldest and most beautiful cities, which is located approximately three and a half hours from Havana

**Check-in at the Hotel Jagua**, one of Cienfuegos's finest hotels, located at the end of the beautiful peninsula. Enjoy a relaxing dinner at the hotel.

**Enjoy a performance by the Canticus Novus Choir**, which incorporates classical melodies with more modern Cuban rhythms





## Friday, Dec 11

**Tour of the Cienfuegos Botanical Garden**, containing some of the country's most diverse fauna. We will receive a guided tour of the lovely grounds.

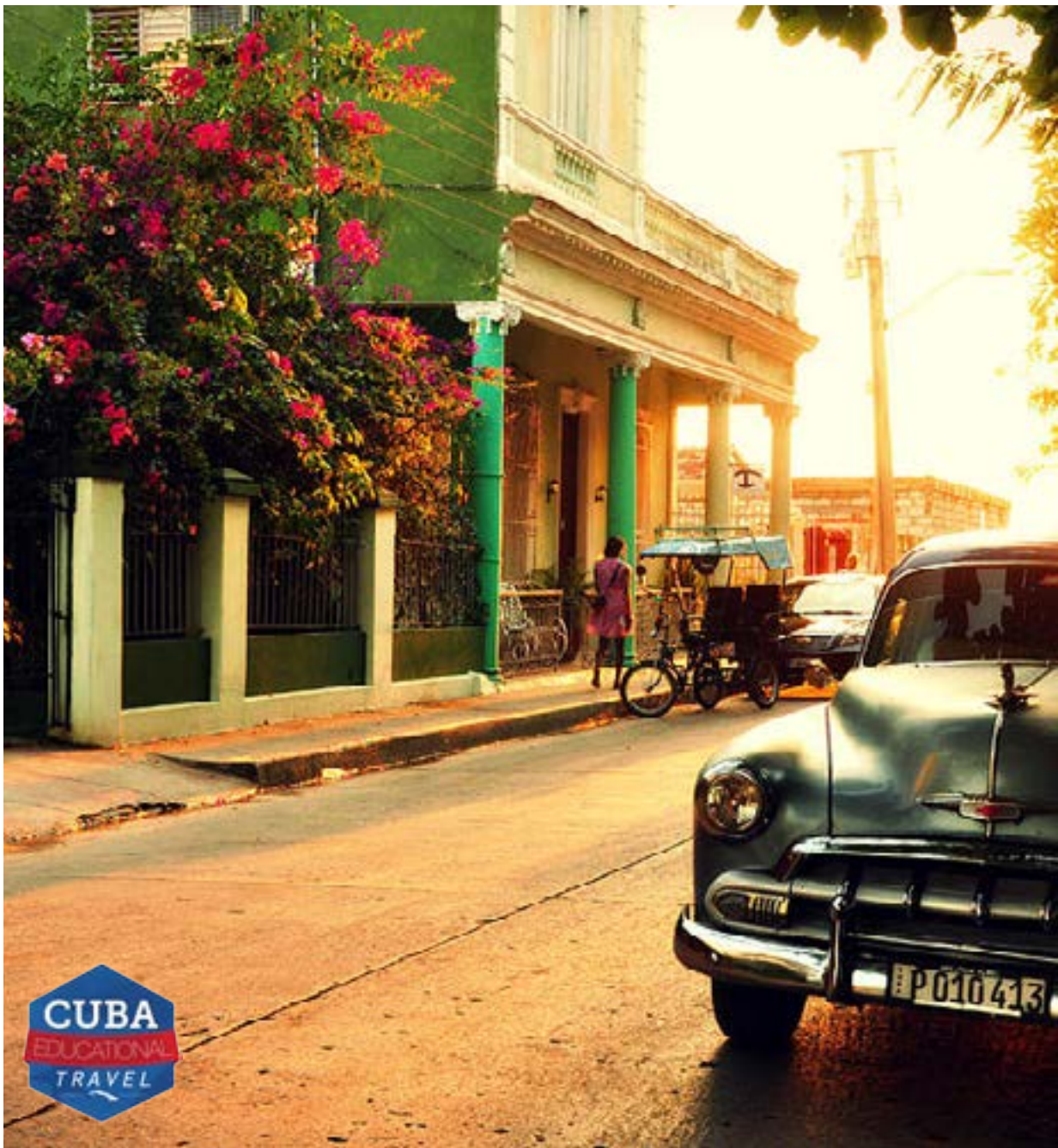
**Walking tour of historic center** of Cienfuegos, followed by **Music and conversation** with the local chapter of UNEAC, the National Union of Artists and Writers of Cuba, featuring an **interactive discussion** with photographers, musicians and other locals, followed by live music and dance

**Family style lunch at Las Mamparas**, a family-run paladar reminiscent of the first private restaurants to open in the early 1990s

**Visit the Palacio del Valle.** This stunning palace, completed in 1917 by a sugar merchant, was once a casino and is now the home of a picturesque restaurant with a sea view.

**Depart for Trinidad**, a UNESCO world heritage site, known for its cobble stoned streets, pastel colored homes and small-town feel.

**Check-in at bed and breakfasts, known as “casas particulares,” or “private homes.”** Since the 1990s Cuban families have been permitted to rent rooms out of their family homes to foreigners. Featuring comfortable accommodations and ample privacy, it's a great way to interact with everyday Cubans.



## Saturday, Dec 12

**City Tour with Nancy Benítez**, a local architect, historian and restoration specialist

**Conversation with artist Yami Martínez** at her gallery, La Casa de los Conspiradores. Yami has achieved international recognition for her art depicting the strains of life on Cuban women.

**Lunch and early afternoon free** – enjoy the market, explore the city center or head to the the nearby beach

**Farewell dinner at Los Conspiradores paladar**, located at the foot of the main plaza and the lively Casa de la Musica, featuring live music all night.





**Sunday, Dec 13**

Say farewell to Cuba today. Check-out and depart for airport

01:10 pm **American Eagle Flight 9537**, arriving in Miami, Florida at 2:10 pm



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