



Culture History and Heroes Tour

The Bay of Pigs | Cienfuegos | El Nicho National Park | Trinidad | Santa Clara

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Culture History and Heroes | 3 Night Tour

The Bay of Pigs | Cienfuegos | El Nicho National Park | Trinidad | Santa Clara



Tour Highlights

- Relive the failed US backed invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs
- Take a boat ride through the mangroves in the Zapata National Park
- Swim in the crystal-clear waters of the Caribbean Sea
- Overnight in the charming French influenced Colonial city of Cienfuegos, overlooking a large bay
- Visit spectacular El Nicho National Park and waterfalls
- Spend 2 nights enjoying the fascinating UNESCO preserved museum city of Trinidad with its bars, restaurants and live music venues
- Take a picturesque journey through the Escambray, Cuba's second highest mountain range
- Visit Santa Clara, the final resting place of the Revolutionary hero Ernesto 'Che' Guevara

The Highlights Collection from Captivating Cuba

A collection of organised short tours covering the most popular areas of Cuba, with guaranteed departures on at least a weekly basis. Developed specifically to compliment a stay in Havana or enhance a beach holiday in Cuba or even neighbouring countries, our Highlights Tours are an excellent way to experience this fascinating and unique island.

With numerous UNESCO World Heritage sites, historic towns and cities and spectacular landscapes, the best way to make the most from so many experiences is through one of our organised tours. These hand-crafted, carefully designed itineraries are drawn from our 25 years-experience arranging tailored travel to Cuba.

The Highlights Collection perfectly tie in with Virgin Atlantic's direct flight from London to Havana and a 3-night Havana stay, as well as other UK regional flight options and flight choices from the USA, Canada and neighbouring countries.

Our organised tours are led by experienced and professional English-speaking guides, who will not only show you the most important sights but will also immerse you into the fascinating life of Cubans, the political and social environment and what life is really like in Cuba.

We operate all of our tours using small groups to maintain quality and intimacy, and to allow more flexibility for our guide to add some extra elements to the day to day itinerary according to guest interests.

Our organised tours include quality, well-located accommodation with breakfast included, as well as lunch, air-conditioned transportation, services of a dedicated English-speaking guide during travel days, a range of activities, and entrances to the places we visit. Best of all, our tours are guaranteed to operate, so we will never cancel a tour due to lack of interest.

For those seeking a private experience, we can also organise our tours on an exclusive basis, on any day of the week just for you.

Introduction

A three-night tour visiting some of Cuba's most famous colonial and historical cities, along with a variety of carefully chosen visits en-route. The Culture History and Heroes Tour offers you the chance to enjoy all the major sights of this vibrant and diverse area of Cuba, and also allow some independence to explore on your own or relax and choose your own activities and dining options at times.

Itinerary | Culture History and Heroes Tour



Day 1 | The Bay of Pigs / Cienfuegos

Lunch included, dinner excluded (assistance with advanced recommendations and reservation upon request).

Estimated departure time from Havana: 0730

Estimated arrival time to Cienfuegos: 1630

You will depart Havana and head south east through the Sugar Cane and Citrus plantations towards the UNESCO preserved Zapata National Park where the first stop will be at Guama.

Guama is a replica village of Cuba's earliest settlers the Taino Indians who lived on the island in the 1100s, the original settlers on the island. Located on a string of small islands and reached by an exhilarating boat ride through the mangroves, there are also a number of life size sculptures depicting the life of these early settlers.

Continuing the journey into the Zapata National Park you reach the Bay of Pigs the site of the failed CIA backed invasion of Cuba that was repelled by Fidel and Che and their revolutionaries. Here you will briefly visit the museum to gain an insight into one of the major world events from the 1960s, and an important date in Cuba's revolutionary history.

After a relaxing lunch in the area, you will travel along the south coast and as the afternoon progresses there will be a stop by a small beach with time for a paddle, swim or a visit to a natural salt water pool set in a tranquil woodland location.

