



Journey to Cuba

People to People Exchange

Commonwealth Club
March 15-22, 2013

Please note that this schedule is subject to change.

Day 1 Friday, March 15

Morning

Depart from Miami on our charter flight for Havana. Flight time is 1 hour. Travelers should arrive into Miami the evening before independently.

Upon arriving in Havana, we will clear customs and immigration. (approximately 1 hour)

We will have lunch at the famous **El Aljibe** restaurant. The roasted chicken soaked in orange garlic sauce is a favorite.

Orientation tour of **Havana Vieja**. Your bags will be dropped off at the hotel and will be waiting for you upon check-in.

Check into **Hotel Parque Central**, considered the finest hotel in Havana and perfectly located in the central part of Havana.

Hotel Parque Central

Neptuno, esquina Prado y Zulueta, Havana, Cuba, Havana 10100, Cuba
Tel. 53 7 860 6627

Evening

Depart the hotel for our welcome dinner at **Dona Carmela**, followed by the canon ceremony at **La Cabana Fortress**.

Return to the hotel.

(L,D)

Day 2 Saturday, March 16

Breakfast is served every day at the restaurant in the lobby level from 7:00 am to 10:00 am.

Morning

Socio-Political Lecture by **Rafael M. Hernandez**, historian, author, and editor of *Temas*, a Cuban quarterly in the field of social sciences and humanities. Rafael co-authored "The History of Havana" and has recently returned to Cuba after role as adjunct professor at

Columbia University. Our lecture will be focusing on the Cuban transition and the factors that have changed Cuban society in the last 20 years.

Meet in the hotel lobby. Wear comfortable **walking shoes**; we will be exploring the city by foot.

This morning we visit the **Plaza de Armas**, a scenic tree-lined plaza formerly at the center of influence in Cuba. It is surrounded by many of the most historic structures in Havana as well as important monuments.

Continue to the **Castillo de la Real Fuerza**, a massive fortress built between 1558 and 1577.

Visit the **Palacio de los Capitanes Generales**. The palace currently houses the Museo de la Ciudad and was the former residence of the Spanish Captains.

We also see the **Plaza de San Francisco**, a cobbled plaza surrounded by buildings dating from the 18th century, dominated by the baroque **Iglesia and Convento de San Francisco** dating from 1719.

Wander through the **Plaza Vieja**, the oldest plaza in Havana, dating from the 16th century.

Afternoon Lunch at **Conde de Villanueva**.

Visit to the **Plaza de la Catedral** and the **Catedral de San Cristobal de La Habana**.

Experience the **Taller de Grafica Experimental**. The Taller is more than Havana's printmaking workshop. It is a studio, a school and most of all, an art institution that preserves and develops the sophisticated art of print making with relative freedom of spirit and form. We will be welcomed by artist **Yamilis Brito** and **meet other participating artists**.

Visit the **Fototeca de Cuba**, National Photographic archive, where we meet director, **Nelson Ramirez**. Established in 1986, the Fototeca de Cuba contains the widest and most valuable archive of Cuban photos. Its permanent exhibition displays the work of Cuba's photographic heroes such as Raúl Corrales, Alberto Korda, Osvaldo Salas, Ernesto Fernández and Mario García Joya.

Return to the hotel.

Evening Welcome dinner at **Atelier**.

(B,L,D)

Day 3 **Sunday, March 17**

Morning Guest Lecture by **Prof. Carlos Alzugaray** – Former Cuban Ambassador to the European Union and former Director of the Institute of Foreign Relations.

Demonstrative lecture on **Cuban Music** at Cabaret Parisién by **Prof. Alberto Faya**. He has worked as a musician, professor and researcher within the Cuban musical world. He has obtained national awards due to his work in the field of music and musicology, and written articles and books. Discussion and Q&A with the musicians and Prof. Faya.

Afternoon Enjoy a traditional Cuban **lunch** overlooking the Straits of Florida, at **La Barraca** restaurant at the historic **Hotel Nacional de Cuba**.

Visit to **Parque Trillo**, a park in Centro Habana that is popular with followers of the **Santeria** religion. Our host and guide will be local scholar **Elias Aseff**, who will explain the role of African religion and culture in Cuba and the importance of Santeria in everyday life. He

will also explain how Afro Cuban religion has influenced the evolution of Cuban culture. Meet some of the followers of the religion and learn how it helps them in their daily lives.

