



MisterLatinJazz Goes to Havana Jazz Festival! An Exploration of Afro-Cuban Percussion

January 20-29th, 2024

Summary:

Do you love Afro-Cuban drumming? Join Arturo Riera, MisterLatinJazz, as he creates percussion-focused events deep inside Havana's Afro-Cuban drumming community! This Support for the Cuban People Journey provides you with a way legally to travel to Cuba while learning about the history of Cuban music, with a focus on the drum. Our journey will include many private performances, select Havana Jazz Festival concerts, docent-led art and architectural tours, and a group percussion lesson! We will take you deep inside the alleys and among communities with drumming traditions unique to Havana and Cuba. Explore the percussion of diverse musical genres and cultural traditions such as Son, Rumba, Abakua, Bata, and contemporary Jazz from Cuba's top musicians.

What makes Cuban culture so rich and exciting? You will get a chance to experience Cuban music, art, and architecture curated just for our group. 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 and musicians, enjoying community made musical events, and experiencing how deeply music and art is integrated into Cuban culture.

Saturday, January 20th Bienvenidos a La Havana (D)

AM Arrival into Jose Marti International Airport, Havana, Cuba. We will arrange two transfers this morning. Please arrive by 2 pm.

3:00pm Check in to our home for the week, the 5-star Grand Aston Hotel in the Vedado neighborhood.

6:00pm Welcome Meet and Greet, with a Mojito of course! After a brief orientation, learn about “A Century of Cuban Music” through a live musical overview of diverse genres by Prof. Fayas.

8:00pm Enjoy Welcome Dinner at Paladar.

Sunday, January 21st (B, L)

Breakfast is at your leisure daily 7 – 10 am.

9:00am This morning we start our day with a lively **briefing by architect Miguel Coyula**, an architect and urban planner, for an overview of the history of Cuba and its capital.

11:00am Enjoy a **guided walking tour of Old Havana**. 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. 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.

1:00pm Lunch at a restaurant in Old Havana

2:30-4:00pm **Enjoy a private Son Performance. The Septeto Nacional de Ignacio Piñero is Cuba’s oldest Son band!** We will get to listen and dance to Cuban classics. The focus of this concert is on the Bongos, invented in Cuba! Frank Oropesa, bandleader and bongo player, is one of the best in the world!

6:00pm Break for dinner

Eve **Enjoy Opening Concert for the Jazz Plaza 2024!**

Monday, January 22

(B,L)

Breakfast at your leisure.

10:00am Learn about music education in Cuba today with a visit to a local conservatory, or **ISA the Institute of Superior Arts in Cuba.**

12:00pm Lunch in Old Havana

2:30pm **A visit to the Solar El California, former home of Chano Pozo, for a Rumba Abakua and Iremita performance.** We will be deep inside Havana's Abakua community which originally developed as a male secret society for self-protection during slavery. We will see the sacred Ceiba tree growing there, an important part of the Abakua rituals! The Abakua make music with a bell, shaker, marimbula and three hand held drums called *èkòmò*. We focus today is on the *èkòmò* drums and the percussion and dance of the Abakua.

Break at the hotel to rest and enjoy dinner

Eve **Free for Jazz Concerts in Havana!**

Tuesday, January 23rd

(B, L)

Breakfast

10:00am Enjoy a docent guided visit through **the Museo de Bella Artes**, the Cuban Fine Arts Museum for an overview of Cuban contemporary arts.

12:30pm Lunch with invited guest filmmaker **Gloria Rolando** at **El Jardin de los Milagros.**

3:00pm **A private performance from the all female Obini Batá.** The Bata, a two-headed conical drum played by three drummers during Afro-Cuban religious ceremonies, is used to call the Orishas down to Earth. Historically women were not allowed to play the sacred Bata drums and become "Bataleras". We will watch an electrifying performance of Afro-Cuban religious drumming and dancing. The focus today is on the sacred Batá drums of the Yoruba faith.

Followed by optional hands-on **Group Drumming Workshop!** Now it is your turn to learn the basics or show off your skills in Havana, Cuba!

5:00pm Break at the hotel to rest and enjoy dinner

Eve **Free for Jazz Concerts in Havana!**

Wednesday, January 24th

(B,L)

Breakfast

10:00am Learn about the labor-intensive nature of Cuba's most famous export (besides music!) as we visit a cigar factory.

11:00am Visit with the community project Quasicuaba.

1:00pm Lunch at el Bodeguita del Medio.

2:30pm **A Rumba with the Rumberos Mayores (Elders) of Havana**

Cuban Rumba evolved in the ports of Matanzas and Havana with dock workers making music using sticks (clave pattern and palito pattern), drums (three conga drums or cajones), and lead singer (Gallo) accompanied by the chorus. It is a participatory music with the vocal call and chant we are familiar with from African-American roots music. The focus today is on the Clave and Conga drums.

Break at the hotel to rest and enjoy dinner

Evening **Free to enjoy Havana Jazz Festival** or visit a Cuban Jazz Club (Jazz Café or La Zora y el Cuervo)

Thursday, January 25th

(B,L)

Breakfast

10:00am **Optional Salsa Dance Class.**

12:30pm Lunch

2:30pm Enjoy the community arts project **Muraleando.**

4:00pm Enjoy a lively performance with **Wil Campa y la Gran Union.** Wil Campa and the Gran Union is one of Cuba's most popular contemporary dance bands, nominated for a Cubadisco 2022.

6:00pm Break at the hotel to rest and enjoy dinner

Eve **Free for Jazz Concerts in Havana!**

Friday, January 26

(B,L)

Breakfast

10:30am Visit to the **Havana Music School** to learn about classical music training. Focus on classical percussion.

Lunch

2:30pm **Yaroldi Abreu in a Private Concert** Abreu is Cuba's top percussionist having toured with Chucho Valdes for decades and played with the seminal Maraca y su Otra Vision. We will explore contemporary Afro-Cuban Jazz percussion with Abreu and his special group of invited guests. The focus today is on Afro-Cuban hand percussion in contemporary Jazz. Afterwards, we will stop by the **Piano Bar La Maison** for a drink and more music.

5:00pm Break at hotel.

Eve **Free for Jazz Concerts in Havana!**

Saturday, January 27th

(B, L)

Breakfast

9:30am This morning we cross the bay and visit the **Church of Regla** to learn a bit about the AfroCuban religion of Ifa and its popular evolution into "Santeria". We will learn about the Black Madonna, the Virgin of Regla also knows as Yemaya.

Next we will visit the municipal museum of Guanabocoa. Enjoy a brief overview of its history & the Orishas. Then we end our day with a coffee at a local community arts project in a gallery of a local artist.

12:30pm Lunch

3:00pm Enjoy Sabado de la Rumba at the **Palace of Rumba**, a cultural institution devoted to live music and dance, or a Havana Jazz afternoon performance.

5:00pm Free time in hotel

8:00pm For those that like we can drop you off at the **Fabrica de Arte Cubano**. We will enjoy a VIP tour and you can taxi back to our hotel anytime you wish. This is a vibrant mixed media art and music venue!

Sunday, January 28th

(B, D)

Breakfast

Free Morning. We can arrange a visit to the Playas de Este for anyone that wants to enjoy beach time!

If you like we can arrange transport to the **San Jose de Almancen**es Craft market in Old Havana and visit with local artists.

5:30pm **Cruise the Malecon in Classic Cars with a stop at the Plaza** de la Revolucion.

7:00pm **Farewell Dinner at San Cristobal Paladar.**

Monday, January 29th

Hasta Luego!

(B)

Breakfast and departures from Havana, Cuba back to the US.

This Journey is Powered by...

