

Afro-Cuban Roots
8 days - 7 nights
Santiago de Cuba - Havana - Matanzas
Heritage, Cultural Experience, History

Day 1: USA, Santiago de Cuba

After passing Customs and Immigration at Antonio Maceo International Airport in Santiago de Cuba you'll be met and greeted by the driver/guide that will transfer you to a hotel in Santiago. The rest of the morning is free for you to settle down. In the afternoon have a tour of the city of Santiago de Cuba, which was founded by Diego Velazquez in the year 1515, and was once the capital of the island. Santiago has a large number of sites that are considered UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including the San Pedro de la Roca Fortress and Baconao Park. Your visit of Santiago will include a walking tour of the colonial section of the city, with stops at Cespedes Park, Diego Velazquez's House, the Cathedral and the Bacardi Museum. You can enjoy a wonderful view from the terrace of Casagrande Hotel. In evening enjoy dinner at a private restaurant followed by a live music show at "Casa de las Tradiciones" (Popular Customs House), which is dedicated to the music and dance of Santiago de Cuba. Return to your hotel for overnight. [D]

Day 2: Santiago de Cuba (El Cobre)

After breakfast at your hotel leave for a visit to Morro de Santiago, as Cubans know San Pedro de la Roca Castle. It was designed in 1637 as a defense against raiding pirates although a smaller fortification had been built between 1590 and 1610. After many changes the fortress and the citadel were finally completed in 1700. The fortress was declared a World Heritage Site in 1997 as the most complete example of Spanish-American Military Architecture. Afterwards, we continue to visit the National Sanctuary Basilica of Nuestra Señora de la Caridad del Cobre, patron of Cuba. It was built in 1926 in the village of El Cobre about 12 miles west of Santiago de Cuba. It is a 3-aisled church on the hill "Cerro de la Canteras" linked to the village by a flight of 254 steps. Popes John Paul II and Francis have visited the Sanctuary. After a boat ride around El Morro and Cayo Granma we'll have lunch at Punta Gorda. In the afternoon, lecture on History of Slavery and Slave Rebellions in Eastern Cuba lead by a professor of the Universidad de Oriente (Eastern University). Discuss the importance of Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, a Cuban planter who declared the independence of Cuba from Spain in 1868 after freeing his slaves, whose statue stands in a park named after him and Lt. General Antonio Maceo, Lt. General in the 10 –Year War that followed the Declaration and called "The Bronze Titan" because of the color of his skin, now immortalized in the Revolutionary Square, among others marked forever the African impact in Cuba's history and culture. In the evening enjoy dinner at a private restaurant followed by a live music show at "La Casa de la Trova", which is dedicated to the Cuba's musicians. Return to your hotel for overnight. [B/L/D]

Day 3: Santiago de Cuba

In the morning participate in a Afro-Cuban religion workshop, that gives a brief overview of the Afro-Cuban religion Santería, covering the syncretism of Catholicism and African religions, and the role and significance of drums in the religion. Santería has been present on the island of Cuba since colonial times, and is currently practiced by more Cubans than at any time in history. This workshop covers the main deities of the religion, the origin of its myths, the colors and vestments associated with them and their roles in human life. Guests are usually amazed after attending this workshop, when they realize that the many bright colors worn by Cubans on the street are associated with the religion. Afterwards enjoy "Tumba Francesa", an interesting Afro-Cuban music originated in eastern Cuba in the 18th century and played by "Societies" or associations of which only three remain. Today you'll visit one of them, the Caridad del Oriente - Music and Dance Association founded in 1862 and declared a World Heritage Site. Lunch at the Fondita de Compañy Ramon founded by Ramón Ramos (a Cuba born choreographer, teacher and dancer) followed a funny but informative show called the Coffee Ceremony. In the afternoon, we will visit two emblematic places to understand the Cuban amalgamation of religions: first, Museo del Carnaval with songs and dances brought to Cuba by the African slaves and, then, La Casa del Caribe (Caribbean House) a must to understand the popular traditional culture in Cuba. Return to the hotel to rest and relax before dinner evening show at Iris Jazz Club, one of the best Jazz places in the world. Return to your hotel for overnight. [B/L/D/S]

Day 4: Santiago de Cuba - Havana

Early in the morning, check out and transfer to the airport for your flight to Havana. On arrival you'll be picked-up by our representative and driven to Old Havana for a visit to the Callejon de Hammel, the frantic street considered Cuba's "high temple of African culture" for an explanation of the Abakuá secret society created in the beginning of the 19th century to harbor slaves during those testing times (on Sundays there is a special performance). Then, take a specialized walking tour of Havana's historic center led by Anibal del Prado, former associate of the Havana Historian Office, a person with great knowledge of the city's history and available to discuss diverse matters of architecture and the way that has impacted the Program of the Comprehensive Rehabilitation of the Historic Center, declared by UNESCO as a World Cultural Heritage in 1982. The walk focuses on San Francisco square and church, Plaza Vieja or Old Square, Plaza de Armas or Main Square and Plaza de la Catedral or Cathedral Square. We will walk up Obispo Street to Floridita Bar (one of Hemingway's preferred) to enjoy a Daiquirí cocktail and learn a little about Ernest Hemingway's history. Finally, visit the "Casa de África" or African House before having lunch at a private restaurant. In the afternoon, visit to Fine Arts National Museum, with special interest in paintings related to Afro Cuban painters: Kcho, Choco and Mendive. We'll end the afternoon with a visit to Taller del Sol, Choco's Studio, one of the best Cuban painters African descendent. Tonight enjoy dinner at a private restaurant and after-dinner live music at the Buena Vista Social Club. [B/L/D/S]

Note: The program for this day will be definite after seats and timing for the flight Santiago/Havana are confirmed.

