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CUBA FROM WEST TO EAST

Cuba is not only a paradise island where colourful colonial cities compete with the stunning Caribbean seabed, it is also, and above all, a country which truly lives. Inhale the rich aromas and let your body move to the rhythms of the music. Meet friendly local people and discover a history beyond any standards of fascination! This great island crossing takes you from Santiago to Vinales in 3 weeks immersing you in the heart of Cuban history, traditions and culture. In the footsteps of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, in the heart of the Sierra and the Vinales valley and through the cobbled streets of Havana and Trinidad, this trip is a step back in time and undoubtedly be one of the most beautiful, memorable trips you could take...

👎 Region	Centre
	East
	La Havana
	West
Activity	Trek & Hiking
O Duration	21 days
📼 Code	UCUBAFITEST
Price	From €2,548
🐕 Level	2/5
🛱 Comfort	4/5

ITINERARY

• Day 1 Welcome to Havana

Late afternoon rendez-vous at your accommodation for an official welcome from our local team and presentation of your stay.

Accommodation: Homestay Meals not included

• Day 2 La Havana

Today, you visit the different neighbourhoods and colonial squares of Old Havana. Immerse yourself in the heart of Cuban history.

Accommodation: Homestay Breakfast included

Pay 3 Havana - Las Terrazas - Viñales

Today you head to Las Terrazas, a classified World Biosphere Reserve. Visit the ruins of the Cafetal Buena Vista farm and swim in the lush waters of Baños del San Juan. The community of Las Terrazas was founded thanks to the reunion of several families in the 60's. The village developed around the lake because of their ability to work as a cooperative. From here, you continue to Viñales and stop at Mirador Los Jazmines to enjoy spectacular views of the magnificent valley.

Several short walks Accommodation: Homestay Meals included

Pay 4 The Valley of Viñales

Accompanied by a local guide, today you go hiking in the valley of Viñales. The chosen route enables you to really appreciate the beauty of the valley, the nature and the traditions of the people who live in the heart of this stunning landscape. Meet Alexis the tobacco farmer and his family, visit his plantation or observe his tobacco drying (depending on the season) and learn to roll a cigar the traditional way. After lunch at the private farm you visit Cuba's largest cave system, the Great Tavern of Santo Tomas.

Walk duration flexible Accommodation: Homestay Meals included

• Day 5 Cayo Jutías

underwater universe.

A relaxing day on the stunning white sand beach, Cayo Jutia. Go snorkelling and discover the barrier reef here, part of Cuba's rich

2 hours of road Accommodation: Homestay Breakfast and dinner included

• Day 6 Vinales - El Salto - Havana

Today you head East. On the way, you stop to visit the cigar factory of Pinar del Rio, the lush El salto waterfalls and a stunning Orchid garden. Late afternoon arrival in Havana where you settle into your casa particular accommodation for the night.

2 and 1/2 hours on the road Accommodation: Homestay Breakfast and lunch included

Day 7 Santa Clara - Mausoleum of Che - Cienfuegos

Today, you leave for Santa Clara and visit the Che Guevara Mausoleum memorial. Then, you continue to the charming city of Cienfuegos and explore the old town with its many squares and monuments. Installation into your casa particular accommodation and end of your afternoon at leisure.

4 and 1/2 hours on the road Accommodation: Homestay Breakfast and dinner included

• Day 8 Cienfuegos - Trinidad

Take the road to Trinidad and explore the colourful city. Discover a beautiful colonial city featuring several Cuban architectural jewels. Dinner and overnight with locals.

1 and 1/2 hours on the road Accommodation: Homestay Breakfast and dinner included

• Day 9 Topes de Collantes

Departure for Topes de Collantes Natural Park in the Sierra del Escambray. Several hiking trails are possible in what can only be described as the ideal place for walking... Enjoy an easy varied walk along the river... Bring a small bag with your swimstuff and a water bottle.

Free afternoon Accommodation: Homestay Meals included

• Day 10 Catamaran for Cayo Blanco

Transfer to Ancon marina and departure by catamaran for the stuning white sand beach of Cayo Blanco. Spend the day relaxing and exploring this picture perfect paradise island with its variety of flora and fauna. Late afternoon return to Trinidad.

