



## ***Immerse yourself -Taste of Cuba***

*December 8-14, 2025*

*April 20 -26, 2026 & December 7-13, 2026*

*(Custom dates and groups upon request)*

***Step into the rhythm of Cuba — past, present, and future. Experience the island's vibrant music, art, history, and culture while making a meaningful impact. Join us in Havana and be part of a modern-day mitzvah, supporting and uplifting the local communities.***



## ***"Purposeful Travel for Passionate People"***

***Cuba is on the move—transforming in real time. Now is your chance to witness and engage with this historic moment.***

***Delve beneath the surface with exclusive access to artists, musicians, community leaders, and everyday Cubans.***

***From the rhythm of salsa to the aroma of rich Cuban coffee, from iconic vintage cars to cutting-edge cultural shifts—this is not just a trip, it's total immersion. Join us for an unforgettable experience that blends discovery, connection, and purpose.***

# **Itinerary**

## **Day 1: Welcome to Havana – Let the Journey Begin!**

*(Plan to arrive before 4:00 PM if possible)*

In just 45 minutes from Miami, you'll land in a place that feels worlds away. From the moment you arrive, Cuba invites you to step into a rich mosaic of history, culture, and warmth. Upon arrival at José Martí International Airport, you'll make your way to the hotel via taxi (unless arriving with a group transfer). Our local team will be on hand to assist and guide you as needed.

Once checked in, enjoy a refreshing welcome cocktail, settle into your room, and take a moment to get comfortable in your home away from home.

To kick off our Cuban experience, we'll visit the iconic Plaza de la Revolución, a powerful symbol of Cuban identity. Snap a group photo in front of the famous Che Guevara mural and learn how this vast square became the backdrop for Fidel Castro's marathon speeches. Just around the corner, we'll also stop at a lesser-known but fascinating monument honoring Ethel and Julius Rosenberg—a unique intersection of Cuban and American Cold War history.

This evening, we'll gather for a Welcome Dinner at one of Havana's acclaimed private restaurants. Savor the flavors of Cuba and get to know your fellow travelers. ¡Bienvenidos a Cuba! Let the magic begin.

## **Day 2: Explore the Heart of Havana**

After a delicious breakfast at the hotel, we'll begin our journey in the historic center of Havana—La Habana Vieja. As we walk through this captivating UNESCO World Heritage Site, you'll step into a living museum of Spanish colonial architecture, cobblestone streets, vibrant plazas, and restored buildings that showcase centuries of history and culture. We'll also stop by Hotel Raquel, a boutique hotel with Jewish-inspired art and architecture, reflecting Havana's small but storied Jewish heritage.

We'll then visit Taller Experimental de Gráfica, Havana's renowned printmaking workshop founded in 1962. This creative hub has launched the careers of some of Cuba's most important visual artists. Learn about traditional engraving techniques, meet local artists, and have the opportunity to purchase one-of-a-kind prints to support the local art scene.

Lunch will be enjoyed at a paladar, one of Cuba's independently owned restaurants. These gems represent the best of Cuban hospitality and innovation—offering creative takes on

traditional cuisine in intimate, welcoming settings. Other Cuban Journeys has curated the best of the best for an unforgettable culinary experience.

In the afternoon, we'll visit the Havana Music School (or a comparable community initiative). This is a chance to learn how Cuba's music education system became a revolutionary success story—and to see firsthand how music continues to shape the lives of Cuban youth. Your presence helps support their efforts and celebrates the power of art as a form of resilience.

As the day winds down, we'll stroll through the legendary Hotel Nacional de Cuba, a glamorous 1930s-era hotel that once hosted the likes of Sinatra, Ava Gardner, and the infamous 1946 Mafia Conference. Enjoy the breezes and stories from its iconic Hall of Fame bar.

We'll close the day with another delicious group dinner at a privately owned restaurant, sharing reflections and setting the tone for an unforgettable week of connection, culture, and discovery.

### **Day 3: Culture, Community & Creative Expression**

After breakfast, we continue our immersive exploration of Havana—this time delving into the island's vibrant Jewish legacy and extraordinary artistic spirit.

This morning, we visit one of Havana's three active synagogues and meet a leader from the Sephardic Jewish community. Learn how this resilient community has maintained its identity and institutions since the revolution. You'll also have the chance to see the synagogue's Holocaust memorial exhibit, dedicated to educating Cubans about this dark chapter of history. We'll deliver thoughtful gifts and supplies in support of their ongoing efforts.

