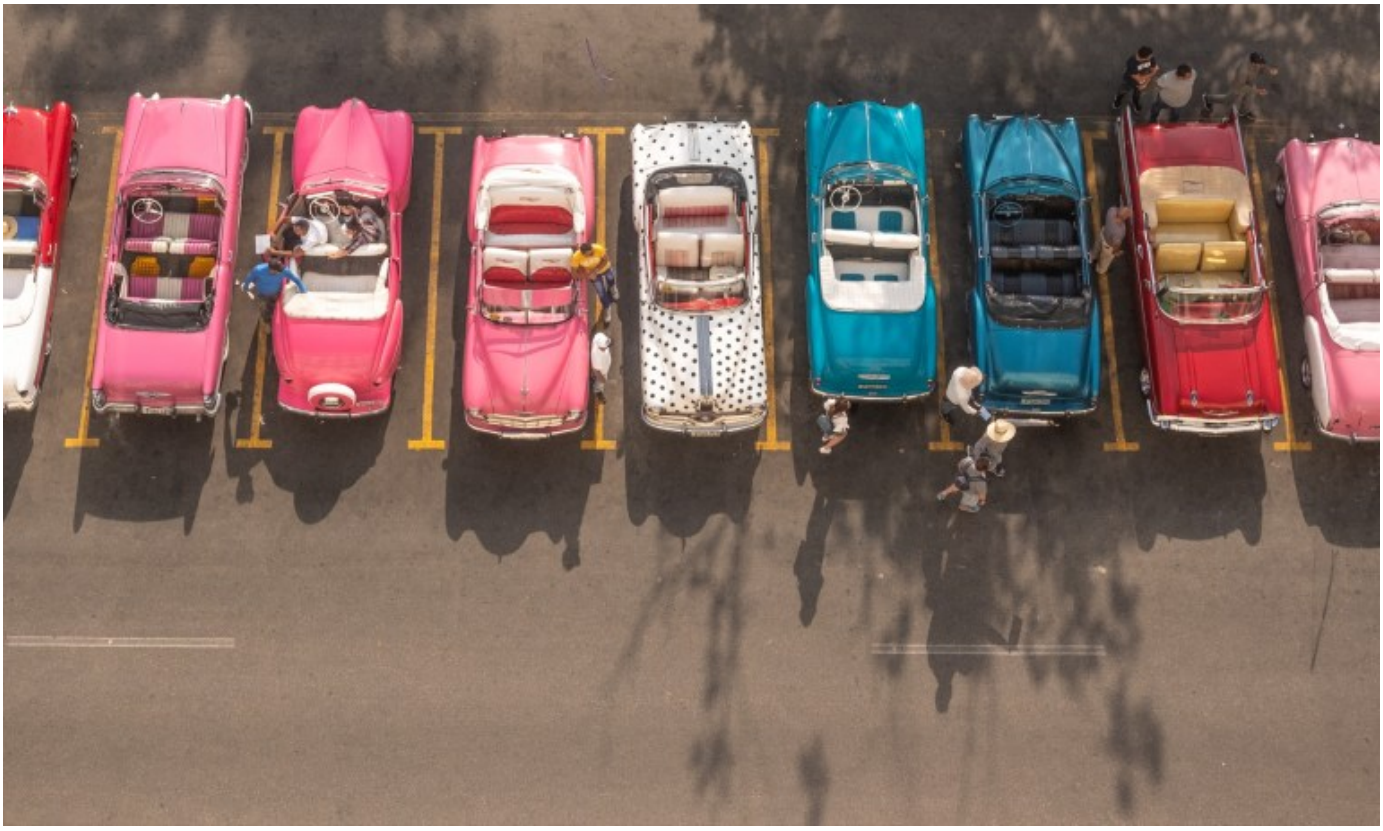
JOURNEY
LATIN AMERICA



PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

VALUE CUBA: CUBA AT A GLANCE

11 days from **£1,450pp**

CUBA / HAVANA / TRINIDAD AND THE ESCAMBRAY MOUNTAINS / VIÑALES AND THE SIERRA DE LOS ORGANOS / CARIBBEAN CAYES AND COAST



WITH OVER 40 YEARS EXPERIENCE, NO-ONE KNOWS LATIN AMERICA LIKE WE DO

EXPERIENCE SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY

WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

- A passion for the region runs through all we do
- All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America
- Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