Accommodation; Homestay Meals included

Pay 11 Trinidad - Sancti Spiritus - Camaguey

Departure to the picturesque Sancti Spiritus. On the way, you visit Manaca Iznaga, a small village where you can climb to the top of a tower and visit the main house. You continue to Sancti Spiritus and visit the central square. After lunch you continue to Camaguey and visit of the historic center the iconic place de San Juan De Dios and the historique place Ignace Agramonte.

4 hours on the road Accommodaion: Homestay Breakfast and dinner included

• Day 12 Camaguey - Bayamo - Sierra Maestra

Journeying ever eastward, you continue to Bayamo city where you enjoy a walking tour through the colourful streets. Tonight you stay in Sierra Maestra surrounded by lush green scenary.

4 hours driving Accommodation: Homestay Breakfast and dinner included

Day 13 Comandancia de la Plata - Santiago de Cuba

Today you hike to the Comandancia de la Plata, the former secret headquarters, hidden in the mountains, where Fidel Castro took refuge to prepare the revolution at the beginning of the 'guerrilla''. Visit the old facilities, the country hospital and the site of

'Radio Rebelle'... Then, you continue to Santiago where you spend the night.

3-4 hours of walking Accommodation: Homestay Meals included

Pay 14 Santiago, Cuba

Visit the main monuments of the most Caribbean of the Cuban cities whose colonial houses and alleys climb up the hill facing the Santiago bay. This afternoon, take a stroll through the old city center, soak in the atmosphere and visit the impressive Castillo del Morro fort which guards Santiago bay.

Accommodation: Homestay Breakfast and dinner included

• Day 15 Santiago de Cuba - Baracoa

Today you take to the road, direction Baracoa. As you journey along the south coast of the island the arid landscapes and cactis give way to coconut trees... You join a winding road with beautiful views and follow it to Baracoa, the first city to be founded in Cuba. Visit the town and settle into your casa particular accommodation.

4 hours on the road Accommodation: Homestay Breakfast and dinner included

• Day 16 Visit La Esperanza Farm

On board a rowing boat, you cross the River Toa to La Esperanza, typical Cuban farm. Spend today visiting the farm and learning

about rural life here in East cuba, afternoon return to Baracoa.

Free afternoon Accommodation: Homestay Meals included

Pay 17 Baracoa - Yunque - Maguana

Accompanied by a local guide, today you hike to the summit of Yunque. This famous tabular mountain overlooks Baracoa and the top yields fabulous views. On the route back you head to Maguana where you spend the night in bungalow by the sea.

5 hours of walking Bungalow accommodation next to the sea Breakfast and lunch included

Pay 18 Maguana

A day to relax by the sea. Discover the stunning white sand beaches, turquiose waters and lush tropical vegetation...

Bungalow accommodation by the sea Breakfast included

Pay 19 Humbolt National Park - Holguin

Accompanied by a local guide, by boat or on land, you discover the stunning Humbolt National Park. Then, you continue to the postcard city of Holguin. After a tour of the city you settle into your homestay accommodation, it is your last night before your return to Havana.

Accommodation: Homestay Breakfast and dinner included Today you fly to Havane. Early afternoon arrival in the capital of Cuba, installation in your accommodation and then free time to visit the ancient city.

Transport: Domestic flight Accommodation: Homestay Breakfast included

• Day 21 Havana - End of stay

After breakfast, continue your stay at your convenience. End of our services.

Breakfast included

The details in this programme are updated regularly but imponderables and unpredictable circumstances may result in inaccuracies. In order to provide the adventure which is best suited to your demands, the weather and the operational conditions, changes to the programme may be made. For safety reasons, we reserve the rights to interrupt your participation in this programme at any time if your technical level or fitness are deemed unsuitable or if you are seen as a danger to the group or yourself. This will in no case give rise to refunds or compensation.



Price

From 2490 € per person (based on 2 travellers)

The budget is an indication of the price per person, subject to availability. Your local agent will send you a customized quote with the exact price. The price can vary according to availability, level of services, period of travel, number of participants, booking time frame and other items.

