



Ævintýri og Nýár á Cuba 2023!

December 29, 2023 -January 9, 2024

Optional Beach Excursion to Varadero, Matanzas

January 9-14, 2024

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 impulses of 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 ring in New Years 2023 with you and our Cuban family and friends in community together!

Friday, Dec. 29th:

(D)

am Group check in at Miami International (tentative flight times)a.m.

Departure from Miami International (TBA-Iceland Air) **As of February 1, 2022, the airline will operate charter flights from Houston (IAH), Miami (MIA), and Orlando (MCO) to Havana (HAV).**

am Arrival into Jose Marti International Airport. Transfer and check in to our hotel.

5:30 pm Welcome Meeting and **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.

7:30 p.m. Welcome dinner (**San Cristobal Paladar**)



Saturday, Dec. 30th

(B, L)

Breakfast on your own at the hotel.

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

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 (El Figaro Paladar) 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.

3:00pm Visit **the Museo de Bella Artes** , the Cuban Fine Arts Museum for an overview of Cuban contemporary arts.

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).

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.



Sunday, Dec. 31st. **(B, D)**

Breakfast on your own at the hotel.

10:00am-12noon Basics of **Salsa Dance Lesson!**

Lunch and afternoon free to rest, swim and enjoy the beauty of the hotel and surrounding area.

8:00 Dinner and Eve **New Years Celebration with live Cuban Music (Venue TBA).**

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

Late Breakfast on your own at the hotel.

Free morning to rest and sleep in.

12:30 pm Lunch at Café Laurant.

3:00pm Meet and exchange with **Roberto Salas, Cuban Photographer or Roberto Chile.**

5:00pm Enjoy a private performance by **Julio Valdez and Pentajazz !**

7:00pm Evening and dinner are free. Check out live salsa at the Casa de Musica!

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

Breakfast on your own at the hotel.

9:30 am Visit to a **Cigar Factory**

11:00 am This morning we will start our day with a briefing with a Santero or a representative of the **Yoruba Association** to learn about the Letra del Año, the governing guidelines that believers in Santeria (a popular religion in Cuba that is a



synchronism between Catholicism and Ifa beliefs from Africa). We will also have an opportunity to learn about Santeria.

1:00 pm Lunch at **paladar** Jardin de los Milagros. Here we will also enjoy a special sharing by Cuban filmmaker **Gloria Rolando** as she shares a film short.

3:00 pm Enjoy a **Cocktail Making class**

6:00pm Dinner and Evening are free. Tonight we can recommend checking out the cabaret at **Le Parisian** at the Hotel Nacional!

Wednesday, January 3 **(B, L)**

Breakfast on your own at the hotel.

9:30am **Iceland and Cuba**- discussion about diplomacy and relations with ICAP the Cuban Institute of friendship with the peoples as the Casa de Amistad.

11:00am **Exchange with the CTC** – the Cuban trade Unions to discuss labor rights and compare contrast labor rights. (*OR other social institution or mass organization (health clinic, Casa de Abuelos (3rd generation visit), Federation of Cuban Women (fmc gender rights), CENESEX (LGBT issues, or youth?)*)

12:30pm Lunch at Heminway's old dive the **El Bodequita del Medio** off Cathedral Square. After we will visit the **Taller Grafica** printmakers' center in the old city's Cathedral

4:00pm **Exchange with Rosario Cardenas Modern dance studio (or Prodanza)** for a brief rehearsal

5:30 Free time to enjoy the hotel's pool and dinner.

9:45 pm **Enjoy live jazz at the Fox and the Crow!** We will go together and you can walk back to hotel just a few blocks away.

Thursday, January 4th **(B,L)**



Breakfast on your own at the hotel.

9:30 am Learn about Cuban Musical Genres over the years with an interactive overview (Dr. Fayas).

11:30 am Cooking Class for Lunch!

3:00 pm Enjoy a **community rumba in Pogolote!**

5:00pm Return to Hotel

7:30 p.m. **VIP Visit to the Fac- the Fabrica del Arte Cubano.**

Friday, January 5 Excursion! Terrazas (B, L,)

Breakfast on your own at the hotel. Check out of hotel!

We are off to our excursion to 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.

Overnight at Hotel Moka. <https://www.lasterrazas.cu/en/hotel/hotel-moka/>

Saturday, January 6th Excursion! Vinales Valley (B)

Breakfast and leave for Vinales Valley.

A walking tour of the farmlands and crops is included today. Learn more about the simple lifestyle here and see first hand the farmers who grow tobacco for some of the most expensive cigars. Vinales is a small and charming rural village. Visit for Benito's to understand the paring of cigars and rum.

Later head to an ecological farm for lunch (it will be about \$20 USD) there to support the farmers directly . We will also learn how cigars are rolled (and give a shot at it yourself.)

After lunch we will have a free time, up to 2 hours, for either hiking, horseback riding or biking through the area. Here we get a chance to see the countryside of Cuba, and how their traditional ways of farming and living have been maintained throughout the years. (Please note it is 15 cuc as option fees).



After we have lunch we will visit the Cueva del Indio or Prehistoric Mural and park.

After we take a group picture at the look out over the Mogotes we return to the Hotel Moka.

Sunday, January 7th Excursion and Return to Havana (B, L)

7:00am Optional morning bird hike.

9:00am Breakfast and Check out.

11:00am Visit the beautiful Soroa for Gardens and Orchids!

Lunch

2:30 pm Return to La Havana and check in for one night at the hotel.

5:30 Malia to invite **Cuban friends and artists** to join us at her home in Jesus Maria. We will exchange with Francisco Gordillo and talk about his AfroCuban work and symbolism. Then we will exchange with her godbrother Dr. Orestes Quesada for a discussion about Santeria and Health care in Cuba.

Overnight at the Hotel

Monday January 8th La Havana! (B, L)

Breakfast on your own at the hotel.

10:00 a.m. **Optional Yoga Class** at the hotel with our friends from Yoga Va

12:30pm **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.

3:00pm 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. Exchange with Luisa Campo.



Overnight in Havana, time to walk Old Havana at night!

Tuesday January 9th Adios or Optional Excursion To Varadero (B, D)

Breakfast on your own at the hotel and transfer to the airport for those that like.

For others....

9:00 am After breakfast we check out and 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".

Before we leave Havana we visit the Church of Regla to see the Black Madonna, also known as Yemaya and thank our time in Havana. Then we are off ! 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 checkin at your all inclusive resort! .

January 10, Free Beach Resort (B, L, D)

Free day to enjoy the sun surf and white sand of the beach resort town of Varadero. Your resort is all inclusive to drinks, meals and entertainment are yours at your leisure. Also enjoy plenty of time to golf.

January 11 Free Beach Resort (B, L, D)

3:00pm Drumming Percussion Workshop in Matanzas.
4:30-6:00pm Community Rumba Birthday party !

Back at the hotel we gather together for Sóley's birthday Bash!

January 12 Free Beach Resort (B, L, D)



Free day! Enjoy the sun surf and white sand of the beach resort town of Varadero. Your resort is all inclusive to drinks, meals and entertainment are yours at your leisure. Also enjoy plenty of time to golf.

January 13th Free Beach Resort (B, L, D)

Free day! Enjoy the sun surf and white sand of the beach resort town of Varadero. Your resort is all inclusive to drinks, meals and entertainment are yours at your leisure. Also enjoy plenty of time to golf.

January 14th Hasta Luego Cuba! (B)

Breakfast and check out to the airport for your flights back to Iceland.