

CUBA ITINERARY

ACANELA EXPEDITIONS



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Trip Overview

Introduction: Explore a side of Cuba that few rarely get to experience. Travel through Havana's history-infused streets and stroll along Trinidad's cobblestone avenues to Afro-inspired music. Visit Vinales to tour a tobacco plantation to experience iconic Cuban culture and take in the views of the island's beautiful rolling hills. Along the way meet local Cubans who will give you a proper welcome – tobacco farmers, local chefs, artists, and historians.

Day 1: Havana, Cuba

Meals: D

Arrival Airport: Jose Marti International Airport (HAV)

Arrival: Welcome to Havana, Cuba, a land full of adventures designed to create memories that will last a lifetime. Upon arrival at the Jose Marti Airport (HAV), your guide and driver will greet you with a sign reading "Acanela Expeditions". After a quick orientation of the city, you will enjoy a leisurely drive through the city to your traditional casa. Get to know artists, dancers, and musicians who have helped transform a downtrodden neighborhood into a living work of art. Explore the city surrounded by music and dance — the pulsing undercurrent of life in Cuba. Visit the Escuela de Arte in San Antonio de los Baños and enjoy a thorough immersion in popular culture, son and salsa tosantería — the island's syncretic religion fusing African and Catholic faiths.

Afternoon: If you arrive in the early afternoon, you will have some time to enjoy lunch at a local establishment before checking into your classic Cuban accommodation. Take time to freshen up before dinner.

Time permitting, we will visit FAC (Fábrica de Arte Cubano). We will enjoy the real art scene in Cuba at Fabrica De Arte Cubano. FAC is located in the C / 26 corner 11 (next to the al puente de Hierro - the Iron bridge). Do not miss it because the large fireplace Chef restaurant (attached to the FAC) is visible from the street Line. The old factory has now become the cultural epicenter of the city. Various proposals in the visual arts (installation, video art, sculpture, painting, theater, architecture, etc.) live music, restaurant, club bar, cinema and every day a new surprise. If you want to know the most trendy city environment, this is definitely the place. ***Note: At the entrance, your guide will hand you a ticket where the waiters will record your drinks. Please do not lose your card as without it you will have to pay 30 CUC. Occasionally, the FAC is closed in January, if that is the case, we will substitute an equivalent cultural activity.***

Dinner: End your first day in Cuba with a delicious traditional Cuban welcome meal at a local restaurant. Your guide will inform you of the meeting time and provide the relevant directions. After dinner, relax and enjoy the city life in Havana before returning to your traditional casa for the evening.

Accommodation: *Old Havana Colonial Villa*

Inclusions: *Airport Transfer, Welcome Dinner*



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Day 2: Old Havana

Meals: B, L

Breakfast: Enjoy a delicious breakfast at your traditional casa before beginning the day's adventures!

Morning: Start the day with a tour of Old Havana. Make a stop at Plaza de Armas, the oldest square in Havana and the site of the city's foundation and marvel at the sights and sounds that have captivated travelers for years. Cathedral Square, Plaza Vieja and Plaza San Francisco de Asis (the four more important squares in old Habana) Continue on to El Templete, the oldest neo-classical building in Havana, for a look at the place where the first city town council was held.

Lunch: Take time to pause amidst your adventures to grab a bite to eat at a local restaurant and indulge in some of the most incredible flavors you have ever tasted!

Afternoon: After lunch we will visit the Capitolio and Big Theater and walk down to Paseo del Prado! Walk around Centro Habana and visit the Chinese area, Callejón de Hammel and Revolution Square for some extra historical immersion! Spend some time walking about the streets and speak to the locals with the assistance of your guide. Search for the perfect souvenir and other memorabilia while learning more and more about the rich culture.

Dinner: Return to your traditional casa to freshen up before tucking into a delicious dinner of traditional Cuban dishes. Your guide will be able to provide you specific recommendations or enjoy a classic meal at your casa.

Recommendations: Provided by your guide & the in-country team

Accommodation: Old Havana Colonial Villa

Inclusions: Breakfast, Tour of Old Havana, Free Time in Havana, Local Dinner Experience

Day 3: Havana - Vinales - Havana

Meals: B, L

Breakfast: Enjoy a delicious breakfast at your traditional casa before beginning the day's adventures!

