

Brookdale Community College Cuba Trip

Friday June 3 – Friday June 10, 2016

Day 1. Friday June 3. Hello Cuba!

Arrival at Havana International Airport.

Meet your Authentic Cuba Travel tour guide and tour bus driver.

Transfer to your Hotel Par View located in the historic Old Havana neighborhood.

Private group check-in.

Day 2. Saturday June 4. Exploring Old Havana

**Breakfast and lunch included*

Morning: Guided visit to the Museum of Revolution, the former Presidential Palace. Today it exhibits the history of the Cuban Revolution through documents and objects among which we find the famous Yacht Granma that returned Fidel and his 82 guerilla fighters from Mexico to Cuba to launch the struggle for liberation from the Batista dictatorship.

Other historic artifacts include military vehicles and weaponry from the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, a U-2 spy plane shot down during the Cuban missile crisis, and items from Cuba's nineteenth-century wars of independence.

Lunch at the family-run restaurant *paladar* 'La California'.

Afternoon: Visit to the Scale Model of Old Havana for a private meeting with world-renowned architect Miguel Coyula from the Group for the Comprehensive Development of Havana City.

Mr. Coyula has been a leading figure in urban design, urban policy and community development for over 45 years, garnering design accolades, awards and public leadership roles. An internationally renowned architect, urban planner, and frequent lecturer abroad, he is on the faculty of architecture at ISPJAE (Instituto Superior Jose Antonia Echeverria) at Havana University.

The model serves as an excellent introduction to the layout of the city. It is color-coded by age with the historic buildings painted in crimson, pre-Revolution buildings in yellow and the post-revolutionary buildings in ivory. You'll learn how each part of the city has developed historically, and the tough challenges each district faces today.

Followed by guided walking tour of UNESCO World Heritage Site, Old Havana.

Visit to the Cathedral Square, named after the masterpiece of Cuban baroque architecture: the Cathedral of Havana built by the Jesuit order.

The Cathedral's baroque facade is simultaneously intimate and imposing, and one of the two towers is visibly larger, creating a pleasing asymmetry.

Visit to Square of Arms, ancient military parade ground for Spanish soldiers and surrounded by impressive buildings such as:

Palacio de los Capitanes Generales, the former official residence of the governors (Captains General) of Havana, Cuba. It is home to the Museum of the City of Havana.

Palacio del Segundo Cabo. The seat of the second authority of the island. Today it houses important publishing houses.

Continue walking tour onto San Francisco Square, named after the Convent of San Francisco, this square was conceived in 1628, with the objective of supplying water to the ships trading with the metropolis.

Visit to Plaza Vieja, the only civic square of colonial times.

Free time in the famous handicraft market of Old Havana, located inside the *Almacenes de Depósito San José*, an old warehouse on the harbour side where you can purchase all sorts of crafts and souvenirs by local artisans.

Evening: Attend one of the most traditional and popular ceremonies in Cuba, The Fire of the Cannon of 9 O'clock at the Fortress of San Carlos de La Cabana where Che Guevara established his headquarters after the Revolution came to power in 1959.

Day 3. Sunday June 5. Hemingway in Cuba

**Breakfast and lunch included*

Morning: Visit to Finca Vigia, a hilltop villa 20 kilometers east of Havana, where famed author Ernest Hemingway lived from 1939 to 1960. It is here where the writer completed some of his greatest works, including *The Old Man and the Sea*, *Across the River and into the Trees*, and *Islands in the Stream*.

The villa has been maintained as a museum for the past 49 years. It contains original book and short story manuscripts, letters, over 3000 photographs, Hemingway's fishing tackle and gun collections, furniture, priceless art collection, and a 9000 volume library that contains rare first editions of his books and those of other famous writers.

Finca Vigía has made both the World Monuments Fund List of 100 Most Endangered sites and The National Trust for Historic Preservation's 11 Most Endangered Places.

Lunch at Sloppy Joe's.

Afternoon: Visit to the studio of artists Yamilis and Jacqueline Brito.

The two sisters have worked together in their separate art worlds since grade school. Their art can be found in many important collections including the Arizona State University Art Museum, the Antonio Pérez Foundation in Spain, the Akron Art Museum in Ohio, the San Francisco Art Institute, and the Jablonka Gallery in Cologne, Germany, among others.

Evening: Enjoy Latin jazz at Club La Zorra y El Cuervo, Havana's most famous Jazz club. The club features great performances by island bands and soloists! (Optional, not included).

Day 4. Monday June 6. Arts and Education

**Breakfast and lunch included*

Morning: Visit to Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA), the country's top art academy. School departments include Music, Modern Dance, Drama, and Visual Arts.

The schools were designed and built by architects Cuban Ricardo Porro and the Italians Roberto Gottardi and Vittorio Garatti from 1961 to 1965, in the former affluent neighborhood of Country Club Park (today known as Cubanacán), specifically on the grounds of the Havana Country Club golf course.

