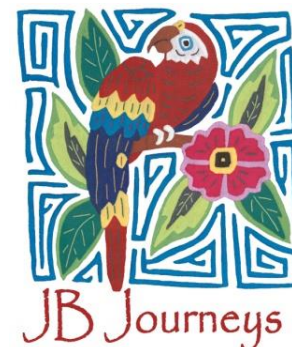
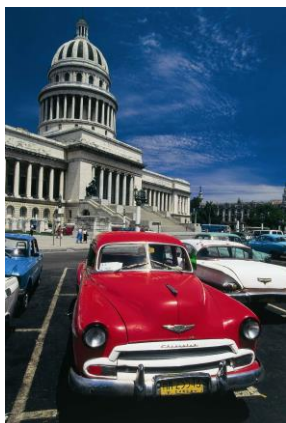


3C's – Cuba, Cars & Cigars

June 6-13, 2020



Who hasn't dreamed about traveling to Cuba? Well now is the time.



All but closed to US citizens for five decades, recent changes in US/Cuba relations have made it easier to visit the island. While some restrictions still apply, JB Journeys is excited to offer legal, small group experiences, under the visa category Support for the Cuban People.

In a week's time we'll focus on two of Cuba's great traditions – cigars and classic cars. Havana offers great restaurants, music, architecture, and classic cars on every corner - it's a car lover's dream! We'll drive west to the province of Pinar del Rio, the most beautiful area of the island, to meet tobacco farmers and learn the whole process, from seedling to stogies. The rich soil of

Pinar also produces some of the best food you can find in Cuba, where farm-to-table isn't just a culinary trend, it was a necessity.

We invite you to travel to Cuba now, in this exciting time in history.



Day 1 – June 6 - Saturday (D)

Arrive Havana anytime; our driver will pick you up at the airport and transfer you to your *casa particular*.

Casas Particulares are similar to what we call a Bed & Breakfast. In 1997, the Cuban government allowed Cubans to rent out rooms in their houses or apartments to travelers, providing Cuban families with a new source of income. Now many are building extra rooms, all with private bath, and we can house several people in the same house. All the *casas* we use have been checked out by our ground staff.

This evening we will dine at one of the local *paladares*.

Paladares, which are usually family-run restaurants in people's homes, first appeared during the post-Soviet economic crisis of the 1990s, when the government, briefly and grudgingly, allowed some private businesses to take root. Many, however, either failed to thrive or were pushed out of business by officious inspectors. When the Cuban government opened the door to private enterprise again in 2010 to help invigorate the struggling economy, hundreds of Cubans leapt at the chance to set up a *paladar*. Today, there are many *paladares*, still some in people's homes or free-standing. How's that for a first day of meeting and supporting the Cuban people?

Day 2 – June 7 – Sunday (B, L)

After breakfast, we will meet our guide for a guided walking tour of Old Havana, which was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982.

Habana Vieja is a living museum, filled with over 3,000 buildings in varying stages of renovation. The old colonial city boasts several squares of historic significance: **Plaza Cathedral** is dominated by the 18th century Cathedral of Havana. **Plaza de Armas** is the oldest square, used for military exercises by the Spanish from the 16th century. The Palacio de los Capitanes Generales on the western side of the square was the seat of

Spanish authority, then the headquarters of US military governors, and finally the presidential palace after the Republic of Cuba was born in 1902. **Plaza San Francisco** (1628) was once the commerce hub, where Spanish galleons came for supplies for their transatlantic journeys. The former Basilica de San Francisco is today a concert hall. **Plaza Vieja** was established in the 16th century as a market square and remained so until 1835.

After lunch at a local restaurant, we'll see **Modern Havana**, or should we say **Mid-century Modern!** We'll cruise along the **Malecon**, Havana's picturesque seawall, **Quinta Avenida** (5th Ave), past **Revolution Square**, and the **Hotel Nacional**. The Nacional is the grand dame of Havana and was the place to be seen. If you have seen Godfather II, you may remember a scene of a meeting of Mafia bosses; that meeting took place here. We'll stop in for a mojito.