You will arrive in Cienfuegos known as the Pearl of the South, with a strong French colonial atmosphere and overlooking a beautiful bay. Wander through the central squares and along the 'Malecon' promenade after which you will be dropped at your accommodation.

This evening there will be time to enjoy an independent exploration of Cienfuegos and you can opt to book dinner locally in the hotel or at a local private restaurant.

Overnight in Cienfuegos.

Destination Information – The Bay of Pigs

The area more popularly known as the Bay of Pigs is made up of two small beach areas called Playa Larga and Playa Giron. Globally famous as the landing point for the failed US backed invasion of Cuba in 1961, which was repelled after some fierce fighting by the revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. For those interested in the history of Cuba, there are plenty of monuments to those who defended the island's shores, as well as a small museum that houses many artefacts from the short period of fighting.

Playa Larga which is a 20-minute drive through the mangroves from Playa Giron, sits on the gateway of the Zapata National Reserve, a very important eco-area in Cuba which is mainly mangroves and swamps. With a choice of eco-trails to explore, bird watching, and the spectacularly beautiful Las Salinas protected reserve, an area of countless migratory birds, it is a fantastic area for dedicated wildlife enthusiasts.

The beaches in this area are undeveloped but picturesque and are lovely for a day of exploration. There are also some very good snorkelling and scuba diving opportunities that can be pre-booked.

The two villages at Playa Giron and Larga both offer a real insight into Cuban life and are not developed for international tourism, which for many is quite an attraction.



Destination Information - Cienfuegos

Known as 'The Pearl of the South', Cienfuegos is a small city overlooking a large Caribbean bay which served as a refuge against storms for explorers and pirates long ago. In 1745 the 'Castillo de Jagua' was built at the entrance to the bay for protection against Caribbean pirates and the colonial town was later founded in 1819. Initially settled by French immigrants, Cienfuegos became one of the chief seaports of the Cuban sugar, coffee and tobacco trades. This rich and culturally diverse heritage has left an eclectic legacy of French influenced colonial and neo-classical style buildings in the UNESCO listed historic centre. The beautiful bay, historic buildings and harbour-front Malecón make it a wonderful city to explore.

In the busy centre is Parque Jose Marti, here you will find locals relaxing and chatting under the shade of a tree. Surrounding the park are a variety of buildings of interest including the ornate Teatro Tomas Terry and the Paseo del Prado. The longest boulevard in Cuba is close by, also lined by many beautiful buildings. Along the bay, just outside of the town centre is a beautiful old Moorish style palace called Palacio de Valle. This building is well worth a visit to see the stunning architecture, or you may want to enjoy a meal in the restaurant or have sunset drinks at the rooftop bar. The Palace is located in the Punta Gorda area of Cienfuegos, a narrow headland in the bay. Here you can find many excellent Casas Particulares and private restaurants, and visitors and locals enjoy spending time in this area.

In the evening there is a good choice of venues to listen to traditional Cuban music throughout this small city, and Cienfuegos has a strong link to Cuban music as it was the home to the world-famous musician Beny More.

Within a short drive of Cienfuegos, you can find a number of unspoilt beaches, ideal for a peaceful walk, swim or relaxation and the foothills of the Escambray Mountains are also not too far away. Cienfuegos also boasts one of the largest botanical gardens in the Americas on the outskirts of the city, and another off the beaten track location is the small bay popular with hundreds of flamingos.



Day 2 | El Nicho Park / Trinidad

Breakfast at accommodation, lunch included, dinner excluded (assistance with advanced recommendations and reservation upon request).

An early departure from Cienfuegos takes us El Nicho Park, a marvel of nature with waterfalls and natural pools in an area hidden among the mountains and one of the most beautiful spots in Cuba. It is a paradise which combines the green of the vegetation, rivers, the Black Creek waterfalls, where water can plunge more than 30 meters, and we reach the area by taking a very scenic route through many quaint rural villages.

