



# 21st Century Cuba



**Havana, Cienfuegos, Trinidad  
March 13-20, 2016**

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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 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.

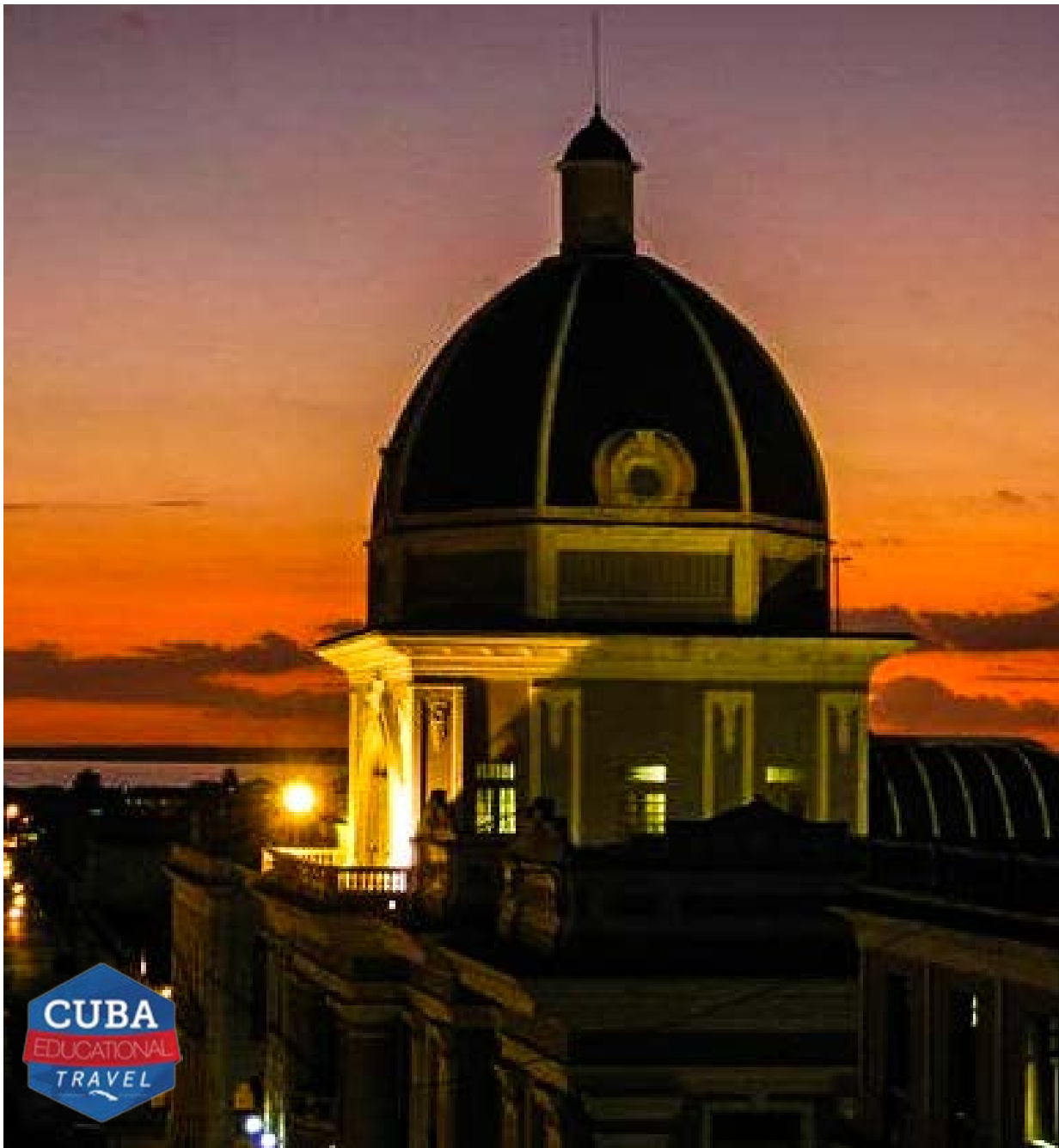




## HAVANA

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.



## CIENTFUEGOS

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.

## Saturday, March 12

Arrive to Miami and prepare for early morning departure to Cuba. Option available for a discounted group rate at the Crowne Plaza MIA, featuring a free shuttle to the airport every 20 minutes.