Next, we travel to the kaleidoscopic world of José Fuster, Cuba's most beloved mosaic artist, often called the *Picasso of the Caribbean*. His home and surrounding neighborhood, Fusterlandia, are transformed into a living canvas of vibrant tilework, sculptures, and bold color. On our way there, we'll pass through the elegant neighborhood of Miramar, once home to Havana's elite, with mansions that whisper of pre-revolutionary grandeur.

A delicious lunch at a top-rated paladar will introduce new flavors and culinary creativity that elevate traditional Cuban cuisine.

In the afternoon, prepare to be energized by the extraordinary Havana Compass Dance Company. This dynamic performance blends Afro-Cuban rhythms, flamenco, and contemporary choreography with powerful percussion—sometimes using chairs, boxes, and even tables as instruments! It's a celebration of movement and music that will have you clapping along in awe.

After a full day of inspiration and connection, enjoy some well-earned downtime back at the hotel. Sip a glass of rum, take a dip in the pool, or simply relax before heading out for dinner on your own, with plenty of local recommendations to guide you.

#### **Day 4: A Journey into Cuba's Green Heart – Viñales**

After breakfast (and a strong shot of Cuban coffee!), we leave the buzz of Havana behind and head west to the breathtaking province of Pinar del Río, home to the famed Viñales Valley. Along the way, take in a landscape of rolling hills, lush sugarcane fields, and tobacco farms—a photographer's dream.

Our first stop is at the humble home of a tobacco and coffee farmer, where you'll be welcomed with homemade coffee and warm conversation. Learn firsthand about the challenges and rhythms of rural Cuban life. Watch as a fresh cigar is rolled right in front of you, and step into the drying sheds where tobacco leaves are aged to perfection. Surrounded by towering limestone mogotes and fertile farmland, you'll understand why this valley is considered one of Cuba's most beautiful natural treasures.

For lunch, we'll gather at a family-run organic farm nestled in the heart of the valley. Enjoy a fresh, farm-to-table meal while hearing the remarkable story of its visionary owner—one of Cuba's most successful female entrepreneurs, whose work was even recognized by the White House. Engage in a conversation about organic agriculture, sustainability, and Cuba's ongoing Green Revolution, all while marveling at one of the most spectacular panoramic views on the island.

We return to Havana in the late afternoon. Dinner is not included tonight, but after a full day of travel and a hearty lunch, you may prefer a light snack or rest. Your guide will be happy to help with recommendations or reservations.

#### **Day 5: Memory, Meaning & the Spirit of Shabbat**

We begin our day with a visit to a bustling agro-market, where locals shop for produce and daily essentials. Here, you'll gain insight into Cuba's dual economy and the continuing role of the libreta—the ration book that has shaped Cuban life since the revolution. This is a powerful window into the resilience of daily life in Havana.

Our exploration of Jewish Cuba deepens with a solemn and moving visit to the Jewish Cemetery, the final resting place for generations of Cuban Jews. We'll pause at the Shoah Memorial, erected in 1947—the oldest of its kind in the Western Hemisphere. Legend has it that six grains of soap, believed to be made from human fat by the Nazis, are buried beneath it. This quiet moment of remembrance reminds us of the enduring importance of memory and identity.

Next, we shift to literary history as we follow in the footsteps of Ernest Hemingway with a visit to his beloved home, Finca Vigía, perched on a hillside outside Havana. Explore the rooms just as he left them, discover his personal collection of books and trophies, and see his legendary boat, *Pilar*, preserved on the grounds. The estate offers an intimate look at the life of the writer who fell in love with Cuba and captured its soul in his work.

From there, we travel to the quaint fishing village of Cojímar, immortalized in Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. We'll visit a statue honoring *Papa*, lovingly built by the local fishermen who inspired his writing, and enjoy a delicious lunch at a standout paladar with coastal charm and bold Cuban flavors.

On our return to Havana, we'll stop at the Castillo del Morro, the imposing colonial-era fortress that guards the entrance to Havana Bay. From its cliffside perch, you'll be treated to one of the most breathtaking panoramic views of the city—a perfect place to capture the heartbeat of Havana.

In the late afternoon, we visit the San José Craft Market, where Havana's artists and artisans showcase their work. This is a great opportunity to chat with local creatives, learn about their materials and techniques, and directly support Cuba's thriving artistic community.