During the tour, you can walk up through numerous walking paths with 'El Reino de las Aguas' being a gentle hiking trail of 2 km (1.2 miles) or you could choose a more difficult route, observe the flora and fauna and enjoy swimming in the cool river pools at the end of the walk.

A traditional and rustic Cuban style lunch is served locally before heading through the national reserve in the Escambray Mountains range to Trinidad. On arrival we will drop you at your accommodation after a fantastic day and the remainder of the evening will be at leisure to enjoy dinner and relax at your accommodation or listen to live music over a mojito or two in the centre of Trinidad.

Overnight in Trinidad.



Destination Information | Trinidad

Located close to the Caribbean Sea on the south coast of Cuba, lies the fascinating small city of Trinidad. Similar in size to a typical UK market town and sitting proudly between the coastline and the impressive Escambray Mountains, lies Cuba's most beautiful and cultured city.

Trinidad was founded in 1514 by the Spanish conquistador Diego Velasquez and became a major centre for trading sugar and slaves for almost 200 years. The wealth generated by the landowners during this region's dark past, is reflected in the treasures found in Trinidad's museums, as well as the ornate colonial architecture found in the centre. Declared an UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1988, Trinidad is regularly described as a living museum. Cobbled streets are lined with pastel-coloured houses, while the beautiful plazas are overlooked by striking 18th and 19th Century buildings.

The centre is home to a number of lovely squares, churches, museums and mansions and can easily be explored on foot. There is also a growing market scene with a range of local artworks and handicrafts on sale, and Trinidad is particularly known for its lace and pottery. In the evening, Trinidad offers a vibrant and growing selection of lively venues to sample Cuban food, music and dancing. The Casa de la Trova and Casa de la Musica are also both really lively with locals and visitors alike, and feature live music, dancing and typical Cuban fare.

Also, very close to Trinidad lie sugar-white Caribbean beaches and the warm clear ocean, perfect to spend some relaxing time away from the heat of the city. Many enjoy sunrise or sunset on the beaches, and they are easy to reach by taxi.



Day 3 | Trinidad

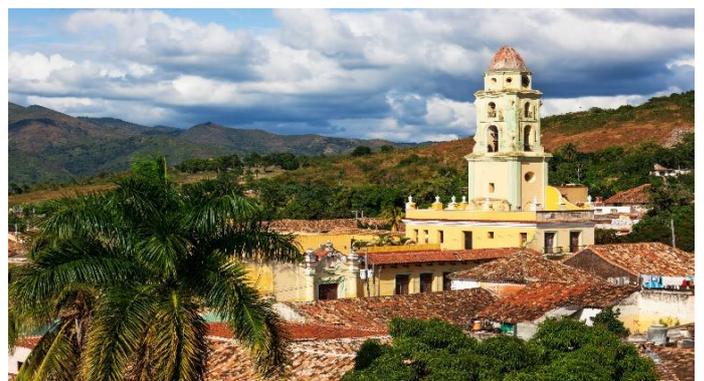
Breakfast at accommodation, lunch excluded, dinner excluded (assistance with advanced recommendations and reservation upon request).

After breakfast, the day begins with a 2-hour walking tour of Trinidad, a city founded in 1514 and now totally preserved by UNESCO, with one of our very knowledgeable and professional English-speaking guides.

Your tour can include a visit to the History Museum that depicts the long history of the city, and a local potter's house selling Trinidad ceramics. You will be free to choose any of the museums or places that may interest you (nominal entrance fees payable locally). The tour will end in the lively Canchanchara bar listening to Cuban music whilst sipping (or gulping!!) the local sugar cane juice ...be warned it tastes lovely but can make you whoozy!

The afternoon and evening are free to explore at leisure, visit the nearby beaches of Playa Ancon, or simply relax.

Overnight in Trinidad.



Day 4 | Santa Clara

Breakfast at accommodation, lunch included, dinner excluded (assistance with advanced recommendations and reservation upon request).