## Sunday, March 13

- 12:45 pm **American Airlines Flight 9478** , departing Miami at 12:45 pm – check-in closes strictly at 11:15 am – and arriving in Havana, Cuba at 1:45 pm
- 03:00 pm **Visit to Morro Castle**, one of the earliest constructed and most important Spanish forts in the Americas, featuring a great view of the Havana city landscape.
- 04:30 pm **Check in at the 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.”
- 07:30 pm **Enjoy a traditional Cuban meal overlooking the Straits of Florida at the Hotel Nacional.** Tasty Cuban food served family style with a great view of the Havana sea wall and the old Spanish fortress. The setting brings many back to the 1950s, when the mafia held its annual meetings at this historic hotel.





## Monday, March 14

- 09:30 am Visit to a home in Central Havana for a **discussion with Magia López and Alexey Rodriguez of the hip-hop/jazz duo Obsesión** about their experiences and views on race and gender equality in Cuba.
- 11:00 am **Private performance and lecture on Cuban Music at Bar Asturias by Prof. Alberto Faya** who has been working together as a musician, professor and researcher within the Cuban musical world for over 20 years. He will be joined by a quartet of some of the finest young jazz musicians in Cuba who will take us on a lively musical journey thru the history of Cuba.
- 12:30 pm **Lunch at La Bodeguita del Medio.** Located on a side street in Cathedral Square, this is apparently where the mojito, Cuba's famed National drink, was first created.
- 02:00 pm **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.
- 04:00 pm **Visit to the Liza Alfonso Academy, a women-led dance company and school for local youth**, specializing in various types of dance. We will watch a private performance by 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. The talent and work ethic at this school is impressive.

