

Exploring Cuba: From Havana to Trinidad

with Dr. Joyce Salisbury (Nov. 2026)
or Dr. Sharika Crawford (2027)

November 17–23, 2026 | March 16–22, 2027 | November 17–23, 2027



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From \$6,195 per person

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Islands and island nations all over the world have always captivated people with their unique combination of isolation and connection. Perhaps none more so than Cuba. On this journey, you will delve into a rich and fascinating narrative—a complex tapestry woven by European explorers, enslaved Africans, and indigenous Taino people who converged on the island in the 16th century, leaving a lasting imprint on its heritage. Its architecture, food, music, and culture all reflect this rich history.

Led by your expert, you will explore Cuba's complicated historical, political, and economic past to gain insights into its present trajectory. By engaging with the entrepreneurial spirit of the next generation in Cuba; contemplating the world-renowned rhythms of Cuban music deeply rooted in West African culture; and visiting historic sites like Playa Girón, the site of the Bay of Pigs invasion; you will begin to peel back the layers of Cuba's story. Through the expertise of your expert you will connect with Cuba's past and gain a profound understanding of its heritage and ongoing evolution in the global landscape.

Your Journey Expert



Dr. Joyce Salisbury (Nov. 2026), is a Professor Emerita of Humanistic Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay. She began her career conducting research in Spain, is expert in the colonial world of Spain, and has led tours for several decades. Professor Salisbury has appeared on PBS specials and on the History Channel. In addition, she has been invited to lecture in many venues around the world for her ability to bring the past alive. Professor Salisbury has been widely recognized for her teaching abilities, including being named Professor of the Year in 1991 by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education. She has taught three times on Semester at Sea, a study-abroad program on a ship that circumnavigates the world with more than 500 students for a full semester. Professor Salisbury earned her Ph.D. in Medieval History at Rutgers University, specializing in religious and social history. She has written more than 10 books, including the widely used textbook, *The West in the World*; and created 4 Great Courses, the first of which was *The History of Spain: Land on a Crossroad*.



Dr. Sharika Crawford (2027 departures) Sharika D. Crawford is a historian of modern Latin America and the circum-Caribbean. She is a tenured professor at a four-year undergraduate institution in the United States. Her book *The Last Turtlemen of the Caribbean: Waterscapes of Labor, Conservation, and Boundary Making* was published by the University of North Carolina Press in 2020. The Elsa Goveia Book Prize Committee of the Association of Caribbean Historians awarded it an honorable mention in 2021. Most recently, in 2025, she co-edited *Understanding and Teaching Modern Latin America*, which was published by the University of Wisconsin Press. Since her first study abroad trip in Mexico as a teenager, Dr. Crawford has enjoyed traveling internationally. She has led short-term cultural immersion trips in the Caribbean, South America, and West Africa.

Highlights

- Participate in morning discussions with your expert about the thematic focus of each day's activities.
- Immerse yourself in Havana's rhythms during a rooftop jam session, a salsa or Afro-Cuban percussion lesson, and a youth jazz/funk band.
- Explore Cuba's indigenous and Afro-Cuban roots through visits to the Museum of Archaeology and the vibrant neighborhood of Callejón de Hamel.
- Embark on a tour of Playa Girón and the Bay of Pigs Museum, delving into the pivotal history between the US and Cuba, and lasting impact of the embargo.
- Engage in meaningful discussion with entrepreneurs on what they see as the economic future of Havana.

Exploring Cuba: From Havana to Trinidad Itinerary



Day 1: Bienvenidos a Havana

Arrive at José Martí International Airport and transfer to your boutique hotel in Havana's centrally located Miramar neighborhood. Begin your journey with an orientation meeting and welcome lecture by your tour expert who will delve into the themes of the week. Experience Havana's charm firsthand with a driving tour along the famed seawall and through the Vedado neighborhood as you cruise in 1950s cars, an iconic symbol of the complex relationship between the United States and Cuba. As the sun sets, toast the beginning of your adventure with a rooftop jam session featuring local musicians. Then, dine at El Cocinero, a stylish restaurant housed in a former factory overlooking the Almendares River. If you wish to extend your evening, explore multimedia gallery spaces and experience a live performance at Fabrica de Arte Cubano.