- Fully bonded and licensed
- ATOL-protected
- On your side when it matters
- Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

- Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks
- We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions
- Let us show you the Latin America we know and love

OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

This modestly priced holiday includes some overnights in homestays and plenty of free time to explore at leisure or organise your own excursions. The UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office currently advises against travel to Cuba.

DAY 1	**Arrive in Havana and transfer to your accommodation in the historic centre.**
DAY 2	**Half day walking tour of Old Havana.**
DAY 3	**Road transfer to Viñales western Cuba.**
DAY 4	**Half day bike tour of Viñales.**
DAY 5	**Road transfer to Trinidad, UNESCO World Heritage Site.**
DAY 6	**At leisure.**
DAY 7	**Guided tour of Trinidad and the Sugar Mills valley.**
DAY 8	**Land transfer to Caribbean beach resort**
DAYS 9-10	**At leisure on the beach.**
DAY 11	**Transfer to airport for international flight home.**

ITINERARY

It doesn't cost a fortune to experience the hospitality of the Cuban people, their extraordinary history, living culture, music and dance. We've devised a good-value holiday where you will explore old Havana's evocative historic quarters, the fairyland valley landscapes of the fertile Viñales region and Trinidad's elegant colonial streets.

Cuba's unique Latin American beat sets it apart from all the other islands of the Caribbean. After these adventures, you'll soak up the sun on the chalky white sand beach at the fully inclusive beach resort Memories Jibacoa. There's plenty of time at leisure to choose optional excursions and activities when you are there, or just wander around according to your own whims. The tour uses coaches designed for tourists and the accommodation is in friendly guest houses and **homestays.**

DAY 1

Arrive in Havana and transfer to your accommodation in the historic centre.

Transfer to your accommodation, a superior guesthouse in the historic centre.



DAY 2

Half day walking tour of Old Havana.

Soak up the atmosphere on a guided walking tour through the cobbled streets of one of the world's most vibrant capitals. The streets of La Habana Vieja were declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982, and the subsequent restoration of this part of town has transformed it into arguably Latin America's finest colonial quarter, in marked contrast to the rambling, potholed streets and crumbling façades around it.

Stroll along the cobbles, between grand, pastel-hued mansions and bustling street life; music seeps out of every doorway and the narrow streets are clogged with gargantuan, crumbling 1950s American cars, which you will have the option of hopping into and cruising down the Malecón. You'll have trouble keeping your camera by your side as iconic images flash before you round each and every corner.



DAY 3

Road transfer to Viñales western Cuba.



Drive to the bus station for the tourist service to Viñales, a small town set in a stunning, Jurassic landscape of serene valleys and weirdly shaped rock monoliths. This sumptuous landscape makes a good base for horse-riding, mountain-biking or day walks. Overnight in a genuine Cuban home allowing you to experience a more authentic setting where the welcome is always warm and invariably there's lobster on the menu! (Your popular host operates several properties along with members of his family, you'll stay in one of them.).

DAY 4

Half day bike tour of Viñales.



There's a guided tour by bike through this lovely countryside. Cycling really is the best pace at which to enjoy the tranquillity and beautiful scenery. Tobacco and other cash crops are cultivated in the rich soils of the valley floor and you'll stop at a plantation to learn about the techniques involved in the production of the crop, most of which are traditional.