Morning: This morning you will visit the most beautiful places in Vinales - making stops at Las Terrazas and the famed Mirador Los Jazmines where your local guide will assist you in discovering the endless expanse of curious shapes of the mogotes! Learn about this blessed area while visiting natural lookouts and caves. We will then continue onwards to visit Casa del Veguero - a traditional Cuban tobacco house where we can see how Cuban cigars are made (you can even purchase a few to take home if you want!).

Lunch: Enjoy a traditional lunch in an authentic farm restaurant.

Afternoon: Following lunch we will depart to explore the Cave of the Indian (a stunning stalactite cave structure nestled within the jungles of Cuba). Following our time at the cave, we will continue to Taller Raices - a stunning artisan workshop which is almost more museum than workshop! With the mogotes as the



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backdrop, you'll find here the stunning creations of local Cubans as they have crafted stunning woodwork creations. This is another stunning place to visit with flowers, fruits, and beautiful trees in the surrounding area. Following our time at Tallier Raices, we will set out by car back to Havana to ensure we return before it gets too late in the day.

Dinner: In the evening, enjoy a well-rounded dinner with traditional Cuban cuisine.

Recommendations: Pazillo st/ 5ta b/ 4 and 6; Decameron - Linea #753, e/ Paseo y Calle 2

Side Note: There are several places in Cuba where you can go salsa dancing. If you wish to learn some great moves to take back home to the USA, be sure to look for one of these places. If you have any questions about Salsa, please feel free to ask our in-country team about it. In Cuba itself, a new quicker style of Salsa developed from an exciting and vibrant mix of Funk, Nueva Trova, Hip Hop, Jazz, called Timba. The Salsa class doesn't start until late in the evening, so if you decide to do this, it will be a late night! Please ask your guide for instructions.

Accommodation: *Old Havana Colonial Villa*

Inclusions: *Breakfast, Private Transport to Vinales, Tobacco Farm Visit, Local Dinner Experience*

Day 4: Havana

Meals: B, L

Breakfast: Enjoy a delicious breakfast at your traditional casa before beginning the day's adventures!

Morning: Start the day with a tour around Centro Habana and visit Chinesse área, Callejón de Hammel and Revolution Square and enjoy a deeper look at Cuba's rich history and the real live style of the Cuban people.

Lunch: Take time to pause amidst your adventures to grab a bite to eat at a local restaurant and indulge in some of the most incredible flavors you have ever tasted!

Afternoon: Visit Miramar (Parque de los Ahorcados) and the surrounding area - brimming with interesting things to see. Miramar, prior to the revolution, was a neighborhood of upscale Cuban residents (you'll see by the many large houses and mansions that line some of the streets). This district is where some of the most glamorous Cuban homes in the 50's existed. After touring the city, make a stop for a taste of the best ice cream in all of Cuba!

Dinner: If you haven't visited it yet, we will visit the Fabrica de Arte Cubano which is a great place to enjoy a variety of delicious dishes and foods. (own expense) This is also a fantastic place to experience the real Cuban art scene. Unwind from the day's adventures with the delicious dinner items before returning to your traditional casa for the evening!

Accommodation: *Traditional Cuban Village*

Inclusions: *Breakfast, Free Time in Old Havana, Visit to Hemmingway's Estate, Local Dinner Experience*

Day 5: Havana / Trinidad

Meals: B, L



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Breakfast: Enjoy a delicious breakfast at your traditional casa before beginning the day's adventures!

Morning: Depart for Trinidad, a beautiful five-hour drive from La Habana (Havana). You will make stops along the way to explore the beautiful nature, scenery, and culture around you. Our stops will include the city center of Cienfuegos with popular places such as the main square, Theater of Thomas Terry, and the Palacio del Valle and Punta Gorda.

Lunch: Take time to pause amidst your adventures to grab a bite to eat at La Campana before heading onwards toward Trinidad.

Afternoon: Afterwards, we will continue traveling down the coast arriving in charming Trinidad that afternoon, and tour Cuba's best-preserved colonial city with a restoration expert. Set off on cobblestone streets, gazing upon colorful houses as we make our way to meet artisans, antiques collectors, and longtime residents who've transformed their historic homes into guesthouses. End the day watching a stunning sunset from the terrace of your picturesque colonial villa.

