

CUBA

THE PEOPLE, MUSIC, AND ART

APRIL 10-17, 2012

JOIN CROSS CULTURAL JOURNEYS FOUNDATION

on an exciting people to people journey, as we explore the colorful and vibrant culture and history of Cuba. Discover elegant, exuberant Havana...spend time with its friendly citizens, exceptional artists, musicians, enjoy the architecture, and vibrant outdoor markets. Antique cars, preserved in their rustic authenticity maintain the dignity and beauty of another age. Proud buildings in disrepair and rhythmic music encountered everywhere tell a story of the changes Cuba has undergone in the last decades that have shaped this globally unique country and friendly people. Walking through the cities will take you back decades with the richness and depth of a culture somewhat stopped in time. Travel to meet with local citizens in the colonial towns of Cienfuegos and Trinidad, both exquisite gems of soft-hue painted architecture, lively music and smiling, warm-hearted people. Immerse yourself in learning from local people about the music and dance, the expression of the soul of the Cuban people. The elegant and content style of Cuba's musicians is unmistakably beguiling; their smiles and easy aliveness contagious to visitors and locals alike. Meet with the local people from all walks of life and discuss their lives and share your own.



Learn about the grass roots sustainability movement and meet with innovative professionals and locals in Havana who are developing a mosaic of sustainable practices to counteract the scarcity of food and water resources. The human spirit to live, enjoy, create, and thrive despite hardships is ever felt as we get to know the strong people who weave it together. It wouldn't be uncommon to meet a medical doctor who is also a master mechanic, and guitar player, but who drives a taxi to make ends meet financially. Visit with artists and musicians, students and the elderly, local people who welcome you... and happily share their cultural gifts of creative arts, crafts, music, dance, cuisine, and a joy of life that is apparent everywhere. Visit the last home in Cuba of Ernest Hemingway. Experience this "off limits" island during this unique period when it is still conserved from excessive tourism. Travel legally to be with the people of Cuba and learn about them and their culture under a people to people educational license



NOTE: Cuba is the only country in the world that a U.S. citizen is barred from visiting by the U.S. Government without a license. From 1998-2003 the Cross Cultural Journeys Foundation had a license until the U.S. government terminated such travel. Cross Cultural Journeys Foundation again has a license to legally take U.S. citizens to Cuba for educational trips and to meet with Cuban citizens, as long as we conform to U.S. Government requirements. We have spent a lot of time in Cuba, and it would be our pleasure to introduce you to Cuba and the people we know there.



DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1: Tuesday, April 10: Miami/Havana. Upon arrival, drive half an hour to our hotel conveniently located in elegantly down-to-earth Old Havana. Walk to dinner and absorb your first impressions of the tropical air, rhythm and color wafting out of the doorways you pass, laughter and conversation bouncing amongst neighbors easily, meeting local people along the way. We dine at Santo Angel restaurant featuring traditional Cuban food and music. The music will follow us throughout our journey and is a window into the heart of Cuba. **(D)**

Day 2: Wednesday, April 11: Havana. After breakfast we begin our day at the Model of the City, a magnificent and vast bird's eye view of Havana where the history of the city's restoration and fascinating past will be told to us by an expert architect and city planner. We continue with a walking tour of the four major plazas of Old Havana to orient us to our location, ending up at the *Plaza de Armas*, a UNESCO Heritage site. Here, we stroll along the outdoor market stalls of collectible books dating back to the 1950's, and the time of the Revolution. You may experience the feeling of time standing still. Throughout the city urban gardens are sprouting up in neighborhoods as Cuba has had to resort to self-sufficiency measures of growing the lion's share of its own food in the past two decades. Over 50% of Havana's vegetables are grown within city limits and over 80% of the entire country's cultivated produce is grown organically. Lunch in the patio of a restored colonial home overlooking the *Plaza Armas*. This afternoon we visit and talk with artists in their studios as well as spend time with print makers at a print making co-op. Dinner is on your own. We will provide a list of *paladares* and restaurants for you to try. A *paladar* is a small family run restaurant licensed to provide meals in their home. Here, you will taste some of the best food in Cuba as well as experience being in the intimate, warm, and real spaces of local people. **(B,L)**

Day 3: Thursday, April 12: Havana. Visit ISA (Instituto Superior de Arte), where exceptional Cuban art students attend classes. Take time to talk with them about their art and lives. After lunch at *El Ajibe* for local Cuban food, we go to *Callejon de Hamel* (Hamel Street) to see the brightly painted murals on the buildings of this neighborhood. Street music and dancing celebrate the AfroCuban heritage of the people living there. Meet with the neighborhood organizer, and local residents and spend time with the people who are working in community to find local solutions to the scarcity challenges of food and water. The feeling of cooperation and ingenuity are palpable and many of the people you will meet will surprise you with their multitude of talents, which they have had to develop to survive in a society lacking basic resources. Roof-top gardens, farming co-ops, bicycling, and sharing products and services are some signs you will see of how the adversity Cuba has faced has fostered individual ingenuity, family support systems and neighbors to bind closely as a community. Dinner in your choice of local *paladares*. **(B,L)**

