



THE OXFORD CLUB EXPLORES CUBA – AND YOU’RE INVITED

Wednesday, February 8 in Miami, February 9-14 in Havana

A People-to-People Educational Exchange Organized by Cuba Cultural Travel

Cuba is more than '50s Chevys and mojitos. Experience the charms and changing dynamic of Havana, the hospitality of the people and the cultural delights offered by the country’s vibrant music and arts scene.

Oxford Club CEO Julia Guth and Chief Investment Strategist Alexander Green will be your hosts, along with in-country experts from the fields of architecture, economics and music. This is sure to be an unforgettable journey. At The Oxford Club, we are extremely excited to explore Cuba during its historic transition.



Heather Downey Phillips
Executive Director
World Financial Seminars

Wednesday, February 8

Participants will fly independently to Miami and stay overnight at the Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables. The hotel is located at 1200 Anastasia Avenue and the phone number is 855.311.6903.

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Private Reception for The Oxford Club group at the Biltmore Pool Lawn. *(NOTE: In the event of inclement weather, the reception will be held inside the Marbella Room.) Hors d'oeuvres will be served along with a selection of sweet indulgences. Full service bar features the Biltmore Signature Mojito with white rum.*

Day 1

Thursday, February 9

Morning

Complimentary breakfast will be served at the lushly landscaped Fontana Courtyard restaurant beginning at 7 a.m. Upon check-in, a voucher will be issued to each guest for the all-inclusive BILTMORE BREAKFAST BUFFET, which includes scrambled eggs, smoked bacon, pork sausages, roasted potatoes with peppers and onions, freshly baked breakfast pastries, sliced cured meats and cheese, tropical fruit and berries, homemade granola, honey yogurt and assorted cereals, freshly squeezed Florida orange juice and brewed coffee or tea.

9:15 a.m. Please place bags outside of your room for pickup by bellhops.

10:15 a.m. Meet in the hotel lobby and depart by private coach to the airport.

10:45 a.m. Airport check-in.

1:21 p.m. Depart for Havana on American Airlines flight AA1345.

2:34 p.m. Arrive at Havana. Clear customs and immigration, a process that takes about one hour. En route to Havana, we'll see the Plaza de la Revolución. The center of government, this area contains most of the offices of the main ministries and is often used for massive rallies.

Coffee or cocktails at the iconic **Hotel Nacional de Cuba** overlooking the Straits of Florida and the **Malecón**. When the hotel opened in 1930, Cuba was a prime travel destination for many illustrious guests, including Frank Sinatra, Ava Gardner, John Wayne, Marlene Dietrich, Marlon Brando and Ernest Hemingway.

5:00 p.m. Check into **Hotel Parque Central**, considered the finest hotel in Havana and perfectly located in the central part of Havana. All rooms include a safe deposit box free of charge. Breakfast is complimentary and served between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. in the lobby-level restaurant.

Hotel Parque Central
Neptuno, esquina Prado y Zulueta, Havana, Cuba
Telephone: 53.7.860.6627

Historic areas surrounding the hotel include...

- Havana's **Central Park** and the first monument erected in Cuba (in 1904) dedicated to national hero José Martí
- The **Centro Gallego**, built in 1915 by Belgian architect Paul Belau, today the Great Theatre of Havana, which includes the García Lorca Theatre among other rooms

- The **Capitolio Nacional**, a fabulous monumental building inspired by the capitol model and built in 1929 by Cuban and foreign artists
- The **Bacardi Building**, erected in 1930, one of the most fabulous examples of art deco in Cuba today
- The **Sevilla Hotel**, remodeled in 1923 by the American firm Schultze & Weaver
- The lavish **Palacio de los Matrimonios**, recently restored
- The former **Casino Español of Havana**, built in 1914 by Luis Dediott
- The **Paseo de Martí (el Prado)**, a tree-lined pedestrian promenade leading to the sea. This area includes the home of Cuba's former president **José Miguel Gómez** and the lavish **Palacio de los Matrimonios**.