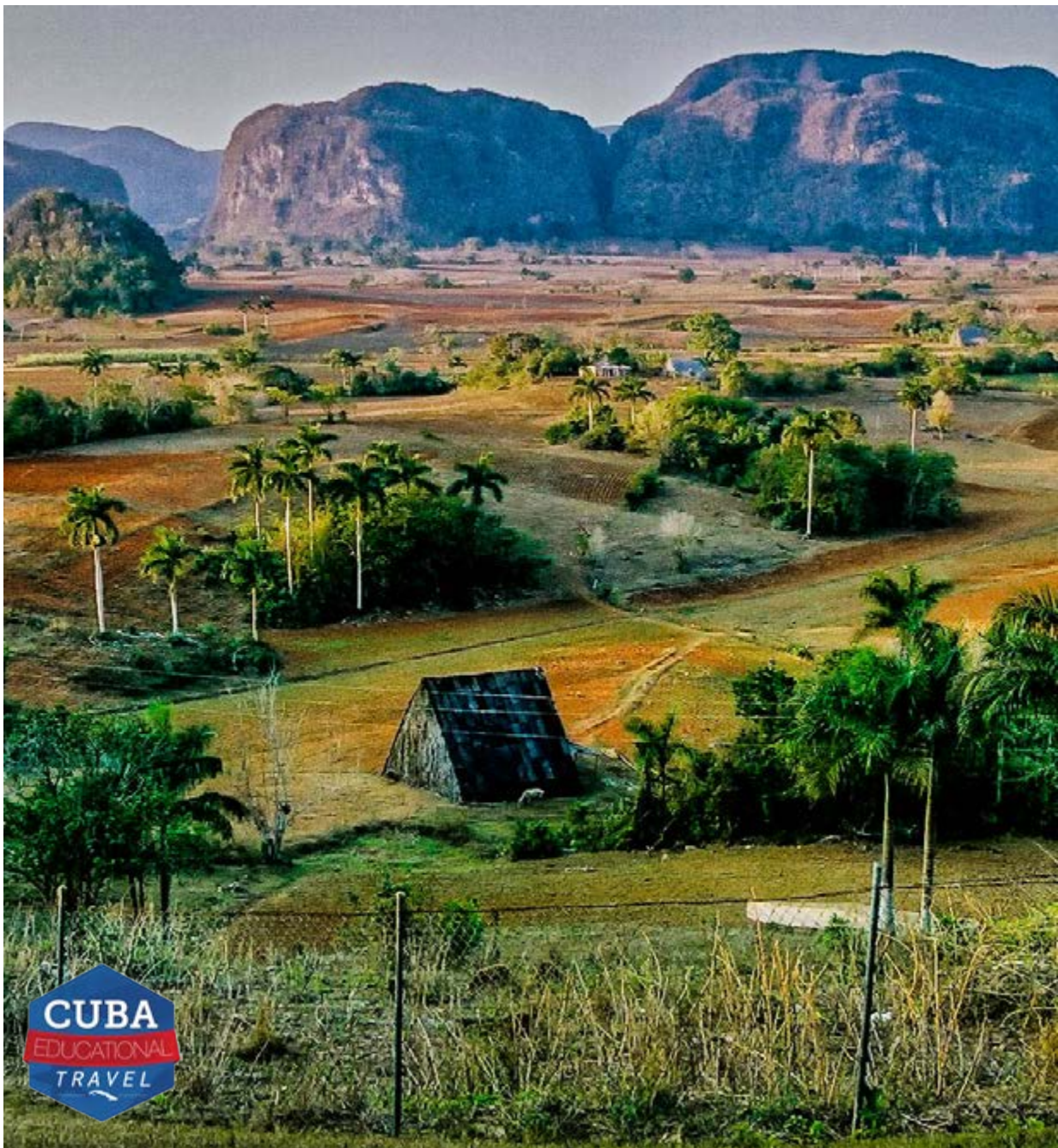
*Evening Free*



## Tuesday, March 15

- 09:00 am **Socio-economic discussion with urban planner Miguel Coyula**, who's presentation will touch on housing, infrastructure, investment and restoration programs. It's bound to leave you with a better understanding of why Havana looks the way it does today and possibilities moving forward.
- 11:00 am **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.
- 12:30 pm **Enjoy a nice Italian Meal at Bar Asturias**, housed in a beautiful building along Havana's famous Prado Avenue.
- 02:00 pm **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
- 04:00 pm **Visit to Fusterlandia, the home and studio of plastic artist Fuster**, who has converted his neighborhood into an art project featuring murals, plastic art and other designs.





## Wednesday, March 16

08:30 am **Day trip to Viñales Valley.** Considered by many to be the most beautiful place in Cuba, the Viñales Valley National Monument holds stunning landscapes. The area is also famous for being the premier tobacco growing area in the world. The 3 hour ride is well worth it. Visit a world-renowned tobacco farm, eat lunch on an organic farm overlooking the valley and explore the quaint country town.

**Enjoy lunch** on the grounds of a local farm, **Finca Paraiso Argoecologica** (the agro-ecological Paradise 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 small country town where Mario Pelegrin, a community activist, has created a charming neighborhood project dedicated to local children.** In this tranquil setting, a collection of rustic cabins provide a home for amateur art programs. This wonderful program gives local kids the opportunity to have fun while learning new skills in the areas of music, dance, theatre and art.





## Thursday, March 17

09:30 am **Discussion with journalist Marc Frank.** Author of “Cuba Revelations” and 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. His will offer insight into important economic, political and social issues on the island and share colorful stories about being a reporter in Cuba.