Evening Dinner at **Atelier**. We will be joined at dinner by several Cuban dancers who you will get to meet and learn about their years of study.

(B,L,D)

Day 4 **Monday, March 18**

Morning Meet in the **hotel lobby** to depart for the day's activities. Please **bring your passport**.

The **United States Interests Section** or **USINT Havana** represents U.S. interests in Cuba. It is staffed by United States foreign service personnel employed by the U.S. Department of State. USINT Havana and its counterpart for Cuban interests in Washington, D.C. are formally sections of the respective Embassies of Switzerland. They operate independently of the Swiss in virtually all but protocol respects. Cuba and the U.S. do not have formal diplomatic relations, however, their respective Interests Sections function as de facto embassies. Deputy Public Affairs Officer, Nancy Szalwinski will speak to us about the role of the USINT and present day US/Cuban relations.

Mario Coyula will take us on a tour of **modern architecture** in Western Havana. Few people realize the important place Havana holds as a treasure trove of 20th Century architecture. Mario Coyula will highlight some of the best examples to be found in this incredibly diverse area of the city, including the **University of Havana** and the **Christopher Colon Cemetery**.

Afternoon Enjoy lunch and fabulous views **La Torre Restaurant**, which boasts the highest point in Havana.

Evening Learn about Cuban music during a performance from *Tradison*, followed by dinner at **Paladar San Cristobal**.

(B,L,D)

Day 5 **Tuesday, March 19**

Morning Day trip to **Viñales Valley**.

Considered by many to be the most beautiful place in Cuba, the **Viñales Valley National Monument** holds stunning landscapes. The area is also famous for being the premier tobacco growing area in the world.

This morning we visit a tobacco farm. A member of the family will give us a **tour of this beautiful 40-acre farm**, privately owned by the large family of Concha and Paco Hernandez. The descendants of Concha and Paco have farmed the same plot of land for many generations and their land is involved in the production of a multitude of fruits, vegetables, grain and tobacco.

Afternoon Lunch will be a **community event** on a private farm, organized by the extended family of **Concha and Paco Hernandez**.

On our return to Havana we visit small country town where a remarkable man named **Mario Pelegrin** has created a charming community project dedicated to local children. In this tranquil setting, a collection of rustic cabins provide a home for amateur art programs. Local children are provided with the space and resources needed to allow their creative juices to flow in the areas of music, dance, theatre and art. This wonderful program gives local kids the opportunity to have fun while learning new skills.

Evening Return to Havana. **Dinner** on your own.

(B,L)

Day 6 **Wednesday, March 20**

Morning **Lecture by Dr. Marta Nunez**, professor and a researcher at the University of Havana. Her research has concentrated on transition projects for Cuba proposed by Cuban American and U.S. scholars, and women and employment in Cuba. Marta was a visiting scholar at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard in 2010. She'll discuss gender and race in Cuba today.

Visit the **Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA)**. One of the few major architectural projects completed in Cuba in the early 1960s, this remarkable post-revolution campus is the premier school in Cuba for students studying music, visual arts and performing arts. Meet students who will be assigned to us as we will break into small groups to better enjoy a personalized tour of the school.

Afternoon Lunch at the whimsical home of artist **Jose Fuster**, who has made a major contribution to rebuilding and decorating the fishing town of Jaimanitas in the outskirts of Havana, where he lives. Jaimanitas is now a unique work of public art where Fuster has decorated over 80 houses with colorful ornate murals and domes.

Experience the beautiful home of collector and art dealer, **Milagros Borges**, and learn about how Cuban artists express themselves, and art's place in Cuban society.

Evening Dinner at **Las Terrazas**.

(B,L,D)

Day 7 **Thursday, March 21**

Morning Lecture by **Dr. Marcelino Feal**, Professor of General Surgery at the University Hospital Calixto García. Dr. Feal is also a member of the Cuban Artists and Writers Union and published extensively on subjects as diverse as medicine, cinema and literature.

Visit the **Museum of Cuban Art**. We will be greeted by art historian **Nelson Herrera**. The museum is dedicated exclusively to Cuban Art from the earliest days of colonialism to the latest generation of Cuban artists.

Afternoon Lunch at **Prado y Neptuno**.

Visit the **Iglesia de la Merced (Church of Mercy)** which dates back to 1637 when the "Monks of Mercy" began construction that would require over 100 years of effort. This magnificently ornate cathedral, cloaked in a patina of time, serves as potent reminder of the immense influence the church once held in Cuba.