There's a brief stop at El Palenque, a tourist spot and restaurant reached through a narrow cave which bisects one of the area's limestone *mogotes*. At the end of the path there's a re-construction of one of the nomadic homes set up by runaway slaves who lived and hid in the many subterranean caves and tunnels which are characteristic of limestone scenery and riddle the valley. You'll take a boat trip down one of these rivers, which issues from a cave called the Cueva del Indio.

DAY 5

Road transfer to Trinidad, UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Transfer to Trinidad, a beautifully preserved colonial town with numerous eateries and live music venues set in some of Cuba's loveliest scenery. Trinidad was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1988. Its popularity has not affected its colonial charm and unhurried atmosphere.

Low-rise, brightly painted houses with vast shutters open out onto cobbled streets, palm trees dot the main plaza and evening entertainment continues into the early hours with dancing and music each night.

DAY 6

At leisure.

At leisure. You could use your leisure time to take part in an excursion to walk in the cool, lush forests of the lake-dotted Escambray mountains at Topes de Collantes in the hinterland of the city or head in the other direction to the beach at Ancón, which is only a short taxi ride away.



DAY 7

Guided tour of Trinidad and the Sugar Mills valley.

You'll be driven out from Trinidad to the striking UNESCO World Heritage Site of Valle de los Ingenios. The sleepy valley was once one of the most prosperous areas on the island, having built its affluence from its many sugar plantations, worked by African slaves. Climb to the top of the Manaca-Iznaga tower and enjoy spectacular panoramic views. Next, return to Trinidad for lunch at a local restaurant and then wander the picturesque streets of this surprisingly vibrant colonial treasure. You'll pass the Plaza Mayor, visit Museo Romántico and sample a traditional cocktail in an authentic bar before heading to a beautiful ceramics workshop, La Casa del Alfarero.



DAY 8

Land transfer to Caribbean beach resort

Travel by car through the heart of the Cuba to your next accommodation, set on tightly forested coastal hills. There are plenty of outdoor activities on offer, with tennis courts, a gym with sauna, spa, water sports, a huge open-air swimming pool with poolside grill. Entertainment is not lacking either, with concerts and other shows a regular feature. There are four restaurants and five bars to choose from.

DAYS 9-10

At leisure on the beach.

These days are left free for you to get the best out of your time – whether that's time relaxing on the beach or enjoying the range of activities on offer.



DAY 11

Transfer to airport for international flight home.

INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

- Guided walking tour of Old Havana
- Guided bike tour in Viñales valley
- Guided tour of Trinidad and the Sugar Mill valley

ESSENTIALS

4 road journeys (longest 6.5hrs).

Accommodation on this trip is in simple but characterful guest houses and homestays. In Cuba standards of amenities and service can be erratic, but are constantly improving. You'll find reasonably well-equipped rooms, private bathroom and air-conditioning and some local detail in the décor and furnishings.

Breakfast daily. Lunch days 4 & 7. Full board days 8-10.

We carefully select our local partners; their English-speaking guides understand the expectations of our clients very well, and are consistently singled out for praise by clients on their return.

11 days, 10 nights: Havana 2; Viñales 2; Trinidad 3; Jibacoa 3.

The unit of currency in Cuba is the Cuban peso.

The Cuban National Peso (CUP) is the only official cash currency in Cuba, however many outlets will accept US dollars and some may also accept Euros. We recommend you bring your funds in US$ cash and exchange a small amount into CUPs when in Cuba. You can also exchange Euros but we don't recommend Sterling. Your bank notes should not be damaged in any way. As a foreign tourist you should receive a considerably better exchange rate than the 'official' rate used for commercial transactions.

A limited number of ATM's are available around Cuba, but queues can be large, charges can be high, and the official rate of exchange is given which makes them much less attractive.

Changing small amounts at a time into CUPs will help to avoid having leftover currency when you leave Cuba (it is not always easy to exchange CUPs back to other currencies). It is worth noting that CUPs are not accepted at Havana Airport.