*Morning and early afternoon Free*

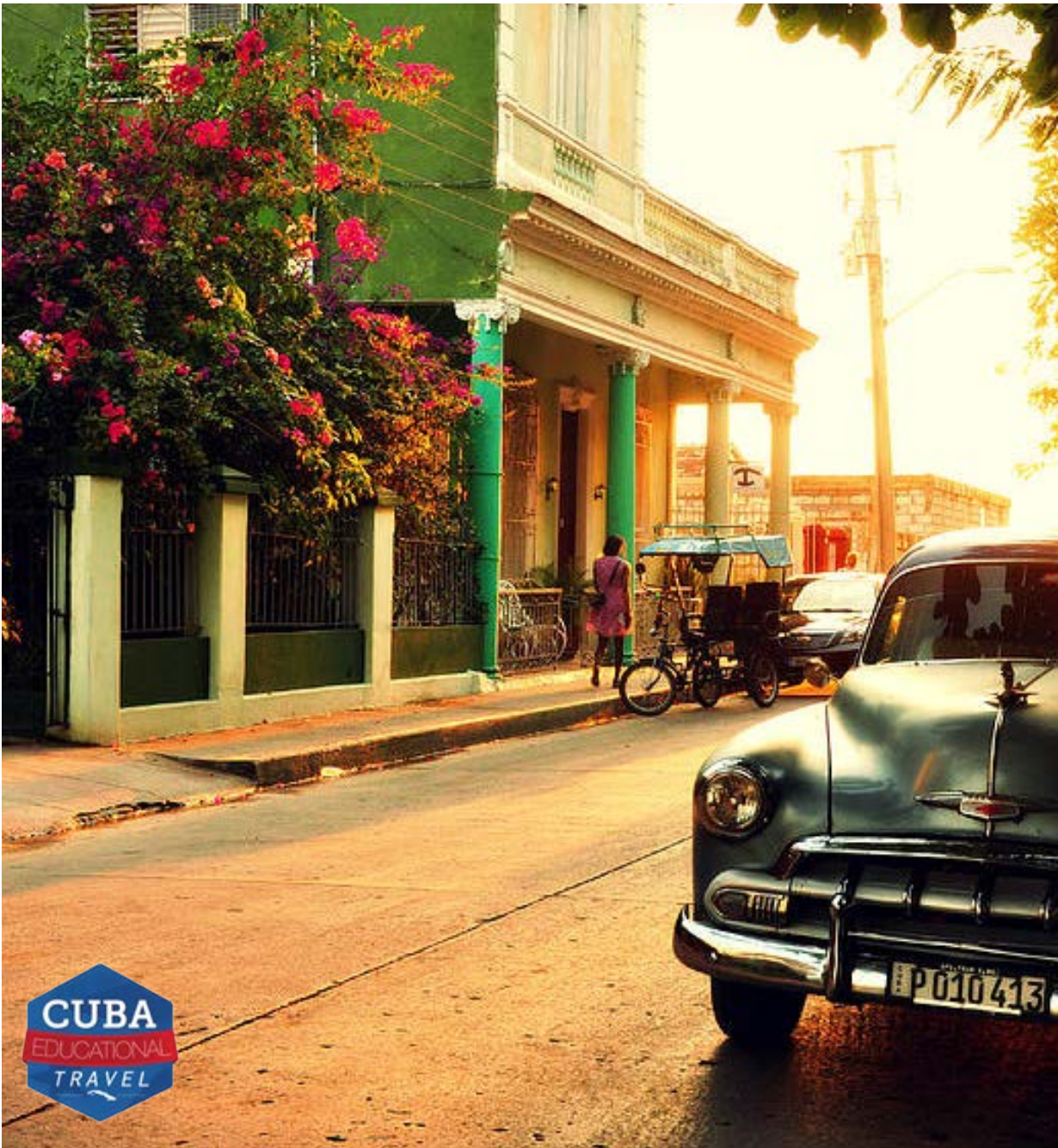
02:30 pm Visit to the **University of Havana**, the country’s oldest and most prestigious university, where we will receive a tour of the grounds and classrooms.

04:00 pm **Visit to the Nostalgic Cars restoration garage.** Owners Nidialys Acosta and Julio Alvarez have taken advantage of the recent economic opening to put together a fleet of 20 plus pristine “clasicos” to provide professional service to their clientele. We will visit the garage to see how they restore these beauties from the 1950s.

05:30 pm **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.**

07:30 pm **Farewell dinner at El Cocinero.** This lovely restaurant is housed in a former factory. Home to Havana’s hip, you might think you are in Soho or Madrid. **Following dinner walk next door for live music, art and some clubbing at La Fabrica de Arte Cubana.** Rock star X Alfonso has turned this into meeting spot for a young, eclectic crowd of Cubans and foreigners.





## Friday, March 18

- 08:30 am Depart for **Cienfuegos** , one of the country's oldest and most beautiful cities, which is located approximately three and a half hours from Havana
- 01:00 pm **Lunch at las Mamparas, a family run paladar.** Quick and simple, the food is as extraordinary as the family that operates it.
- 02:30 pm **Music and discussion** with the local chapter of UNEAC, the National Union of Artists and Writers of Cuba, featuring an **opportunity to meet local** photographers, musicians, and other locals.
- 04:00 pm **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.
- 04:30 pm **Enjoy a private performance by the local Cienfuegos choir – Canticus Novus,** which will perform classics like Shenandoah and contemporary Cuban hits. This hard-working choir makes evident their passion for performing.
- 07:00 pm **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. **Enjoy a traditional home cooked meal at your casa particular.**





## Saturday, March 19

- 10:00 am **Explore Trinidad**, a UNESCO world heritage site, known for its cobble stoned streets, pastel colored homes and small-town feel. **City tour** with **Nancy Benitez**, a local architect, historian and restoration specialist. Ms. Benitez will provide an overview of the city's history from an architectural, economic and infrastructural point of view.
- 12:00 pm **Enjoy a hearty meal at Paladar San Jose**, a recently opened restaurant with a diverse menu featuring everything from lobster to pizza
- 02:00 pm Spend the afternoon at nearby Ancon beach.
- 08:00 pm **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, March 20

10:00 am Check-out and depart for airport

01:20 pm **American Eagle Flight 9537** - departing Cienfuegos at 1:20 pm and arriving in Miami at 2:30 pm. Please leave 3 hours between scheduled arrival and connecting flights.



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