Day 4: Friday, April 13: Havana: Take the local ferry across to the island of *Regla*, where we visit the church of the Sea Farers and the Black Madonna, their patron saint. You can talk with the Santeria priestesses outside the church, learning about the rich roots of an African tradition very much alive in Cuba and serving as a mainstay of faith in their everyday lives. En-route to see *Finca La Vigia*, the home where Ernest Hemingway spent the last 14 years in of his time in Cuba, we stop to meet with members of a small church in *Cojimar* and to drop off humanitarian donations. Lunch at *La Divina Pastora* restaurant at the *El Morro* Fort, where we will also get a close up view into the making of one of Cuba's most famous icons when we meet, talk with, and observe the skill of a master cigar maker. This afternoon visit a local dance club with Cuban friends to try your skill at salsa dancing (optional) or simply soak in the music with local friends who accompany us. Dinner is on your own. You may want to try *La Guarida paladar*, where the movie, *Strawberries and Chocolate*, was made, or *Mar Vista*, which has a sweeping view of the ocean. Both are in private homes. **(B,L)**

Day 5: Saturday, April 14: Havana/Cienfuegos/Trinidad. After breakfast, we leave for Cienfuegos to see the rural county side and meet the people living outside Havana. We will lunch at the yacht club in French colonial Cienfuegos, the beloved city of Cuba they call "The Pearl of the South" for its spacious, sea-misted streets and plazas, a relaxed city by the bay that is the only city in Cuba that was colonized by the French. The bay on which it is situated was used long ago by ships as a refuge during storms in the Caribbean. We will use this picturesque city similarly as a refreshing and peaceful stop on our way to Trinidad. Continuing on to one of the best preserved colonial towns in the Caribbean and a World Heritage site, Trinidad dates back to the 1500's when sugar trade was the main industry in the region. Dinner and overnight in Trinidad at our hotel on the hillside. **(B,L,D)**

Day 6: Sunday, April 15: Trinidad. We start the day with a talk by the city historian and a walking tour of the town, meeting some of the local citizens along the way and mutually inviting each other into friendly conversation, which is a way of life in Cuba. This afternoon you have the opportunity to learn about Cuban music, dancing the salsa or drumming with locals. Spend the evening chatting with residents and strolling through Trinidad, famous for its lovely cobble-stone streets, and pastel colored houses with elaborate wrought iron grills. Outdoor markets here are well known for their artisan works of wood carvings and fine handmade lace, as well as ceramics, masks, and musical instruments. Visit and chat with the artisans. Dinner on your own in a local home (*paladar*), a setting you will by now anticipate for the the hot savory meal, and interaction with local musicians, capping off the end of our long day. Overnight Trinidad. **(B)**

Day 7: Monday, April 16: Havana. Today we drive back to Havana. On the way we visit the Valley of the Sugar Mills, set amidst fertile, fallow swaths of countryside once productive with sugar cane. Rustic haciendas dot the countryside with an old steam train rumbling by. The valley has many historic sugar plantations which are a reminder of the importance of sugar to the Cuban economy over the centuries. We explore the La Torre Manacas Iznaga, a 148 foot high tower built by Alejo Iznaga Borrell in 1816, erected as a watchtower to oversee the slaves working in the fields. Slaves from Africa were essential in the operation of sugar plantations, as well as servants in the beautiful palatial homes of the owners. Today, due to the lack of investment in the industry, Cuba imports 60% of the sugar it consumes. We visit with the women making lace who live in the former slave quarters. Arrive back in Havana and our farewell dinner is at a restored private home with invited Cuban guests. Overnight Havana.



(B,L,D)

Day 8: Tuesday, April 17: Noon hotel departure as we head for the airport to catch our flights home. (B)

COST: \$3460 (plus charter air of \$525 Miami/Havana/Miami. Air from other U.S. cities to Havana may be available) **Space is limited.** Single Room: add \$500

INCLUDED: U.S. people to people license to travel legally to Cuba; Cuban visa; in country transportation per itinerary; hotels (double occupancy); breakfast daily at the hotel, 8 additional meals per itinerary (B,L,D); local guides, guest speakers; preparation materials; tips for included meals on itinerary; tips to bellman, local guide and driver; bottled water; medical insurance in Cuba.

NOT INCLUDED: charter airfare to Havana or other cities; items of a personal nature; alcoholic drinks; 6 meals per itinerary (B,L,D); excursions not on the itinerary; \$50 humanitarian aid items (list will be sent of suggested items); travel insurance (strongly recommended, info will be sent upon registration.)

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Meet with artists in their art galleries, studios, and street markets
- Attend a talk by a musicologist, then gather with and listen to local musicians
- A walking tour and historical account of Havana's past by the city historian, learn its architecture
- Wander the safe, friendly, and colorful streets of Old Havana and Trinidad, both World Heritage sites, and meet local residents in their homes and on the street
- Visit local neighbors who have joined together in urban community development and sustainability projects
- Travel through the countryside to colonial towns of Cienfuegos and Trinidad
- Tour a sugar plantation and its historic slave quarters
- Explore the home and boat of Ernest Hemingway, now a museum and pilgrimage spot for his literature lovers around the world
- Meet with crafts women making traditional lace
- Listen to live Cuban music everywhere!
- Savor authentic foods in restaurants situated in homes, getting to be close and personal with local people
- Visit with children at an arts non governmental organization (NGO) started by volunteer artists and writers



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

CALL: 1-800-353-2276 OR 415-332-0682
or email: info@CrossCulturalJourneys.com

TO REGISTER: call Cross Cultural Journeys office with a \$500 credit card deposit. Or, go to our website, www.CrossCulturalJourneys.com, click on "Register".

***NOTE:** This itinerary is subject to change to take advantage of the serendipity of the moment when we are in Cuba...to meet someone special, to engage in an activity that might occur unexpectedly, or to accommodate circumstances beyond our control. Restaurants or hotels may change in similar category.*