EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Cycle the Backroads of Cuba (CUC 2017)

CYCLING

TRIPDURATI
15
DAYS

Tour Style: Classic
Accommodation Grade: Standard

Tour Type: Small Groups
Cycling Grade: Moderate to Challenging

Trip Code: CUC

Trip Highlights - Cycle the Backroads of Cuba

- ✓ Cycle Cuba - With very little traffic this is the ideal way to see the island
- ✓ Havana Vieja (Havana Old Town) - Explore this atmospheric UNESCO Heritage Site
- ✓ Sierra Maestra coastal road - Ride the stunning mountainous coastline from Marea Portillo to Chivirico
- ✓ Casas Particulares - Stay in locally-owned and run private homestays in the heart of colonial Trinidad
- ✓ Spanish Colonial Towns - Including the beautiful original founding towns of Trinidad, Remedios and Baracoa
- ✓ Historical Sites - Cycle beside the infamous 'Bay of Pigs'; visit Che Guevara's monument in Santa Clara

Trip Essentials

Accommodation:	4 nights Simple Casas Particulares 10 nights Standard Hotel
Included Meals:	14 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 3 dinners
Start Point:	Join trip: Havana
End Point:	Trip ends: Havana
Included Bike:	27 gear Stevens Galant SX or similar hybrid bikes.
Transport:	Bus, Bicycle
Countries:	Cuba

Cycle The Backroads of Cuba

A remarkable cycle journey across Cuba that explores the island's revolutionary history, diverse landscapes and its unique brand of Caribbean culture. Riding on extremely quiet roads, this moderate to challenging tour discovers rich colonial heritage, tropical coastlines, jungle-clad mountains and historic sites such as the Bay of Pigs and Che Guevara's mausoleum. In colonial Trinidad we go local and stay in privately run Casas Particulares.

Now is undoubtedly a fantastic time to visit Cuba to see and experience the island. Visiting Cuba is like stepping back in time as little has changed over the past 50 years. However, the recent relaxation of US sanctions is making Cuba an ever more popular destination placing increasing demands on the local tourist infrastructure. As a result, all tour operators to the island are experiencing occasions where previously confirmed accommodation is changed at short notice. To fully enjoy the Cuban experience you should travel with a willingness to expect the unexpected and, above all, an adventurous spirit. In our opinion go now and experience this unique destination before it changes.

Why Book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a support vehicle, spare parts and take care of day to day bike maintenance. All you need bring is your own helmet.

Cycling Information

On this tour we cycle 691 km over twelve days (an average of 58 km per day). Three of the cycling days are circular and therefore optional. There is very little traffic outside of urban centres in Cuba which helps make cycling conditions perfect. Days 7, 9 and 11 are amongst the most epic rides possible in Cuba. The terrain is often undulating, and on tarmac which can be in very poor condition in places requiring good control of the bike. There are several rides with steeper climbs. A support vehicle is available throughout the tour except on the three circular/optional rides. We have graded the route as moderate to challenging.

Suitability

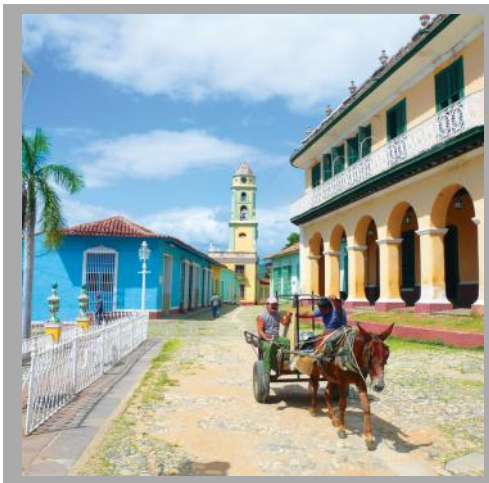
We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Standard

Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic



Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Cycling Grade: Moderate to Challenging

Combining moderate grade rides with some challenging days in the saddle, this grade is ideal for reasonably fit cyclists who want to challenge themselves.

Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced tour leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join tour in Havana

Our tour begins in Havana. Built around a deep natural harbour, Havana is one of the most impressive colonial cities surviving in the Americas today. Crumbling tenement buildings and 1950s American Cadillacs rub shoulders with white marble grandeur and the still audible echoes of the Cuban Revolution. The largest city in the Caribbean and Cuba's political and cultural heart, it is the perfect place to start our journey. In Havana we stay in 'casas particulares' - family-run guesthouses. On arrival to the main joining point casa in the old centre of Havana (as detailed in your Joining Instructions) you will be met by your host and shown to your room in one of the local guesthouses in the surrounding area.

Overnight: **Simple Casas Particulares**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 2 Cycle the Bay of Pigs. Drive to Cienfuegos

This morning we depart the city and drive for about 2.5 hours to the Bay of Pigs - the infamous site of a failed US-backed invasion in 1961. We then enjoy a relatively easy warm-up ride along the flat, following the Caribbean coast from Playa Larga our route ends at the Cueva de los Peces - a flooded tectonic fault (or cenote) with resident tropical fish. We resume our journey by road, travelling for about 1.5 hours on to the colonial city of Cienfuegos, where we have a chance to take in some of its impressive 19th century architecture on a walking tour of the centre, before continuing a short distance to our hotel at Cienfuegos Beach. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 30 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 3 Coastal ride from Cienfuegos to Trinidad

Continuing south-east this morning we cycle along the Caribbean coast to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Trinidad, one of the best preserved colonial towns in the country. Founded in 1514, the town was a haven for pirates and slavers before the arrival of the French in the early years of the 19th century and today remains one of Cuba's cultural gems. On arrival, the rest of the day is free to relax and enjoy this beautiful setting. For the next two nights we will enjoy local hospitality staying in casas particulares - private houses. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 78 kilometres (Total ascent and descent 500 metres)

Overnight: **Simple Casas Particulares**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4 Visit Trinidad; optional cycle to Ancon Peninsula

This morning we enjoy a walking tour around Trinidad, taking in the lovely setting of the central square and the cathedral. The afternoon has been left free to enjoy Cuba's beautiful Caribbean coastline and the white sands of nearby Playa Ancon. For those still

wanting to stretch their legs we also have the option to cycle out to the beaches and coastline of the Ancon Peninsula. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 30 kilometres (optional, unescorted)

Overnight: **Simple Casas Particulares**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5 'Valley of the Sugar Mills' ride. Drive to Camaguey

Leaving Trinidad after breakfast this morning we cycle through the historic landscapes of the Valle de los Ingenios, with its ruined sugar mills and infamous slave watchtower. By the middle years of the 19th century the valley was responsible for a third of all Cuba's sugar production, before the wars of independence saw the mills destroyed. We cycle to the watchtower of Manaca Iznaga, before continuing east towards the city of Sancti Spiritus, another colonial gemstone and one of the seven original Spanish founding villas of the early 16th century. After a short visit to the city we then drive for about 3 hours on to Camaguey, crossing through the central plains and cattle rich lands of Camaguey Province. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 70 kilometres (Total ascent and descent 450 metres)

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6 Cycle the along Granma coast to Media Luna

Continuing east this morning we drive for about four hours to Manzanillo in the Province of Granma - named after the vessel that carried the revolutionary fighters from Mexico to Cuba in 1956. We cycle from here along a route that provides a snapshot of authentic rural Cuba, always close to Caribbean coastline. After reaching Media Luna village we load up the bikes and drive for about an hour across the Sierra Maestra foothills to our next night stop at Marea de Portillo. The Sierra Maestra was the mountain country that served as Castro's base of operations during the Cuban Revolution and its southern slopes provide the perfect backdrop to today's cycle as we make our way towards the black sand beaches of Cuba's southern coast. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 51 kilometres (Total ascent and descent 200 metres)

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 7 Impressive coastal ride on flanks of the Sierra Maestra