Estimated departure time from Trinidad: 0800

An early start will take you east along the picturesque road towards the historic Sugar Mill valley, the site of the former sugar plantations, which are Cuba's link to the slave trade within the Caribbean at the time. The first stop on the transfer will be here where you can see the old plantation houses and ghostly tower of Manaca Iznaga where it is possible to climb the tower which offers a great panoramic view of the area. Our journey continues through the mountains and past numerous small rural villages until we reach Santa Clara, a city of major historical significance. You will visit 'Tren Blindado**' the train that was attacked by Che Guevara and the turning point in the Cuban Revolution, as well as the final resting place of Che Guevara at the very symbolic *Che Mausoleum. There will also be time to visit a museum dedicated to his life before we head for lunch in the city.

Continuing on, you will be dropped at your chosen accommodation in your destination of choice after the tour. Perhaps more nights in Havana or a beach resort of your choice such as Varadero or Cayo Santa Maria.

The following Remedios visit is only possible for clients travelling on to Cayo Santa Maria

After lunch, you will head north through some beautiful countryside to the delightful colonial town of Remedios. Time stands still here, and the life is certainly very laid back! The central square is dominated by the most interesting Catholic Church, the oldest in Cuba and containing statues and other artefacts that are globally unique!

There will be time for a coffee or drink in the oldest café in Cuba a visit to the church or a relaxing walk around the town in the later afternoon sun.

****Important information**

'Tren Blindado' carriage interiors are closed on Sundays (but the location/exterior of the carriages can still be visited) and the 'Che Museum & Mausoleum' is closed on Mondays.

Destination Information | Santa Clara

A likeable colonial city and provincial capital, Santa Clara is most famous for its pivotal role in the Cuban revolution. On December 31, 1958, the combined forces of Che Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos, attacked the city by de-railing a train carrying military supplies for the dictator Fulgencio Batista's troops.

Once Che and Camilo had captured the city, Cuba was effectively split in half, cutting off all communication between the west and east of the island. This was the decisive moment in the revolution and Batista fled the country a few hours later.

Then on 1 January 1959 the victorious revolutionaries, including Fidel Castro, arrived in Havana seizing power and starting a new era in Cuban history. Part of the train is still on display in the city and there is a huge memorial where Che Guevara and other revolutionaries are buried in the city's Plaza de la Revolución, both locations offer a fascinating insight into Santa Clara's history.



General Information

- This itinerary is a small group tour which departs Havana every Monday, Friday and Wednesday. We intend to add more small group tours for departures on other days of the week for a supplement, please ask
- Guests who wish to make the tour private can do so for a supplement, please talk to us
- The tour has been designed carefully for clients to see a great variety of sights and visits, but also have the chance for independent time away from other guests if preferred.
- Evening meals have not been included on the tour, with the purpose to allow for some independence during the 3 nights, however we are able to pre-book tables for you in the most highly recommended restaurants in Trinidad before you depart for your holiday should you wish.
- It is possible to stay longer in Trinidad and enjoy a range of experiences and excursions including hiking in the mountains, a day on a catamaran on the Caribbean Sea, cycling or horse-riding or relaxing on the beach for an extra day or so. Please ask if you would like more information
- Rather than returning to Havana it is possible to arrange for you to continue your journey to the beach resorts of Varadero, Cayo Santa Maria, Cayo Coco/ Guillermo or eastern Cuba (additional fee applies). In this way clients can enjoy a Havana- Mini Tour – Beach Stay holiday
- We are pleased to advise that the tour will operate on a guaranteed basis (based on a minimum of 2 clients booked on the tour) every Wednesday and Sunday. Do also ask us about extra guaranteed departures being added throughout the winter season (November-April)
- Tour prices are based on a minimum of 2 clients. Please ask us for a solo traveller price