Day 5: Havana

This morning visit a Social Community Project at Quisicuaba Association to learn more about Afro Cuban religion. Continue to Muraleando Social Community Project in the Lawton neighborhood to find African roots in art, dance and music and to enjoy a typical Cuban lunch with locals. In the afternoon, we will go to Regla, a working class town built around the Church of the Black Virgin shrine to Yemayá, the Great Mother of the Seas. After the church, visit the studio of the late artist Canet and meet with someone of the Office of the Historian of Regla. From there walk to the Museo de Regla where you will be received by the important local Afro-Cuban group to see a live Afro-Cuban performance and enjoy Afro-Cuban music with Nsila Cheche at Agrupación Folclórica for music, dance and spiritual songs and to talk about race in Cuba. From there continue to visit the Guanabacoa Museum and for a short conference about the Abakuá Brotherhood. Before dinner enjoy a panoramic view of graffiti paintings by artists of Havana's Alamar suburb. Have dinner at a private restaurant and enjoy an after-dinner Jazz program at La Zorra y El Cuervo*. Return to the hotel by your own. [B/L/D/S]

**Program and artists will be announced at time of booking*

Day 6: Havana - Matanzas - Havana

Depart to Matanzas to visit the Bellamar Caves and a tour of the city by a researcher specialized in slavery in Cuba with accent on the Matanzas Museum of Arts, and San Severino Fortress location of the Museum of the Slave Trade, a World Heritage Route, and on the Ruins of the Triunvirato Sugar Batey, nowadays the Museum of the Rebellious Slave (Esclavo Rebelde). Continue to Coincidencias Project, Vive Kubé, Correa's Family, a rural organic farm tour that includes:

- A typical Cuban organic lunch with local farmers - try "*moringa*" soup and tea. 90% of what you'll eat comes from the farm
- Meet staff and organic farmers for a personal farm visit and guided tour including their unique "garden of tribute and inspiration"
- Identify and collect fruits, including the largest mangoes you'll ever see
- Attend a honey and bee workshop: learn about peculiar bees born without stingers and drink honey directly from a living beehive

Depart to Jovellanos, where families trace their ancestry in Benin, Angola and Congo, Return to Havana for dinner at a private restaurant. Overnight at your hotel. [B/L/D]

Day 7: Havana

Visit the National Folklore Company to enjoy a dance show and the Caturra Music School to learn more about Cuban Music. Afterwards go to the very popular open-air Club Salseando El Chévere for Salsa dance show. Lunch at a private restaurant. In the afternoon, visit the Retazos Dance Company specializing in modern dance before enjoying some free time at San Jose Artisan Market and return to the hotel. Time to rest before dinner at La Habanera private restaurant. Return to the hotel for overnight. [B/L/D]

Day 8, Havana, USA

Breakfast at your hotel and transfer to Jose Marti Airport to board your flight back to the US. [B]

Note: We will make our best efforts to follow the above itinerary, however we reserve the right to substitute and/or make changes to certain elements of the itinerary including but not limited to routing, restaurants, hotels and activities in the event of unforeseen circumstances. Please note that activity times shown are for reference only and that actual times may differ significantly – everything runs on “Cuban time” and is part of the cultural exchange experience.

[B] = Breakfast | [D] = Dinner | [B/L/S] = Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner [B/L/D/S] = Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and Show

Your Tour includes:

- Transfers
- 7 nights accommodation in chosen hotels:
- Santiago de Cuba – 3 nights
- Havana – 4 nights
- Meals:
 - Breakfast daily
 - Lunch daily
 - Dinner daily
- African Heritage tours:
 - Santiago de Cuba
 - Matanzas
 - Regla
 - Havana
- Lectures and events:
 - Lecture on History of Slavery and Slave Rebellions in Eastern Cuba by a professor at Eastern University
 - Tumba Francesa Society
 - Havana’s historic center lead by former associate of the Havana Historian Office
 - Afro-Cuban religion workshop
 - Conference about the Abakuá Brotherhood
 - Quisicuba Association
 - Black Virgin shrine to Yemayá
 - Callejon de Hamel
- Music and Dance Shows:
 - “Casa de las Tradiciones”
 - “La Casa de la Trova”
 - Iris Jazz Club
 - Buena Vista Social Club
 - La Zorra y El Cuervo (front tables including cover, 2 drinks and appetizers)
- All transportation
- English speaking guide
- Tours according the program
- All taxes

Tour does not include:

- International or domestic airfares
- Taxes and fees related to air transportation
- Cuban entry visa
- Medical Insurance
- Excess luggage
- Optional activities
- Personal expenses
- Travel Insurance
- Tips to guides or drivers
- Expenses of a personal nature
- Meals and services not mentioned in the itinerary

Hotels in your Tour

Location	Hotel Name	Room Type	Tripadvisor
First Class			
Santiago de Cuba	Imperial	Standard	4
Havana	Hotel NH Capri		4
Deluxe			
Santiago de Cuba	Melia	Standard Modern	4
Havana	Iberostar Parque Central		4.5

Hotels will be confirmed at time of booking

Tour Prices

Season	Minimum 4 people	
	Double	Single
First Class		
May, Jun & Aug 25-	\$3,775	\$4,175
Jul 01-Aug 24	\$3,765	\$4,185
Nov 01-Dec 21	\$4,039	\$4,629
Dec 22-Jan 01 '18	\$4,265	\$5,015
Deluxe		
May, Jun & Aug 25-Oct 31	\$4,075	\$4,439
Jul 01-Aug 24	\$4,099	\$4,465
Nov 01-Dec 21	\$4,315	\$4,849
Dec 22-Jan 01 '18	\$4,725	\$5,259

Prices are per person and may change without notice

Prices are valid up to January 2018

Tour Code: CU09SCU17FFV