6:30 p.m.

Walk a few steps from the hotel to **Centro Asturiano** for a private musical performance and dinner. Our evening begins with a demonstrative lecture on **Cuban music** at Bar Asturias by **professor Alberto Faya**, who has been working as a musician, professor and researcher within the Cuban musical world since 1973. He has won national awards in music and musicology. He will be joined by a trio of musicians who will take us on a musical journey through the history of Cuba.

7:30 p.m.

Welcome dinner at **La Terraza**. You'll enjoy freshly grilled specialties on the third floor terrace overlooking **Paseo del Prado**.

Day 2

Friday, February 10

Morning

Complimentary breakfast is served every day at the restaurant in the lobby level from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. The large buffet offers eggs prepared to your liking, imported cheeses and cured meats, cereals, yogurts, fresh breads and pastries, a large variety of fresh vegetables and fruits, chilled juices and hot beverages.

9:00 a.m.

Lecture by **Dr. Marta Nuñez**, professor and researcher at the University of Havana. Her research has concentrated on transition projects for Cuba proposed by Cuban-American and U.S. scholars and on women's employment in Cuba. Marta was a visiting scholar at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard in 2010. She'll discuss with you many fascinating and unique aspects of Cuban society, including family rights, property laws and gender issues. This lecture will take place in a conference room in the hotel.

10:30 a.m.

Meet in the hotel lobby. Begin our walking tour of **Havana Vieja**. Please make sure to wear comfortable shoes! We will be joined by architect and University of Havana professor **Maria Elena Martín** and architect **Universo Garcia**.

We will stroll through the **Plaza de San Francisco**, a cobbled plaza surrounded by buildings dating back to the 18th century and dominated by the baroque **Iglesia y Convento de San Francisco** dating back to 1719.

11:30 a.m.

Visit the **Escuela de Taller**, where we will learn about the restoration project that is underway in Havana Vieja. This urban rehabilitation project is preserving the architectural history and cultural heritage of this beautiful city. We will visit a construction site and meet with engineers, builders, woodworkers and other craftsmen utilizing traditional handcrafting methods to preserve the authenticity of these once – and soon to be once again – resplendent structures.

- 1:00 p.m.** Lunch at **Paladar Mercaderes**. This impeccably restored mansion is a welcome retreat from the bustling streets of the old city. Enjoy delightful tapas and a selection of seasonal specialties. The affable host Yamil entertains with his charming anecdotes, as do the house musicians.
- 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, including some important monuments.
- 2:30 p.m.** Visit the **Taller de Gráfica Experimental** located in the **Plaza de la Catedral**. 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 printmaking.
- Return to the hotel at your own pace via **Obispo Street**, a pedestrian promenade. You can stop at some of the most significant buildings, such as the art-deco-style La Moderna Poesía, the Ambos Mundos Hotel and the banks of the former Havana Wall Street.
- Some may choose to visit **La Bodeguita del Medio**, the most famous of Hemingway's haunts. Experience live music, dancing and fun where Hemingway enjoyed the acclaimed mojito and famously declared "*Mi daiquiri en Floridita y mi mojito en Bodeguita.*"
- 6:45 p.m.** Meet in the hotel lobby and depart for dinner at the famous **La Guarida Restaurant**. It is one of the best restaurants in Havana, famous not only for its delectable dining, but also for its reputation as the location for the film *Fresa y Chocolate*. It is housed on the third floor of a large old townhouse with the charming ambience of the 1920s.
- Optional late night entertainment: Visit the cool bohemian club **El Gato Tuerto ("One-eyed Cat")**, a laid-back venue featuring various styles of traditional Cuban music – from sultry boleros known as **Feeling**, a soul-like genre heavily influenced by jazz to **Trova**, another unique musical style that gained its popularity in the 70s.