Important Information

- Any timings and order of activities provided are for rough guidance only, and may vary considerably due to local availability, constraints and demand
- As our tours are set up many months in advance, changes can occur to accommodation, restaurants and places to be visited as a result of changes in the local provision of services in Cuba. This is especially apparent in the winter season as Cuba continues to cope and change as a result of unprecedented global demand for the island, as well as a rapidly emerging USA visitor market that is both politically and commercially important to the Cuban Government and Tourism Authorities
- The services of an English-speaking guide are included for the transfers between locations and the tours included in the Highlights Collection

- Please refer to the end of this document for important information on required mobility and fitness required for this tour. Please talk to us if you have any concerns and we can advise you further
- Some experiences, excursions and transfers on this tour (if doing the shared/group tour) may at times be shared with our other customers who are on a different tour/route but have the same services occurring at the same time. This is not applicable if you have booked a private tour.

Accommodation Included

- Cienfuegos 1 night at the Jagua Hotel on B&B Basis
- Trinidad 2 nights at a recommended superior casa particular on BB basis

Highly recommended and extremely popular, Casas Particulares (often referred to as 'Casas') are fully licensed private bed and breakfast accommodation, with many offering a more boutique hotel-style stay. The recommended properties in our portfolio consistently attract excellent feedback from guests and for many are a highlight of their holiday in Cuba. Please visit our website for more information.

Optional Alternative Accommodation / Upgraded Rooms (Upon Request)

Prices given are additional supplements per person per night

Location	Accommodation	Room Type	Double/Twin	Single	Peak Supplement 22 Dec-4 Jan Inclusive
Cienfuegos	Melia La Union or Melia San Carlos Hotel (B&B)	Standard	£15 double/twin	£15 single occupancy	N/A
Trinidad	Deluxe Casa (excludes La Casona)	Standard	£25 pppn	£50 pppn	N/A
Trinidad	La Casona	Standard	£45 pppn	£70 pppn	N/A
Trinidad	Iberostar Grand Hotel	Standard	£120 pppn	£145 pppn	£55pppn-double £80pppn-single
Trinidad (Playa Ancon)	Memories Trinidad del Mar Hotel(all-Inclusive)		£30	£30	£20pppn-double £20pppn-single

Further room upgrades are available upon request, please ask for more information.

If you would prefer alternative accommodation, please contact us.

Transportation and Guide Included

- All transportation as required in the itinerary using fully air-conditioned transportation
- The services of English-speaking guide specialising in central Cuba on days 1 and 4, during sightseeing transfers as described and also during activities included

Restaurant Lunches Included

- Day 1 - Three course lunch in the Playa Larga area
- Day 2 – Rustic lunch at El Nicho National Park
- Day 4 - Lunch at a local restaurant in Santa Clara

Dinner reservations can be pre-booked before departure for a fee of £5 per reservation (cost of meal payable locally). Please ask us for more information and recommendations.

Entrances Included

- Day 1 - Entrance to Guama and boat ride to the replica village, entrance to Cueva De Los Pesces
- Day 2 – El Nicho Park
- Day 4 - Sugar Mill Valley, Tren Blindado (carriage interiors excluded Sundays), Che Guevara Museum and Mausoleum in Santa Clara (excluded Mondays)

Tour Extensions

On the last day, it is possible to transfer clients to the beaches of Cayo Santa Maria, Cayo Coco, Cayo Guillermo, Varadero, Jibacoa or further afield for a few days relaxing on the beach, or alternatively back to Havana or elsewhere for more exploration time.

Journey Times

Approximate journey times by road without breaking to give an indication of travel required. Road closures and other local conditions may mean changes, so please treat as a rough guide rather than definitive times.