The cycling route today is particularly impressive as we follow a route sandwiched between the steeply raked southern flanks of the mountains and the azure waters of the Caribbean. Parts of the route are surfaced with gravel and the support bus will be replaced with jeeps today as the main bus will not be able to access the route. We cycle from Marea de Portillo as far as Chivirico, where we spend the night before heading to Santiago tomorrow. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 105 kilometres (Total ascent and descent 800 metres)

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 8 Visit Santiago; optional ride to lighthouse viewpoint

This morning we drive for about 2 hours to Santiago, Cuba's second largest cities founded by Diego Velazquez de Cuellar in 1514. At the heart of Cuban culture and history since its foundation and briefly the country's capital, Santiago rose to prominence with the growth of the sugar plantations during the 17th and 18th centuries. It was the starting point of the Cuban Revolution and earned itself the title of 'Hero City of the Republic'. On arrival we take a tour of the city, taking in some of the colonial monuments around the Plaza de la Revolucion. This afternoon there is an option to cycle out to the lighthouse that overlooks Santiago Bay. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 25 kilometres (Total ascent and descent 100 metres) (optional, unescorted)

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 9 Ride 'La Farola' mountain road to charming Baracoa

Today presents us with our most challenging ride, as we cycle through the eastern mountains to Baracoa. Departing Santiago after breakfast, we drive firstly for about 2.5 hours to the village of Imias, just past Guantanamo. It is from here that we begin cycling,

following the Caribbean coast as far as Cajobabo, before turning north and continuing up towards the Atlantic coast. As we leave Cajobabo behind we climb into the Sierra del Purial, travelling along the Farola Road, a winding, scenic highway that takes us through the tropical forests of the eastern mountains before descending steeply to the small, colonial town of Baracoa. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 66 kilometres (Total ascent and descent 1000 metres)

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 10 Explore Baracoa; optional cycle to River Yumuri

Lying in Cuba's far south-eastern corner, sandwiched between two bays, Baracoa was the first Spanish colony to be founded in Cuba. For many years it was only accessible by sea until 'La Farola' road was built through the mountains in the 1960's. Today is left free to explore this charming town, interesting colonial architecture and nearby tropical beaches. You may choose to take an optional ride to the mouth of the Yumuri River to the east of the town. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 56 kilometres (Total ascent and descent 350 metres) (optional, unescorted)

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 11 Cycle past Alexander Humboldt NP. Drive to Holguin

Baracoa means 'elevated land' in the local Indian language and the whole area is blanketed in some of the country's most verdant forests. This morning we cycle along the coast, travelling through Cuba's lush, tropical scenery. The ride takes us past Alexander von Humboldt National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the most biologically diverse sites on earth. The road condition is not good in this area and we later switch to the bus to complete the journey on to Holguín, another four to five hour drive away. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 45 kilometres (Total ascent and descent 150 metres)

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 12 Ride along north coast backroads. Drive to Camaguey

Leaving Holguín early this morning we head north, towards the Atlantic coast near Puerto Padre. The ride today takes us along quiet country roads, passing through Cuba's fourth largest province. The area produces a rich variety of crops, from corn and beans in the east to sugar in the central region, whilst the hills above the Rio Mayari are littered with coffee plantations. Reaching the coast later this morning we then meet with the bus for the onward drive to Camaguey, some four and a half hours to the west. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 60 kilometres (Total ascent and descent 150 metres)

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 13 Cycle to Jaguajay. Drive to Santa Clara via Remedios

We start the day with a bus drive for about 2.5hrs to the start point of today's ride. Our final day of cycling sees us cycling up towards the Caguanes Peninsula in the northern corner of Sancti Spiritus Province. Our destination is Jaguajay, lying close to the Caguanes National Park, where we leave our bikes and continue onto the colonial town of Remedios by bus. Founded in 1524 and considered by many to be one of Cuba's most picturesque towns, Remedios still retains something of the flavour of its 17th century heritage and we have a chance to explore some of the town before completing our day's journey one hour onto Santa Clara. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 75 kilometres (Total ascent and descent 200 metres)

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 14 Visit Che Guevara Mausoleum. Drive to Havana; city tour

This morning we visit the Che Guevara Monument and Mausoleum, the final resting place of one of the world's most iconic figures and one of the country's most emotive shrines to its revolutionary heritage. Continuing on to Havana (three hours), we then spend this afternoon exploring the heart of the old capital, wandering through the neo-classical architecture of the Vieja district and enjoying the baroque grandeur of the 18th century Catedral de San Cristobal de la Habana.