Day 3

Saturday, February 11

- 9:00 a.m.** Attend lecture by journalist **Marc Frank**, author of the recently released book, *Cuban Revelations: Behind the Scenes in Havana*. Mr. Frank is the longest-serving foreign correspondent in Cuba, writes for Reuters and the Financial Times and is an authority on the Cuban economy. Frank will offer insight into important economic, political and social issues on the island and share colorful stories about being a reporter in Cuba. It is recommended that participants read his book prior to the lecture. This lecture will take place in the hotel business center.
- 10:30 a.m.** Visit the **National Museum of Fine Arts in Havana**. We will be greeted by an independent art historian who will guide the tour. The museum is dedicated exclusively to Cuban art from the earliest days of colonialism to the latest generation of Cuban artists.
- 12:00 p.m.** Lunch at **Al Carbon** by **Chef Ivan Justo**. This restaurant is located next to the museum.
- 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.** Lecture by **Juan Alejandro Triana**, a graduate of the University of Havana and a faculty member of the Department of Economics at the *Instituto Politécnico José Antonio Echeverría* (ISPJAE). His research and publications have focused on microfinancing in Cuba and Cuba-U.S. economic relations. He will explain the changing policies of privately owned businesses in Cuba and the concept of micro-

financing and how it differs from similar programs in other countries. This event will take place in the Hotel Business Center.

Following this lecture, there will be a presentation by Alexander Green.

The remainder of the afternoon is free.

6:30 p.m.

Meet in the hotel lobby

7:00 p.m.

Dinner on the rooftop at the stylish **Paladar Atelier**, equally known for its atmosphere and exquisite cuisine. The lighting and textures of the house, coupled with walls adorned in modern art, create a cozy, romantic setting. The chef boasts international experience and serves a range of cuisine, including traditional Cuban dishes, paella and seafood.

Evening entertainment: visit to **Fábrica de Arte Cubano (FAC)**. Once an old olive oil factory, this repurposed complex is without a doubt the hippest place in Havana. Part Miami Art Basel, part Williamsburg warehouse party, the FAC is taking the Cuban arts scene by storm, hosting viewings, performances and exhibitions of cinema, theater, dance, music, literature, fashion, architecture, graphic design, photography and the visual arts.

Day 4

Sunday, February 12

9:00 a.m.

Meet in the hotel lobby and board the bus for our day trip to **Viñales Valley**. Considered by many to be the most beautiful place in Cuba, the **Viñales Valley National Monument** has stunning landscapes and jaw-dropping views. The area is also famous for being the premier tobacco growing area in the world. This is a photographer's paradise!

11:30 a.m.

Arrive in **Pinar del Río** for our visit to **Proyecto Grabadown**. The Grabadown Project was started 10 years ago by Jesús Carrete and his daughter Linianna, who was born with Down Syndrome. What began as way for Jesús to share his love of art with his daughter has grown into a well-respected community project supported by many other families who have discovered the benefits of engaging their special needs children with art and music. Starting with a simple printing press that offered the children a chance to express their creativity, the program has grown into a multi-disciplinary creative workshop where the children are encouraged to sing, dance, create art and take a more active role within the community.

Visit the **Despalillo**, a tobacco sorting facility. See a presentation of tobacco processing and a cigar rolling demonstration.

1:00 p.m.

Arrive at **Finca Confianza** in the valley with stunning views of the *mogotes*. We will learn about the production of a multitude of organic fruits, vegetables, grain and tobacco. Lunch will be a community event on the farm where we will be served a large variety of organic fresh vegetables, fruits, chicken and roasted pork. This is a true field-to-table dining experience.

Following lunch, we will continue to explore the valley on foot with Yaniel, touring rustic drying barns and getting a glimpse into rural farm life in Cuba.

3:00 p.m.

Visit the home of **Ramón Vázquez León**, an artist born in Viñales, Pinar del Río, who graduated from the National School of Fine Arts in Havana. Ramon creates fantastic worlds full of allusions with his bright colors.