	From	To	Hours
Day 1	Havana	Guama	2.5
Day 1	Guama	Bay of Pigs	45 <i>minutes</i>
Day 1	Bay of Pigs	Cienfuegos	1.5
Day 2	Cienfuegos	El Nicho Park	45 <i>minutes</i>
Day 2	El Nicho Park	Trinidad	1
<i>Day 4</i>	<i>Trinidad</i>	<i>Havana</i>	<i>5.5</i>
<i>Day 4</i>	<i>Trinidad</i>	<i>Cayo Santa Maria</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Day 4</i>	<i>Trinidad</i>	<i>Cayo Coco</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Day 4</i>	<i>Trinidad</i>	<i>Varadero</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Day 4</i>	<i>Trinidad</i>	<i>Jibacoa</i>	<i>5.5</i>

Culture History and Heroes Tour - On a Private Basis

We are able to organise this tour on a private basis, enabling guests to travel alone with the guide departing on any date that suits. On a private tour, it can also be possible to tailor the tour further if you require. Visits can be added, as can duration, or indeed a specialist interest can be catered for. We would be delighted to assist, please ask us if you would like a quotation.

Not Included

- Dinners and other meals unless confirmed as included
- Tips (discretionary)
- Drinks (soft drinks/alcohol)
- Services of a porter / assistance carrying baggage
- Laundry
- Telephone calls, WIFI / internet
- Local camera / filming fees
- Costs when on 'free time' e.g. taxis arranged locally or optional extras

- Travel insurance / medical insurance

Important Information

We operate our organised tours using small groups. Maximum group size can be up to 21 guests, but usually with an average of 4 – 8. Fellow passengers on travel days may not be partaking in the same organised tour and may instead only be taking that transfer. Tours run with a minimum of 2 passengers, and once 2 passengers are booked, the tour is guaranteed to operate. We will never cancel a tour due to lack of numbers.

Drivers, local staff at accommodation, attractions/places visited, restaurants/bars and local/specialist guides that you may encounter may not speak English (or languages other than Spanish). Your English-speaking tour guide is there to assist during the times specified only.

Please note that as our organised tours are set up many months in advance, changes can occur to accommodation, restaurants and places visited as a result of changes in the local provision of services in Cuba. This is especially apparent in the winter season as Cuba continues to cope and change as a result of unprecedented global demand for the island, as well as a rapidly emerging USA visitor market that is both politically and commercially important to the Cuban Government and Tourism Authorities. While we do our best to operate our tours as closely to published itineraries as we can, local conditions, demand for services,

delays and availability can change from one day to the next, so tour modifications may be needed with no advance warning.

Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements resulting from previous client feedback, guide/local staff comments and our own findings and research. Ultimately, we are trying to provide you with the best possible experience, which may not always be immediately apparent as factors unknown to you such as bureaucracy and local availability can affect an itinerary running smoothly.

Our organised tours are also marketed and sold by travel agents and other tour operators who have their own target markets. Age, nationality, likes/dislikes, lifestyle, and background of our escorted tour guests do vary.

All guests on our organised tours are required to comply with Cuban law and refrain from any illegal activities, bearing in mind your behaviour may impact on others on the tour. Anyone found to be participating in illegal activities will have their place on the tour cancelled immediately, and no refund or compensation provided.

Mobility, Access and Fitness

Our tour itineraries are generally fast paced and will keep you busy, and a considerable amount of walking is involved (including stairs) so an average/decent level of fitness and mobility is required, and you should be physically fit and also able to carry

your own luggage. Comfortable and supportive walking footwear is recommended.

Where tour accommodation is located in a narrow side street where a larger vehicle/bus cannot access easily, or road rules (which may be sudden/unexpected for reasons such as roadworks or underground infrastructure work) imposed restrict the driver from pulling up outside, you may be required to walk with your own luggage to the closest access point.

Some casa particular bedrooms and their facilities are accessed by narrow stairways, and lifts/elevators may not be available. If you do struggle with stairs it is important that you let us know at the time of booking, so we can make sure we understand your requirements, and can advise and assist accordingly.

Trinidad, Cienfuegos and other cities visited on our tours typically have uneven/high/low kerbs and steps and cobbled streets.

When visiting El Nicho, you may be required to climb steps, walk up-hill and navigate countryside terrain (which may be wet or slippery after rain) so an average/decent level on fitness is required in these locations if you wish to fully participate.

Please ensure you read our booking conditions and Cuba destination advice before booking



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