Today the buildings are considered Cuba's best example of post-Revolutionary architecture but at the time they were thought too sensual and avant-garde. The project was halted, though the school did open. The complex fell into ruin and amazingly, in 2001 the Cuban government approached the three architects and asked them to complete the project. Restoration was completed in 2009.

Lunch hosted by Jose Fuster, one of the most important Cuban ceramists and painters today.

Fuster has turned an entire neighborhood in western Havana into a giant art installation that involves locals and their actual homes as part of the exhibit. He's engaged and trained many neighborhood residents as artisans, especially youth. This is art for and by the people on an epic scale!

Afternoon: Visit to Havana University founded in 1728.

Next we go on a guided visit to the Museum of Fine Arts Cuban Collection where we see the evolution of Cuba's visual arts over the last 300 years.

The collection accounts for the richness of the island's Spanish, French, Chinese, and African cultural roots.

Next we'll have a special presentation on US/Cuba relations by former Cuban diplomat and policy adviser Jose Viera at the Hotel Nacional.

Jose Viera served as First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1981 to 1990, participating in cabinet meetings, and representing Cuba at high level international conferences. He received a Bachelor of Law from Havana University, a Certificate of English studies at Louisiana State University, and a Certificate of Studies of Property Rights in Cuba from the Union of Cuban Lawyers.

After the revolution Viera served as a voluntary teacher with the Institute of Agrarian Reform and as manager of a sugar mill. His diplomatic career included postings in Spain, Honduras, Chile, Bolivia, Counselor at the Cuban Mission to the UN (1966-1970), and Deputy Minister in charge of International Organizations and First Deputy Minister.

Free evening.

Day 5. Tuesday June 7. Havana- Cienfuegos- Trinidad

**Breakfast, lunch and dinner included*

Morning: Departure to Trinidad, in Central Cuba. En route, we will visit Cienfuegos City.

Cienfuegos was settled by French immigrants from Bordeaux and Louisiana, led by Don Louis D'Clouet, on April 22 1819. Its original name was Fernardina de Jagua, in honor of Ferdinand VII of Spain.

Visit to Palacio de Valle upon arrival. The building showing an eclectic architecture was erected at a cost of a million and half pesos. French, Arabic, Italian and Cuban artisans worked with marble, alabaster, brass, glass and ceramic imported from Spain, Italy and United States. The entrance is primitive Gothic style and leads to a dining room of Mudejar architecture influence, which imitates the famous Patio of the Lions, of Alhambra, in Granada.

Lunch on site.

Afternoon: We will embark on a guided walking tour of Cienfuegos Historical Center. We will visit neoclassical buildings around Paseo del Prado and the main Square Jose Marti such as:

The Casa de la Cultura, home of another wealthy sugar baron, stunning mansion in neoclassical style.

The Tomas Terry Theatre was completed in 1895 and named after a local sugar baron.

The Cathedral built with the donation of wealthy families like the Lebrancs, the Albis, the Terrys. Inside you find the reproductions of the 12 Apostles in stained glass imported from Paris. Also the original machinery of the clock tower was built in France. Still in place and working.

Now we journey on to the historic city of Trinidad and check in at all-inclusive Club Amigos Costa Sur beach resort.

You'll have time for dinner and a swim in the warm waters of the Caribbean Sea.

Day 6. Wednesday June 8. Trinidad

**Breakfast, lunch and dinner included*

Morning: Guided walking tour of UNESCO World Heritage Site, Trinidad's Historical Center, a perfect relic of the early days of the Spanish colony with beautifully preserved streets and buildings with hardly a trace of the 20th century anywhere.

Visit to Museo Municipal de Historia located in the beautiful Neo Classical *Cantero palace*. In addition to antiques and 19th-century furnishings, there are bits and pieces of slave history, and exhibits of revolutionary Cuba. For many visitors, though, the highlight is the climb up the narrow wooden stairs to the tower, which has terrific bird's-eye views of Trinidad and the surrounding area!

We will stop at a mirador (lookout) over the Sugar Mill Valley, where the sugar barons used to have their countryside mansions and mills. This site is an UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Trinidad is well known for its pottery makers. We meet with a family that has been passing the tradition for generations running their own private pottery workshop: the *Santanders*.

Lunch at the hotel.

Afternoon: Visit to the Academy of Painting “Oscar Fernandez”. Meet with the Principal and teachers to learn about the school curriculum and enrollment criteria. Tour the school and exchange with students in the different workshops.

The rest of the afternoon is free for you to wander the streets of the city centre or enjoy the beach.

Dinner at the hotel.

Evening: Enjoy Cuban popular music on steps of Casa de la Música – a great opportunity to dance with Cubans and your tour companions!

Day 7. Thursday June 9. Trinidad - Havana

**Breakfast and dinner included*

Morning: Transfer to Havana City.

Lunch on your own.

Afternoon: Check in at your Hotel Park View.

Evening: Farewell dinner at one of Havana's most popular restaurants: El Aljibe. This eatery serves the best Creole food in Cuba!

Day 8. Friday June 10. Good Bye Cuba!

**Breakfast included*

Transfer to Havana International Airport for departure.