4:00 p.m. Return to Havana. Have dinner on your own. Suitable recommendations will be provided.

Day 5 **Monday, February 13**

10:00 a.m. Attend a private dance performance of the **Compañía Irene Rodríguez** (flamenco). We will receive a warm welcome from 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. In May 2016, Irene and her company performed at the Joyce Theater in NYC.

Drive to the picturesque fishing village of **Cojímar**. Ernest Hemingway loved this little seaside town. He kept his boat, *El Pilar*, in the harbor of Cojímar and used this village setting for his story *The Old Man and the Sea*, which won him the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954.

12:00 a.m. Lunch at Paladar **El Ajiaco** restaurant with menus created by Chef Roy. Enjoy Cuban classics of Ajiaco (stew), Ropa Vieja (shredded, seasoned beef) and the iconic mojito. Chef Emeril Lagasse filmed part of his Cuban cooking show here.

2:00 p.m. Tour **La Finca Vigía**. Formerly the home of Ernest Hemingway, this house still contains his expansive collection of books today. It was here that he wrote two of his most celebrated novels: *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *The Old Man and the Sea*. Please keep in mind that there are restrictions on passage to preserve the house in the state that Hemingway left it.

4:00 p.m. Return to hotel. The remainder of the afternoon is yours to explore Havana Vieja or enjoy the views from the hotel rooftop pool and bar.

6:00 p.m. Attend a private performance by the **Cuban Youth Orchestra**, comprised of students from the most prestigious music school in Cuba, the **Instituto de Arte Superior** (ISA). These incredibly talented musicians will perform a repertoire of classical and Cuban selections.

7:30 p.m. Depart for dinner at **Paladar San Cristobal**. About a 10-minute walk from Parque Central, this cozy paladar has a reputation of excellence in both atmosphere and local cuisine. The food is refined and balanced and the paladar has a nostalgic atmosphere. President Obama and his family famously dined here during their historic visit to Havana in 2016.

Day 6 **Tuesday, February 14**

9:00 a.m. Check out of the hotel and load bags onto bus

9:15 a.m. Board bus and depart for airport

9:45 a.m. Airport check in

11:45 a.m. Depart Havana on flight #AA1334

12:55 p.m. Arrive Miami, Please allow 3 hours to make your connections.

Flight information pending. Flight duration is approximately one hour.

*Tips may be given to your Cuban guide and driver at this time. The recommended tip is a minimum of seven Cuban convertible pesos per day, per passenger for your guide and a minimum of five Cuban convertible pesos per day, per passenger for your driver.

BE SURE TO COLLECT YOUR BELONGINGS FROM THE SAFE DEPOSIT BOX IN YOUR ROOM:

- PASSPORT
- VISA
- PLANE TICKET
- LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION.

Please Note: This is a "Working" Itinerary. There may be some changes, additions and/or subtractions to the Final Itinerary. All venues and artist's studios are subject to final confirmations. Be assured that any changes made will be done to enhance the total program, and to promote a smooth operation of the tour.

Note about Purchasing Art or other Cuban products:

The U.S. Government allows US travelers to bring back an unlimited amount of Cuban art and informational materials such as books and CDs. If you feel you might be interested in purchasing art during your stay in Cuba you should carry additional money to pay on the spot. Your hotel rooms includes a safe deposit box in which you can keep your valuables safe.

Pursuant to the regulation changes on January 16, 2015; in addition to bringing back art, U.S. Citizens are now permitted to import goods for personal consumption including alcohol and tobacco products; normal duty taxes apply.

Acquiring additional money via an ATM machine in Cuba is not possible at this time. Some of the more established artists could possibly have U.S. bank accounts in which the payment can be wired. The art can normally be brought home and payment sent at a future date. Our first recommendation is that you bring additional cash.

For more details about travel to Cuba please visit our website <http://www.cubaculturaltravel.com/traveltips>

Please contact brigitte@cubaculturaltravel.com for any questions regarding the itinerary.