Evening: Return to your traditional casa for a delicious dinner and time to relax for the evening. Visiting Casa de la Music is also a great activity as there's oftentimes live music playing nearby!

Recommendation: La Botija

***Accommodations:** Trinidad Colonial Casa*

***Inclusions:** Breakfast, Private Transport to Trinidad, Trinidad Local Tour, Local Dinner Experience*

Day 6: Trinidad / Cienfuegos

Meals: B, L

Breakfast: Enjoy a delicious breakfast at your traditional casa before beginning the day's adventures!

Morning: This morning visit Playa Ancon Beach, a beautiful and scenic destinations near Trinidad that can't be missed to enjoy time along the scenic Cuban coastline. Enjoy the warm caribbean water and explore the nearby area with your guide.

Lunch: Fuel up after a morning packed full of adventures with an amazing array of dishes to sample from a local restaurant.

La Marinera at Casilda Village very close from Playa Ancón beach. 14.00 hrs
St. Jovellanos # 178

Afternoon: Afterwards, we will continue to travel to Valle de los Ingenios.

Dinner: Return to your traditional casa for a delicious dinner and time to relax for the evening.

Recommendation: Muñoz Tapas or San José

***Accommodation:** Trinidad Colonial Casa*



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Inclusions: Breakfast, Beach Visit, Cienfuegos Tour, Local Dinner Experience

Day 7: Trinidad / Havana (Via Bay of Pigs)

Meals: B, L

Breakfast: Enjoy a delicious breakfast at your traditional casa before beginning the day's adventures!

Morning: Depart back to Havana, stopping at the famous historical site of the Bay of Pigs (a three-hour drive from Trinidad). Trace the dramatic events that occurred here at a small museum, and then step foot on the Playa Girón, one of two landing sites for the 1961 U.S.-backed invasion.

Lunch: Enjoy a traditional lunch at Oriol's house in Playa Larga (Ciénaga de Zapata). Continue onwards to Havana (a three-hour drive).

Late Afternoon: Arrive in Havana, check in to your casa, and enjoy a relaxing evening.

Dinner: Enjoy your final dinner in Cuba out in the city!

Recommendation: CASA MIA St. 1 #103 (apartment 3 highs) b/ C and D

Evening: Return to your traditional casa for a relaxing evening or explore the city on your own!

Accommodation: Havana Colonial Casa

Inclusions: Breakfast, Bay of Pigs Visit, Private Transportation, Local Dinner Experience

Day 8: Airport / USA

Meals: B

Breakfast: Enjoy a delicious breakfast at your traditional casa!

Morning: Pack up and prepare to say goodbye to this amazing city! After we check out of our traditional casa we will travel together to the La Habana International Airport to catch our International flights back home.

Departure Airport: Jose Marti International Airport

Inclusions: Breakfast, Airport Transfer



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Optional 5-day Extension to Eastern Cuba

Day 8: Havana / Santiago de Cuba

Meals: B, D

**Note on Day 7 of the Itinerary instead of going back to Havana - you will overnight in Cienfuegos / Trinidad area to prepare for your drive to Eastern Cuba*

Breakfast: Enjoy a delicious breakfast at your traditional casa before beginning the day's adventures!

Morning: Meet up with your driver for a beautiful (yet long) drive to Santiago de Cuba (8 to 10 hour drive). The drive will take several hours, so be sure to grab some snacks and have your camera on hand to photograph the beautiful landscape that passes by as you will make several stops along the way.

Late Afternoon / Evening: Arrive in Santiago de Cuba—a city built in the early 16th century by Spanish conquistadors. It's known as the "Cradle of the Revolution" and served as a battleground during the Spanish-American War. Today we'll visit many historical sites, including the Castillo de San Pedro de la Roca.

Dinner: Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant and experience a new side of Cuban cuisine!

Evening: After an afternoon full of education, the evening will transition into a cultural exploration as we experience Santiago de Cuba's vibrant, traditional music scene. Learn about the country's unique rhythm that originates from Haitian French-speaking slaves and proximity to Jamaica.

