



New Year's In Cuba: Celebrating Culture and Community

Dec 27, 2015 -Jan.4th, 2016

Summary:

This AltruVistas Journey will focus on Cuba's ever dynamic culture and arts. We will explore the relationship between personal expression, community development and person-to-person collaboration. We'll visit studios, galleries, World Heritage Sites of extraordinary beauty, and neighborhoods that have been revitalized through imaginative art projects. Much of our time will be spent meeting with individual artists, visiting community art projects, and seeing how art is integrated into the public sphere in Cuba's Socialist culture. Guided visits to important museums and cultural centers will also be featured. Hoping to satisfy the curious impulse of the family and friends on this celebratory trip, this journey will be a wonderful combination of cross-cultural engagement that reaches beyond cultures. Join us as we bring in New Years 2016 with you and our Cuban family and friends in community together!

Sunday Dec. 27: (L, D)

a.m. Group check in at Miami International (tentative flight times)a.m.
Departure from Miami International (TBA)

am Arrival into Jose Marti International Airport.

11:00am Enjoy a **guided walking tour of Old Havana**. Learn about the Master Plan for Restoration of Old Havana through the salvaging of neglected buildings, tourism for restoration investment, and the accompanying social plans. Additionally there will be dialogue with staff about the importance of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, national patrimony, restoration and urban planning.

1:00 p.m. Lunch in Old Habana and experience the City Historian's massive efforts to restore Old Havana buildings, attract tourism and new investment, and improve social services for local residents. See buildings and homes in different stages of reconstruction, meet with neighborhood residents as they engage in selling arts and crafts.

4:00 p.m. Transfer and check in to Hotel Nacional. You will be met with a welcome Mojito and have time to rest.

7:30 p.m. Welcome dinner at La Torre with its wonderful views.

Eve Free for optional cultural

Monday Dec.28th: (B, L)



9:00am After break fast you will have an **Orientation meeting** by your Altruvistas leader, Malia Everette, our local guide and program coordinators on general Cuba travel information and logistics, as well as an overview of the program.

10:30 Visit **the Museo de Bella Artes** , the Cuban Fine Arts Museum for an overview of Cuban contemporary arts.

1:00pm Lunch at El Bodequita del Medio at Cathedral Square

2:30 pm Visit **a few artists studios** in Old Havana. Lastly, we will visit the **Taller Grafica** printmakers' center in the old city's Cathedral Square.

4:30 pm Exchange with the Cuban photographer **Roberto Salas** and learn about his unique history documenting the Cuban Revolution in his home. **We leave Salas' home to briefly explore the Colon Cemetery.** Named for Christopher Columbus, the cemetery is noted for its many elaborately sculpted memorials. Its opening was at 70th decade of XIX century, its architect was Calixto de Loira, he was one of the first bodies buried in this new cemetery at that time on September 29, 1872.

Dinner Tonight you are free to explore local **Paladares**, privately run restaurants. These are wonderful examples of Cuba's economic changes and support of local economic entrepreneurship.

Eve **Private Evening concert with Julio Diaz and his fusion jazz band.**

Tuesday Dec. 29th: **(B, L)**

9:00am *"Havana Today and Tomorrow"* Enjoy a briefing by Cuban Architect **Miguel Coyula** to understand the history and development of the Capital.

After we will visit the art and photography galleries **of La Acacia and Fototeca** and chat with local artists and photographers.

12:30pm Lunch in Old Havana

2:00pm Explore the benefits of tourism to fund community development and urban renewal as you exchange with the students and faculty of the **Escuela taller Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos.** Learn about this vocational training project and how the growth of restoration has inspired a new class of restoration professionals.

4:00 pm **City tour on bus of modern Havana** including the Jose Marti Revolution Square and Playa municipality with architect and urban planner.

5:30 pm We drive to the **Fortaleza ortaleza de San Carlos de la Cabaña**, known as La Cabaña (Fort of Saint Charles), is an 18th-century fortress



complex, the third biggest in the Americas, located on the elevated eastern side of the harbor entrance in Havana, Cuba. The fort rises above the 200-foot (60) hilltop, along with Morro Castle (fortress).

7:00 pm Dinner reservations at a local paladar Canonzoa

8:30pm Canoñazo Ceremony. Soldiers dressed in 18th century uniforms fire a cannon over Havana bay at precisely 9 p.m. o'clock. It is a historical reconstruction dating back to the colonial era. Back then, the cannon fire announced the official end of the day and the time to close the city gates for the night. . Here you will have a lovely view of Old Havana as the restaurant is located in Fortaleza de San Carlos de la Cabana. At the time of its construction in the 1770s it was the largest fort the Spanish had ever built, as well as the most costly. Following the occupation by the British, who used this location to secure the port for their side, the Spanish set about building Fortaleza de San Carlos de la Cabana. We will also enjoy live music.

Eve Free to enjoy contemporary music or ballet.

Wed. December 30th.

(B,L)

9:00am Visit to the Casa de Amistad for a briefing and exchange with the representative of Cuba's Friendship Institute, **ICAP**, our official host in Cuba. will learn about the Cuban views on US/Cuban International Relations and the future of normalized relations with Cuba. Learn about life for the Cuban five back home.