Private hotels, bars and restaurants often accept payments directly in US$ cash. For these transactions, bring small denominations if possible, and note that coins will not be accepted. Change may sometimes be given in CUPs.

Euros may also be accepted, but locals often see them as interchangeable with US$, meaning you will pay the same amount in Euros that you would in US$.

You'll generally need to use a credit/debit card to cover transactions in government shops and hotels, as well as car-rental extras such as petrol and local fees. However, some clients have issues using cards in Cuba so don't rely on them as your only source of funding. Be sure to check with your bank that your cards are accepted in Cuba (cards linked to US banks are not accepted locally). At Cadeca exchange offices it is now possible to purchase a prepaid card (Tarjeta Clasica) which can be bought in cash with US Dollars/Euros. These can be used to obtain petrol. Clasica credit cannot be applied to any other purchases.

Using money changers in the street is not recommended as it is illegal and you are more likely to receive forgeries.

It is very difficult to give a guideline for essential expenses but a budget of around £25 per day should cover the cost of meals not included in the holiday itinerary, drinks and the odd souvenir. Eat at the best restaurants and you will pay considerably more.

Tips are expected and local guides often rely on their tip as a significant proportion of their income.

Most service industry workers will expect a tip of some kind and so it is useful to have spare change for hotel porters, taxi drivers and the like. It is common to leave 10 – 12% in restaurants.

Travel insurance is essential. Cuban authorities require visitors to have travel insurance, and specifically for the medical and repatriation element of cover to be from an approved provider. For example, Journey Latin America's recommended insurance company is Campbell Irvine, and their medical and repatriation cover is handled by International Medical Assistance, who are approved by Cuba. Please check with your insurance company that their provider is similarly

approved.

Details of our recommended policy can be found on our Travel Insurance page.

If you have purchased your flights through Journey Latin America, the international departure tax is usually included in the ticket.
Departure tax from Cuba is now (as of May 2015) included in the price of your ticket.

Holders of a full British passport do not require a visa, although passports must be valid for at least 6 months after the trip begins. A completed Cuban tourist card is essential for all UK citizens travelling to Cuba, we can organise this for you Clients with a different nationality should enquire with us or check with the Cuban consulate.

TRIP SUITABILITY

Generally this holiday is suitable for all able, reasonably fit visitors, including families.

Bear in mind that there are some walking tours on this trip, though nothing especially demanding.
This journey uses a combination of tourist bus services and private transport. Be aware that although there are timetables for buses in Cuba, there are often delays and occasionally cancellations – patience and a flexible attitude will be a virtue in these situations.

As Cuba lies in the Caribbean Sea, it has a tropical climate that is split into two seasons, one wet and one dry.

However, Cuba is generally hot throughout the year (18-32°C) with regular rainfall and high humidity. The rainy season runs from May to October and from July to September, humidity can be very high. The east of the island is hotter and more humid that the west. Hurricanes and tropical storms are possible from July to October.

No special clothing or equipment is required although comfortable walking shoes or trainers, and sandals would be useful. Light, summer clothing will be adequate for these hot temperatures, and the dress code is very casual everywhere. Thin, long-sleeved garments may be useful for evenings, and a lightweight raincoat is the best protection against tropical downpours. We also recommend that you pack a torch as lighting can be poor at night.

Protection against the sun (sunblock, sun hat) and mosquito repellant are essential and you should bring swimwear. A daypack is useful for carrying sunblock, guidebook, water and any extra layers.

Helmets for the biking tour in Viñales can be hired from our partners in Havana, where they have to be returned at the end of the holiday.

Preventative vaccinations are recommended against the following; typhoid; polio; tetanus; hepatitis A. For specific requirements you must consult your GP.

You can also find helpful information on the Masta Travel Health website.

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

0208 747 8315

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm
Saturday & Sunday: Closed

SEND US AN EMAIL

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