Overnight: **Simple Casas Particulares**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 15 Tour ends in Havana

The tour ends in Havana this morning after breakfast.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Notes

Due to the recent increase in tourism in Cuba following the relaxing of US sanctions, we are finding that a number of hotels and guesthouses are cancelling or moving our reservations at short notice. Unfortunately, these changes aren't something we can predict, or prevent, but we'll do our utmost to ensure that any replacements we provide you are of an equivalent standard. On occasions this may be in an alternative location but this should not affect your included itinerary. We'll let you know if we receive notification of changes within a reasonable amount of time, but please do be prepared that you might find out about changes to your accommodation on arrival or during your trip.

Accommodation and service levels in Cuba have improved in recent years but there is an ongoing trade embargo and lack of investment in infrastructure. Accommodation can be basic, particularly in some rural areas, occasionally with unreliable water and electricity supply. Service levels in government hotels, shops and restaurants are generally poor as this is not a service-oriented western culture. Of course, this is all part of seeing the 'real Cuba' and while we think you'll be pleasantly surprised by most of the hotels we use, you should be prepared for simply furnished rooms, some out-dated furniture and varying levels of service. Most of the hotels do have air conditioning and en-suite facilities.

Casas particulares - This is a Spanish term meaning private accommodation or homestay in Cuba. Staying in a casa offers the visitor a unique opportunity to experience Cuban hospitality in local accommodation adapted for tourism. The number of rooms, quality, facilities and access to other areas of the house such as the living room varies massively but as a general rule the majority of Casas are clean, basic, centrally located and can host only a handful of guests. Casas are generally run by the owner and members of the family that live there and the standard of English spoken will vary from zero to fluent, which is a good opportunity for you to practice your Spanish. Virtually all of the rooms have private facilities but on rare occasions it may be necessary to share. Your Explore Leader will coordinate accommodation arrangements on tour.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 14 breakfasts, 0 lunches,3 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide.Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Cuba

Lunch £: 4.00 - 6.00

Dinner £: 12.00-15.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Cuba

Bottle of Beer £: 2.00

Water £: 1.50

Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

Havana - Museo Bellas Artes 5 CUC
Please note - most museums in Cuba charge for use of Camera's and Camcorders, this can be up to 7 CUC per usage.

Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour. Accordingly, you should allow 50 Convertible Peso (CUC) for group tipping.

Foreign Exchange

Cuba

ATM Availability: Available in major towns. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

Credit Card Acceptance: Please note credit cards drawn on American Banks are not accepted. Credit cards are useful and can be used in many places, but may be subject to a 10% service charge

Travellers Cheques: We do not recommend Travellers Cheques. Amex Travellers Cheques are not accepted.

Local Currency: Cuban Convertible Peso (CUC).

Recommended Currency for Exchange: US dollars are no longer accepted in shops and other businesses, tourists and Cubans exchanging dollars will have to pay a 20% commission. We recommend you take clean Euro, Canadian dollars or Sterling cash as these are easier to exchange. Please note that Scottish Pounds are not accepted in Cuba.

Where to Exchange: Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a ‘flight inclusive’ package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the ‘Land Only’ arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific ‘Joining Instructions’ prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the ‘Land Only’ arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

EXPLORE!
The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety
We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

Cuba: Visas or Tourist cards are required by all nationalities travelling to Cuba. Explore can only supply the Cuban Tourist Cards to citizens of the EU, Canada, Australia and New Zealand who are resident in the UK. This currently costs £15. Please contact Explore or your Travel Agent to arrange this service and we will send your tourist card with your final documentation.