***Accommodation:** Traditional Casa Particular*

***Inclusions:** Breakfast, Private Transport to Santiago De Cuba, Local Dinner Experience*

Day 9: Santiago de Cuba

Meals: B, D

Breakfast: Enjoy a delicious breakfast at your traditional casa before beginning the day's adventures!

Morning: After a delicious breakfast, you will have the opportunity to embark on a journey into the countryside where you will first visit the Cementerio Santa Ifigenia – one of Latin America's most preserved cemeteries where Cuban national heroes and presidents were buried. Here you will learn about the history of much of Cuba's past.

Lunch: Take time to pause amidst your adventures to grab a bite to eat at a local restaurant and indulge in some of the most incredible flavors you have ever tasted! Ask your guide for recommendations or explore on your own!

Afternoon: After your morning visit to the national cemetery, you will spend the afternoon meeting & learning from Cuban Artisans. Try your hand at cooking a Cuban dish, learning how Cuban sculptors perfect their art, and even observe a painting class.



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Dinner: In the evening enjoy a delicious dinner with locals and participate in traditional music and dance with some of the best instructors in the region.

***Accommodation:** Traditional Casa Particular*

***Inclusions:** Breakfast, Santiago De Cuba Country Visit, Artisan Market Tour, Local Dinner Experience*

Day 10: Santiago De Cuba / Baracoa

Meals: B, D

Breakfast: Enjoy a delicious breakfast at your traditional casa before beginning the day's adventures!

Morning: Continue on to Baracoa, the first Spanish settlement on the Cuban Island. When Christopher Columbus first encountered Cuba, he landed in Baracoa Bay and named it "the most beautiful land that human eyes could set upon". Your drive from Santiago de Cuba to Baracoa is beautiful – as you drive past Guantanamo Bay along the coast of Cuba and through the beautiful lush mountains. Baracoa only became accessible by land in 1965 – as before then it was only accessible by sea. Today you will take a walking tour of Baracoa and learn about the local Taino people who live in the surrounding villages.

Lunch: Fuel up after a morning packed full of adventures with an amazing array of dishes to sample from a local restaurant.

Afternoon: Enjoy a free afternoon to spend at your leisure!

Dinner: In the evening enjoy a delicious dinner with locals and participate in traditional music and dance with some of the best instructors in the region.

***Accommodation:** Traditional Casa Particular*

***Inclusions:** Breakfast, Private Transfer to Baracoa, Baracoa Tour, Local Dinner Experience*

Day 11: Baracoa - Santiago de Cuba - Havana

Meals: B, D

Breakfast: Enjoy a delicious breakfast at your traditional casa before beginning the day's adventures!

Morning: After breakfast you will continue your exploration of Baracoa as you explore its beautiful mountains, rivers, waterfalls, and beaches. Visit a local fishing community and learn how the fishing industry and produce markets operate on such a remote part of the island. Explore a cacao farm and learn how to make chocolate straight from the Cacao beans!

Lunch: Take time to pause amidst your adventures to grab a bite to eat at a local restaurant and indulge in some of the most incredible flavors you have ever tasted! Ask your guide for recommendations or explore on your own!

Afternoon & Dinner: In the afternoon we will depart from Baracoa to Santiago de Cuba on our way back to Havana. Due to the flight policy implemented in December 2019, flights departing from Santiago de Cuba are no longer allowed to depart directly for the United States.



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Evening: Depart by vehicle for Santiago de Cuba en-route to Havana.

***Accommodation:** Traditional Cuban Villa*

***Inclusions:** Breakfast, Baracoa Cocoa Farm Experience, Baracoa Free Time, Local Dinner Experience*

Day 12: Santiago De Cuba to Havana

Meals: B

Breakfast: Enjoy a delicious breakfast at your traditional casa before beginning the drive to Havana

Morning: Your drive will pick you up early in the morning to begin the drive back to Havana. Please be sure to arrange for flight for either the next morning or late today to ensure you have plenty of time to make your flight.

**Please note that the drive back to Havana is long so please make sure to schedule a late evening departure. If you'd prefer to depart the following morning, please speak with your travel consultant and we can book you an extra night in a traditional casa in Havana.*

Departure Airport: Jose Marti International Airport (HAV)

***Inclusions:** Breakfast, Airport Transfer*