Included Meal: Dinner

Accommodations: Casa Italia

Day 2: Indigenous and African Roots

Each morning, start your day with a 30-minute informal chat led by your expert, focusing on a theme that will shape your day's activities. Today's focus will be Cuba's indigenous roots from Taino culture to Afro-Cuban influence. Engage in a conversation with a local historian and former Director of the Cultural Patrimony Section at the City Historian Office. Explore Cuba's rich history with a visit to the Museum of Archaeology, guided by a local expert who will illuminate the lives of Cuba's indigenous inhabitants. Afterward, take a leisurely walking tour en route to a traditional Cuban lunch at a *paladar* (a privately run restaurant) offering authentic local cuisine. Immerse yourself in Havana's vibrant culture and Afro-Cuban history at Callejón de Hamel, where you can witness a live rumba performance in a neighborhood known for its cultural heritage. Later in the afternoon, choose from various activities such as experiencing a local folk dancing group or participating in a hands-on dance lesson or drumming class. Conclude your day with dinner at one of Cuba's pioneering female-led paladars, housed in a historic former residence.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: Casa Italia



Photo by: Jia Han Dong



Day 3: A Designed Fortress

Gather with your expert in the morning as she explores the theme of isolationism. Throughout the day, gain profound insights into Havana's cultural, political, and socioeconomic landscape as you meet with Cuba's top urban planner and discuss the city's evolution against the backdrop of its history and current influences. Embark on a journey through Havana's iconic landmarks such as Morro Castle, La Cabaña, and Revolution Square, reflecting with your expert on Cuba's history of invasions and its impact on later isolationism. Enjoy a leisurely lunch at a leading paladar in the slow food movement, savoring authentic Cuban cuisine. Visit sites associated with the Mafia's influence during pre-revolutionary times and Havana's economic heyday. At a private class, delve into Cuban cigar craftsmanship with a local expert.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodations: Casa Italia

Day 4: The Next Generation

Meet with your expert this morning as she discusses Cuba's current economic inflection point and starts to peel back the layers of how the United States embargo has affected Cuba's economy for almost 65 years. Embark on a fascinating day starting with a tour of Finca Vigía, Ernest Hemingway's former residence where his extensive book collection and beloved boat, *El Pilar*, are still preserved. Engage in a thought-provoking panel discussion with Cuban entrepreneurs, exploring emerging opportunities in the private sector.

Enjoy a unique dining experience onsite with these entrepreneurs, accompanied by a private musical performance by Primera Linea, a youth band blending New Orleans and Cuban music. Later in the day, choose between a salsa-dancing session or an Afro-Cuban percussion class to further immerse yourself in Cuban culture. As you prepare to leave Havana for Playa Girón, join a veteran for a firsthand account of the historic 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, gaining deeper insights into this pivotal event.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodations: Casa Italia





Day 5: A Battle and a Biosphere

Embark on a full day's journey beginning with a southward drive of approximately 2.5 hours to the Cienaga de Zapata, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, and one of the largest and most diverse in Cuba. Then, tour Playa Girón and the Bay of Pigs Museum to immerse yourself into the place that sparked and shaped so much of current US-Cuban relations. A picnic lunch will be provided as you soak in the history of the picturesque beach before continuing your journey (approximately 2 hours) to Trinidad, renowned for its charming cobblestone streets, pastel-colored homes, and inviting small-town atmosphere. Upon arrival, settle into your *casa particular* before joining a walking tour led by a local architect, historian, and restoration specialist to explore Trinidad's rich architectural heritage. Conclude the day with a home-cooked meal prepared by your hosts.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: Hostal Lola or similar casa particular



Day 6: It All Comes Back to Sugar

Continue your exploration of Cuba's rich history with your expert leading a final discussion on the role of sugar in shaping the island's cultural, political, and economic landscapes. Journey to the archaeological site of San Isidro near Trinidad to delve into the history of Cuba's sugar cane industry during the 18th and 19th centuries. Enjoy a farm-fresh lunch in the scenic Sugar Mills Valley before returning to Trinidad for an afternoon of leisure, perfect for exploring local markets and museums at your own pace. Conclude your Cuban adventure with a farewell dinner and live musical performance in Trinidad's historic center, celebrating the culmination of your journey.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: Hostal Lola or similar casa particular



Day 7: Departure

Depart from Trinidad this morning, making poignant stops in Santa Clara, exploring significant locations important to Cuba's history and legacy. Then, proceed to Santa Clara International Airport for your individual flight back to the United States.