We will be received by **Fr. Gilbert Walker**, originally from Chicago, who will talk about the various community activities and charities that the church supports. Father Walker will introduce us to some of the residents who are benefactors of the outreach programs and we will have short question and answer session.

A short walk from the Church, we will visit the **Arts and Crafts market**, a great place to interact with local, everyday artisans.

Evening Attend a private dance performance of the **Compañía Irene Rodríguez** (flamenco). We will receive a warm welcome by Irene Rodríguez, who is considered by many to be the finest flamenco dancer in Cuba. Irene will introduce us to the dancers and discuss the cultivation of artistic talent in Cuba.

Farewell dinner at **La Guarida**. One of the best restaurants in Havana and famous not only for its delectable dining, but also as the location for the film "Strawberry and Chocolate." It is housed on the third floor of a large, old town house carrying the charming ambience of the 1920s.

(B,L,D)

Day 8

Friday, March 22

Morning

Check out of the hotel and depart for the airport.

Flight departs Havana for Miami.

Arrive in Miami. Clear customs and connect with flights home.

(B)



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TOUR COSTS & CONDITIONS

TRIP COST

Double room occupancy (per person): **\$4,685** Land and charter flight from Miami
Single room supplement (limited): **\$450**

INCLUDED

- 7 nights accommodation @ 4-5 Star Hotel Parque Central Havana (standard room)
- Round Trip Airfare MIA-HAV-MIA
- Daily breakfast
- Meals as listed in itinerary (Lunches and dinners include at least one beverage: water, beer, mojito, or soft drink. Wine with welcome and farewell dinners.)
- Bottled water
- Air conditioned bus throughout the trip equipped with cold water at all times
- Admission to all museums and public buildings listed in itinerary
- Speaker fees and conference room rentals
- Gratuities for all group activities – including meals, guides, drivers
- Commonwealth Club Travel Escort and local Cuban tour guide
- Cuban Tourist Visa
- Cuban Medical Insurance for those under 80 years of age (health and evacuation)
- Compliance with US Treasury Department

NOT INCLUDED

- Airfare to Miami
- Airline baggage fees
- Meals and beverages other than listed on itinerary
- Individualized hotel expenses (mini bar, room service, laundry fees, etc)
- Havana Airport departure tax (25 CUC, about \$25 USD)

Please contact Kristina Nemeth at (415) 597-6720 or knemeth@commonwealthclub.org with any questions.

RESERVATION FORM

Journey to Cuba – March 15-22, 2013

Name of traveler 1: _____

Name of traveler 2: _____

Address: _____

Phone:(Home/Work/Cell) _____

Email: _____

- Enclosed is my deposit check payable to *The Commonwealth Club* for the amount of **\$1,000 per person** to confirm my/our space.
- Please charge my credit card the deposit in the amount of **\$1,000 per person** to confirm my/our space. Charge my deposit to my ___ Visa ___ MasterCard ___American Express

Card#	Expires	Security Code
Cardholder signature	Date	

After receipt of your deposit, a confirmation packet will be sent with several forms for you to complete immediately. **Final payment must be paid by check and is due 60 days prior to departure.**

Cancellations made prior to 90 days of trip departure will be assessed a \$500 cancellation fee, deducted from the deposit. Cancellations made between 60 and 90 days forfeit in full the \$1,000 deposit. Cancellations made after 60 days before departure forfeit the entire cost of the trip. We strongly recommended that you purchase Trip Cancellation Insurance to cover unforeseen circumstances requiring cancellation of your travel. Information on trip insurance will be sent to you with the confirmation packet.

Tour Conditions: (It is required that you initial in following three spaces and sign below)

____Travel to Cuba under the People to People license requires that everyone must participate in our scheduled activities. Therefore, I intend to comply with this Office of Foreign Assets Control requirement and attend the scheduled activities.

____I certify that I have not recently been treated for, nor am I aware of any physical or other condition or disability that would create a hazard to myself or other members of this tour.

____I understand that the Commonwealth Club is unable to accept or retain any person as a tour passenger who may require special physical assistance, a wheelchair, or special attention because of a medical condition unless personal arrangements have been made.

Signature _____ Date _____

**Please return this form along with your deposit to:
Commonwealth Club of California, Attn: Club Travel, 595 Market St., 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105**

You may also fax the form to (415) 597-6729.

A copy of our license and an authorization letter will be provided to you with your final trip documents.