As evening falls, we prepare for a moving and meaningful Shabbat with the Cuban Jewish community. The Jewish presence in Cuba dates back to the time of Columbus, and today, though small, it remains strong and deeply rooted. At Beth Shalom Synagogue (El Patronato), we'll meet community leaders and leave behind donations that will directly support Jewish life on the island.

**Optional:** Join in Shabbat services with local congregants—a unique and memorable expression of shared tradition and solidarity.

We'll enjoy an included dinner at a local paladar, followed (for those with energy left!) by an optional night out at Fabrica de Arte Cubano (FAC)—Havana's world-renowned cultural space where music, art, and performance come alive in a stunningly reimagined factory.

## **Day 6: Art, Rhythm & Celebration**

**Good morning, Havana!**

We begin our final full day with a visit to one of Havana's most inspiring and joyful community projects: Muraleando. Born from a grassroots movement to transform a neglected neighborhood, this vibrant hub of creativity is now filled with colorful murals, playful sculptures, and the voices of local children expressing themselves through art. Peek inside open-air classrooms, dance to the rhythms of a local band, and feel the spirit of a community that has turned adversity into artistry. You'll also have the chance to purchase original art displayed in the old water tank gallery—directly supporting the artists and their mission.

After an included lunch, it's time to truly embrace the Cuban way—with your feet! Join a lively salsa lesson and learn firsthand why music and dance are woven into the fabric of everyday life here. Whether you've got two left feet or the rhythm in your soul, this experience is sure to bring joy and laughter.

If time allows, we'll take a leisurely stroll down the Prado, one of Havana's most elegant boulevards. Lined with marble benches, artists, and performers, it's a favorite gathering place for locals and a perfect place to support the Cuban people.

As the sun sets on our unforgettable journey, get ready to ride in style—classic American convertibles (affectionately known as "Yank tanks") will sweep us through Havana's streets to our farewell dinner. With the wind in your hair and music in the air, this joyful ride is a celebration in itself.

Tonight, we raise our glasses to our incredible guide, driver, and fellow travelers—to the laughter, learning, and friendships forged along the way.

### **Day 7: Farewell Havana**

Enjoy your final breakfast at the hotel as you take in the last moments to digest all that you experienced. After check-out, depending on flight schedules and time, we'll make a few final stops to savor Havana's beauty one last time.

When it's time, you'll be transferred to the airport for your departure flight. For those with flights not going on the transfer, you'll have some free time to make the most of your remaining hours in this enchanting city.

Safe travels and hasta luego—until we meet again in Cuba!

### **Your trip includes:**

- **7 days / 6 nights in Cuba**
- **Accommodations in Havana**
- **6 breakfasts, 5 lunches, and 4 dinners, including welcome and farewell meals**
- **Opportunities to dine at privately owned paladares, sampling some of Cuba's best cuisine**
- **Private transportation throughout the program with a professional Cuban driver-guide, offering deep insight into Cuban history, politics, arts, education, health care, and daily life**
- **Entrance fees to all scheduled cultural and historical sites**
- **Gratuities for included meals and hotel bell staff**
- **Two bottles of water per person, per day**

## Not included:

- **Trip cancellation insurance – *strongly recommended*. Please note: cancellations for any reason may result in the loss of all funds paid.**
- **Round-trip airfare to Cuba**
- **Cuban tourist visa (required for entry)**
- **Tzedakah (charitable donations) to synagogues and community organizations**
- **Gratuities for your guide and driver (recommended amounts will be provided)**

*This trip operates under the "Support for the Cuban People" license, allowing for legal travel to Cuba. Travelers will engage in a full-time schedule of meaningful cultural exchange and community support. Itineraries are subject to change due to local conditions, but any adjustments will be thoughtfully planned to ensure an equally enriching experience.*

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION



- Your passport must be valid for 6 months from date of departure.
- If you are Cuban born and departed Cuba before December 31, 1970 you will need a special visa and must notify OCJ as soon as possible. This is a timely and lengthy process and can take up to 8 weeks to receive.
- All payments are by check only.
- Each traveler must sign a liability form and a travel affidavit
- Cuban health insurance is included (and compulsory) in the cost of the trip. It covers medical expenses in Cuba due to illness and accident up to \$25,000 and repatriation and transport up to \$7000. Pre-existing conditions are not covered.
- As a participant on this people to people trip, you are required by OFAC to participate in the full time activities of this itinerary.