11:00am **Visit to Prodanza and** meet with the Rector, faculty, staff and students to learn about art education in dance. Here we will learn about youth in the arts, arts funding, freedom of expression, teachers and ballet in Cuba.

1:00pm **Lunch and Excursion with the Muraleando Community Art Project**, a community-based art programs in Havana, inspired originally by local neighborhood artists who taught art "in the streets." Outdoor murals and sculptures, depicting fanciful celebrations of Cuban life, were a natural outgrowth of these art classes. In a country where nothing is disposable and everything is useful, broken typewriters, old telephones, tire rims, wrought-iron chair parts - all were fair game to weld and paint and turn into sculpture. The original efforts were made in conjunction with cleaning up trash dumps that had collected throughout the neighborhood. Found art objects, parks and murals now replace piles of trash and serve as gathering places for residents and visitors. We will request to meet with local artist and co-founder of the project, Manuel Díaz Baldrich Manolo. The Muraleando Community Art Project welcomes international support and aid in the form of art and educational supplies.

4:00 pm Enjoy an exchange with **CENESEX**, the Center for Sex Education in Cuba, to discuss the impacts of tourism on contemporary culture, and health in Cuba.



Here we learn about challenges with the rise of STDs in Cuba and how reproductive rights work for the Cuban population and their work to end gender and sexual discrimination.

6:00 pm Enjoy a private rooftop performance by **Grupo Mezcla** for the group).

Dinner and Evening are free (Malia to invite Cuban friends and artists to join us)

Thursday, Dec. 31st. **(B,L, D)**

9:30am Visit to the **Cuban Literacy Museum** for an overview of the mass literacy movement in Cuba, which is now a model in other countries around the world.

11:30 a.m. **Salsa Dance Class** at 1830 followed by lunch.

2:30 p.m. Visit the **Coloreando Mi Barrio, or another, community project**. Exchange with this wonderful community project that teaches children arts and painting. Meet and dialogue with community leaders who inspired this project. Afternoon free to rest, swim, to engage in your own research, or to visit the San Jose Arts Feria.

8:00 Dinner and Eve **New Years Celebration with live Cuban bands (El Chapotin)**

Friday, Jan. 1 **(B,L)**

10:00 am After breakfast we depart for the province of Matanzas, just to the east of Havana. Matanzas known for its AfroCuban culture and legacy is called the "City of Bridges" or the Athens of Cuba". Our highlights of our full excursion are many. We stop at the **Bacunayagua Bridge** on way to Matanzas town where we will visit a book making work shop the **Ediciones Vigia** to exchange with local artists and writers. Next we are off to learn about the history of the region at the **Castillo de San Severino** as we walk through this fort and learn about the Slave Route and the legacy of slavery in Cuba. This fort was declared a National Monument in 1978 and is a UNESCO World Heritage site. We will request a presentation by the performance arts group, **Afrocuba or another folkloric group**. Our afternoon finds us in the resort town of **Varadero**. Here we will have time for personal exploration on the beach. You will learn about the booming tourist economy here firsthand. In the evening we return to Havana.

Saturday, Jan. 2 **(B,L)**

8:00 a.m Enjoy a Day Excursion to **Pinar del Rio and the Vinales Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage Site** that was enscripted in 1999. The Viñales



valley is encircled by mountains and its landscape is interspersed with dramatic rocky outcrops. Traditional techniques are still in use for agricultural production, particularly of tobacco. The quality of this cultural landscape is enhanced by the vernacular architecture of its farms and villages, where a rich multi-ethnic society survives, illustrating the cultural development of the islands of the Caribbean, and of Cuba. In Vinales we will enjoy the beautiful sites and enjoy a **walking farm tour**, including a visit to a tobacco farm. We will spend second part of the day in a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, and visit the **Las Terrazas community**. Enjoy a community guided visit this ecological community and environmental education center. Participants will meet with reserve officials and community and student volunteers working in the reserve. We will receive an overview of the history of the project and then have time for lunch will be at El Romero. Afterwards we will hike through the community to meet with **local artists Jorge Duporte, Lester Campa, Henry Alamo and Ariel Pinelli**. Opportunity to interact with the local community, visit local artists in their studios and engage in leisurely people to people exchanges.

Return to Havana and evening free for cultural activities.

Sunday, Jan.3:

(B,D)

10:00am This morning we will start our day with a briefing at **the Yoruba Association** to learn about the Letra del Año, the governing guidelines that believers in Santería (a popular religion in Cuba that is a syncretism between Catholicism and Ifa beliefs from Africa). We will also have an opportunity to learn about Santería.

11:30am Visit to a **cigar factory**.

1:00pm Lunch reservation at a **paladar**, where the owner also shares what it is like to run a private business in Cuba.

2:00pm Enjoy a special briefing by a Cuban filmmaker **Gloria Rolando** on Representation on Gender and Race in Cuban Film

3:30pm Visit and exchange with the **Ludwig Foundation** and meet with local artist. Then we will have a break at the hotel.

6:30pm **Wrap Up Meeting**

7:30 p.m. **Farewell Dinner**

EVE Free for optional cultural activities

Monday, Jan.4

(B,)

Am Breakfast and Check out of hotel / Check in for return flight to Miami