Next we head to Fusterlandia, a once impoverished neighborhood turned outdoor folk art wonderland. Artist José Fuster began this project about 20 years ago by decorating his own home with murals and tiles. So far, it has expanded to more than 80 houses! He's known as the "Picasso of the Caribbean" and you can see the influence.

Return back to the *casa* late afternoon. Dinner on your own. *We are happy to help with reservations to a paladar, or suggest a visit to [La Fabrica de Arte](#).*

Day 3 – June 8 – Monday (B, D)

After breakfast, we'll take a meeting with a Cuban Specialist about the Cigar Production in Cuba. You'll be visiting the plantations and factories, you probably will spoke a few, but here, learn the business side of tobacco.

After lunch on your own, we will head over to Hotel Condes de Villanueva which has one of the best cigar shops in town, La Casa del Habano, for an interesting class. You'll learn how to identify rums and Habanos, and learn about the art of *maridage*, which is pairing a cigar to a rum, the history of each, and why Cuban Habanos are considered among the best cigars in the world.

This evening we'll dine at La Casa, one of the first *paladares*, still in the family home.

Day 4 – June 9 – Tuesday (B, L, D)

Breakfast at the hotel, then check out.

We will start the day with a visit to one of the **cigar factories, Upmann, Partagas**, or one of the others, where you can see production of Cuba's most famous export. Cuban cigar makers, unlike their counterparts in the rest of the world, make the entire cigar themselves.



Driving towards Pinar del Rio, we'll make a stop in **Las Terrazas** for lunch. This area was deforested going back to the time of conquistadors. Fidel started his green revolution here, planting 6 million trees, including hardwoods, fruits, and nuts, so that it could sustain the local community. Today Las Terrazas is a beautiful, lush area and in 1984 was declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Now it is known for hiking and birdwatching, an artist community, as well as locally sourced food.

Arriving Pinar in the afternoon, we'll visit the Francisco Donatien *finca*, or plantation, where some of Cuba's finest cigars are made, among them Trinidad and Vegueros. Then a visit to a *Despalillo* to see an important stage of the cigar process. Here the center vein of tobacco leaf is removed, the leaves are fermented and then selected according to their quality, size, and texture. This step is considered a woman's specialty, and it has been done this way in Cuba for decades.

In Viñales, we'll be staying in *casas particulares* and tonight will enjoy dinner with our hosts.

Day 5 – June 10 – Wednesday (B, L, D)

This morning after breakfast at our casas, we will visit a humidor workshop which has gained a world wide audience, D’Cuba Arte en Madera. A humidor guarantees the aroma and flavors of cigar, but now they are works of art too. Begun in the 1990s making simple boxes, a retired arts professor came on board and now D’Cuba is an artisan training school. Cigar boxes today are spectacular, some shaped like pianos, buildings, or even like a tobacco leaf.

Then we head to **Vega Quemado de Rubi finca** (or farm) which belongs to Hector Luis Prieto, the youngest ever recipient of the **Hombre Habano** award. The Hombre Habano is given annually for the best quality production of tobacco in the cigar industry. Hector is descended from some of Cuba’s most experienced farmers and enjoys the most optimal soil content for tobacco production in the world. On his 6 hectare farm (about 15 acres) he grows some 250,000 tobacco plants. We’ll see the whole process related to tobacco growing and harvesting, including a cigar hand rolled by an expert. And just when you thought it couldn’t get any better, we’ll have lunch and a drink at the *finca*, followed by a traditional cigar made by a master blender.

This evening we’ll have dinner at El Cuajani Restaurant, a small farm to table place set among the beautiful mogotes of Pinar del Rio.



Day 6 – June 11 – Thursday (B, L)

Breakfast



Depending on time this morning we may visit an Indian cave or a botanical garden. Lunch will be at [Finca El Paraiso Agroecological Farm](#), an amazing farm-to-table experience with views of the beautiful Viñales Valley.

Then back to Havana and we’ll spend our last two nights at the Capri Hotel. Originally opened in 1957 in the Vedado neighborhood of Havana, it was the last of the Mafia-influenced hotels to be built before the revolution. It was owned by Santo Trafficante and featured a fabulous casino (now gone) and rooftop pool (still there!). Hollywood star George Raft was the ‘face’ of the Capri. It was closed for many years and re-opened in 2015. Great neighborhood, near other hotels like the Nacional and clubs and *paladares*.