Included Meal: Breakfast

Accommodations



Boutique Casa Italia

Havana

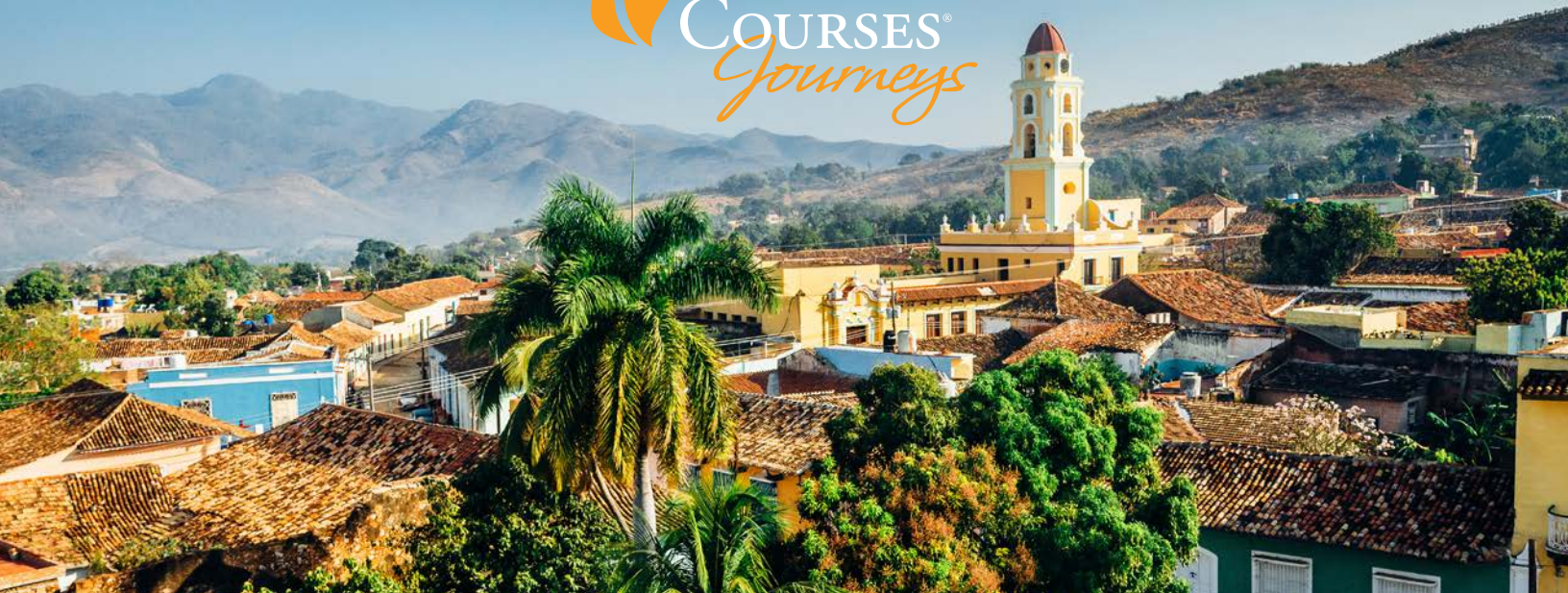
Originally a colonial mansion, this privately owned boutique hotel offers an elegant refuge in Havana. The hotel's 19 meticulously designed rooms offer character, comfort, and luxury. Centrally located on a quiet, beautiful street in the Miramar neighborhood, the hotel is surrounded by striking architecture and public spaces. The property features an on-site Italian restaurant. **(4 nights)**



Hostal Lola

Trinidad

Casas particulares are privately (not government) owned hotels throughout Cuba where American citizens are legally authorized to stay. They are often former colonial mansions restored into about 7 to 10 rooms and professionally operated. Expect spare but clean rooms, air conditioning, private bathrooms, and warm hospitality. Full groups will often be split among two to three nearby casas of similar quality. **(2 nights)**



Pricing:

Departure	Double Occupancy	Single Occupancy	Deposit	
November 17–23, 2026	\$6,195	\$6,895	\$500	BOOK NOW
March 16–22, 2027	\$6,395	\$7,145	\$650	BOOK NOW
November 17–23, 2027	\$6,395	\$7,145	\$650	BOOK NOW

The Great Courses Journeys offers opportunities to travel legally to Cuba under the current OFAC Regulations. As one of the few programs authorized under the US Treasury's "People to People" category, our tour operator has been leading learning adventures there for over 25 years.

What's Included:

- All accommodations for the duration of the tour
- Meals, as noted in the itinerary
- All sightseeing and visits as noted in each itinerary
- Expertise of The Great Courses Expert, travel director and local guides throughout the tour
- All gratuities for on-tour guides, drivers, hotel and restaurant staff as part of the group program
- All on-tour transportation, unless otherwise noted
- Listening devices to facilitate audibility and social distancing on tour
- The assistance of an ATA professional travel team to assist with pre-trip questions, travel arrangements, including flights and other services
- Comprehensive pre-departure mailings and materials with information about the destination and what to expect on tour, including a suggested reading list
- Emergency evacuation insurance

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