Alternatively they can be obtained directly through Cuban embassies and consulates. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

Due to US Treasury Department Regulations we are unable to accept bookings from US passport holders. These Regulations set out different categories under which it is possible for US citizens to travel to Cuba; our trips do not fall under any of the permissible categories. As a tour operator we have an obligation to follow legal procedures, and as such we are unable to sell our trips to US passport holders.

You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

Canada: An electronic travel authorisation (ETA) is required by British citizens transiting via Canada. For more information see the official Canadian government website: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta.asp
Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

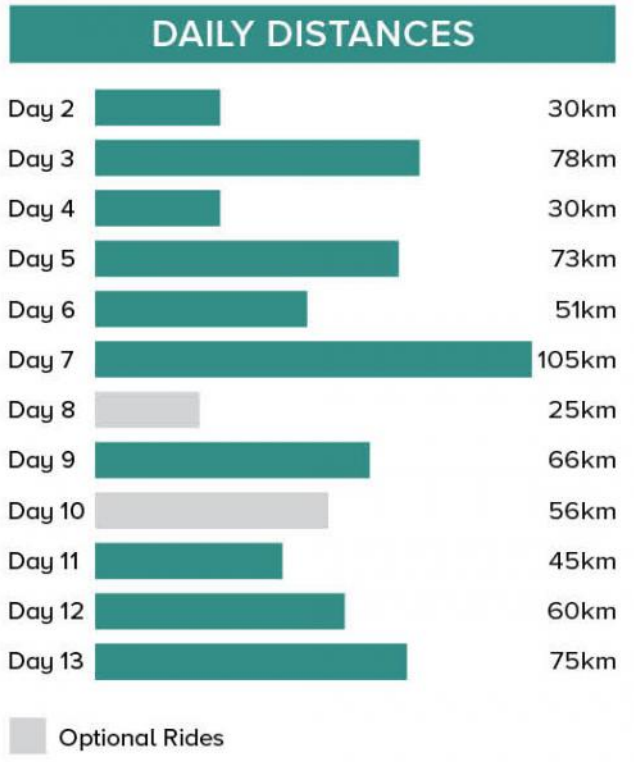
Vaccinations & Protection

Cuba

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, TB, infectious hepatitis and polio. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites

- these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/ and from your local healthcare provider.

Preparing for your Trip



Bike Details

Your included bike will be a 27 gear Stevens Galant SX Hybrid or similar make and model and will be the correct frame size for your height. Female and male frames are allocated accordingly when booking unless you specifically request otherwise. A pannier and water bottle holder are included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

Climate

Cuba

The dry season is from November to April. Average temperatures are 22-26C. Though the sky is often cloudless during the dry season, cold wet snaps do come in from North America especially in Dec and Jan, when the temperatures can drop to as low as 5C at night. From May to October there are normally fine mornings and clear evenings, afternoon rains tend to be short & heavy. Temperatures are hot and humid.

Clothing

Pack for warm and hot conditions. Bring cycling gear such as padded shorts, cycle gloves and quick drying cycle shirts. Remember weather is changeable in the mountains and it can be cool and wet in the high altitude of the Sierra Escambray or even on some evenings in Havana, so bring some warmer clothing too. Wet weather gear is essential at all times in case of rain. Don't forget your swimming costume.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD

cycle shoes are not well suited to tours that combine sightseeing with cycling.
Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage: On Tour

We recommend you bring a daypack and one main piece of luggage (total allowance: 44lb/20kg) which will be transported between hotels while you cycle. Check the bike details section to see if a pannier or handlebar bag is provided on the bike.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Cuba

Population: 11,241,894

Size of Country: 109,884 sq km

Major Language: Spanish

Religion: 60% Catholic

Time Difference to GMT: -5

Electric Supply & Plugs

Cuba

2 Pin Flat

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailormade holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's LicenceÂ granted by the Civil Aviation Authority.Â Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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