On your own for dinner.



Day 7 – June 12 – Friday (B, D)

We’ll begin the day with a visit to **Finca Vigia**, or Lookout Farm, the Cuban home of **Ernest Hemingway**. While living in Cuba, Hemingway did some of his best writing and he won the Nobel Prize. As a gesture of thanks, he gave the gold medal to the Cuban people. The place looks much like it did when he lived there.

Then we’ll head to one of Havana’s beautiful beaches for the afternoon. Lunch on your own.

Back to the hotel late afternoon and we will have our final dinner at San Cristobal, easily one of the finest *paladares* in Havana, in the chef’s own home. Chef always greets his guests and you’ll hear him boast about all the famous people who’ve dined there; you are now among them!

Finally, because it wouldn’t be Cuba without music, we’ll take in one of the great shows around town. These are Buena Vista Social Club-type shows. Few of the original members are still with us, but their musical influence is still there and can still move you.

Day 8 – June 13 – Saturday (B) - We'll depart for the airport about 3.5 hours before flight.

Note: The order and sites visited may vary due to weather, road conditions and other factors beyond our control.

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- Limited to 14 people. Escorted by Jean Warneke of JB Journeys.
- Cost: \$2,695 per person in double occupancy, based on 14. (with 12: \$2,795; with 10: \$2,895; with 8: \$2,995)
- Single supplement \$300 (very limited)
- Deposit of \$500 per person to reserve your place on the tour. Final payment due March 6, 2020.

Included:

- Transportation as listed by A/C bus or van, depending on group size
- Seven nights lodging with taxes
- Visits on excursions listed with any entry fees
- Meals as listed
- Basic gratuities to restaurants for group meals and for driver
- English speaking guide
- Basic Cuban medical insurance

Not Included:

- Airfare to/from Havana
- Meals not listed
- Drinks during meals
- Gratuities at hotels (\$1-2 per room per night; \$1-2 per person at breakfast)
- Gratuities for guide (suggested \$10-15 per person per day)
- Personal Travel Insurance

ABOUT TRAVELING TO CUBA

Things work differently in Cuba; please keep this in mind. It's possible that activities we have scheduled far in advance could become unavailable for a number of different reasons. Cuban guides are skilled at swapping out one activity for another, so don't be disappointed if something changes, because it will. In addition, regulations for travel to Cuba are in flux, and we stay up to date on regulations.

Travel to Cuba is still restricted under the Cuban Assets Control Regulations of the United States Department of Treasury. There are several travel categories that are authorized under the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) general license. Our itineraries fit the category of **“support for the Cuban people”** under a General License, valid as of June 4, 2019. This type of program requires a full schedule of “meaningful interaction” with Cubans, as required by U.S. Treasury Department regulations, as we have laid out in this interesting itinerary.

We have been told to keep a paper trail of our travel to Cuba for five (5) years, and you should too. This comes down from OFAC and is especially important during this time of change. You, too, should keep paper documentation of your trip to Cuba for five (5) years. We recommend that you create a 'Cuba Travel' folder and keep it with your other important documents.

TRAVEL INSURANCE and Cuba

We have included in the price of your package the basic insurance coverage while in Cuba. This is not a comprehensive package but covers you for medical needs while on the tour. It does not cover medical evacuation should that be needed.

If you decide to purchase comprehensive travel insurance coverage, we can send you information on estimating the premium and a company which offers a policy. **NOTE** that this is not required, but many travelers like to cover all parts of their travel investment.

For an estimate on policy cost, use the Travel Guard link on our website and put 'Caribbean' as your destination. However, do not purchase your policy this way as Cuba will not be covered under Caribbean. The only way Travel Guard will provide coverage for travelers to Cuba is by applying by US mail or fax.

If you have insurance coverage (cancellation, health, or other) with a credit card or other type of policy such as an annual plan, we recommend that you check with the supplier to be certain travel to Cuba is included.