Included

- 20 nights in hotel, refuge on the farm and homestay with breakfasts
- 14 dinners (Days 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 19)
- 8 lunches (Days 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 13, 16 and 17)
- The entries in the sites planned in the program
- Accompaniment by a Spanish speaking driver from day 1 to day 21
- You domestic flight from Holguin to Havana, Day 20
- Our English speaking assistance 24 / 7

Not included

- International flights
- Tourist card (necessary for entry into the country)
- Meals: 6 dinners and 12 lunches (detailed in itinerary)
- Drinks, tips and personal expenses all that is not 'included'

Additional Options

Single Room Supplement: Consult us English-speaking driver: Consult us

Terms and conditions

Booking conditions

Booking a trip with Altaï Cuba implies acceptance of the terms and conditions of sale. Each customer is required to complete a registration form and, subject to availability at the time of registration, travellers are expected to pay a deposit of 35% of the total price to complete their booking. Payments can be made online or by bank transfer. You will receive an e-mail with your booking confirmation.

Invoice procedure

Once your booking is confirmed you will receive an invoice by e-mail. The full balance of the trip must be received at least 35 days before your departure date. Altaï Cuba reserve the right to cancel your booking, free of charge, if this deadline is not respected.

Cancellation policy

If for any reason you have to cancel your trip, Altaï Cuba require written confirmation of your decision. The money you have paid will then be refunded according to the following deductions:

- Cancellation received more than 30 days prior to the departure date: a sum of €50 per person will be retained
- Cancellation received 30 to 21 days before the departure date: your deposit, 30% of the total trip price will be retained
- Cancellation received 20 to 14 days before the departure date: 50% of the total trip price will be retained
- Cancellation received 13 to 7 days before the departure date: 75% of the total trip price will be retained
- Cancellation received less than 7 days before the departure date: 100% of the total trip price will be retained

Special cases:

Please note that, regardless of the date of cancellation or modification if you have agreed to pay for services such as hotel reservations, flights or additional activities, these services are usually non-refundable so additional fees may apply.

- Fixed airfares: if your airline ticket was issued in advance, often done to avoid significant surcharges, you will be charged 100% of any non-refundable fees if you wish to change or cancel your flight plan.
- Fixed in-country costs: early charges for firm bookings will be charged if you cancel or modify your trip.
- Insurance costs: if you have taken out comprehensive or cancellation insurance, the cost of insurance is due and cannot be refunded.

Please note that fees apply according to the date we receive your cancellation or modification request in writing.

If we have to cancel a departure due to an insufficient number of participants, you will be informed no later than 21 days before departure and a full refund will be issued, you will not be entitled to further compensation. We reserve the rights to cancel departures due to exceptional circumstances which may impact the safety of participants. Such circumstances include those amounting to 'force majeure' in which case participants will receive a full refund but they will not be entitled to any compensation.

Changes to travel contract

If you wish to make a change to your booking please contact Altaï Cuba in writing; you will be expected to pay any fee which might arise from this change. In the event of unforeseen external events, Altaï Cuba may change some aspects of the travel contract. If any changes are necessary you will be informed as quickly as possible.

Pricing

The prices on our website are updated regularly and all of the prices we advertise are accurate when published. Altaï Cuba reserve the rights to make changes to any of these prices. Before you make a booking we will give you the up-to-date price of your chosen holiday including any supplements, upgrades or additional activities you may have requested. If the number of travellers is fewer than the indicated number of participants on the website, a small group surcharge may be applied. For all of our trips we include details of services, prices and what is/is not included but please be aware that changes to the prices may be necessary in accordance with exchange rates or price changes of various components of the journey.

Contract transfer

If you are unable to travel for any reason, you can transfer your booking to another person in which case our modification conditions apply. Both the transferor and transferee will be jointly and severally liable for payment of the total holiday price and other associated expenses. Some airline carriers treat name changes as cancellations and you may be required to pay for the cost of a new ticket.

Insurance

By law, all tourists visiting Cuba must have travel insurance to cover medical costs. You may be asked to provide proof of your travel insurance policy when you arrive at the airport.

We strongly recommend that you take out personal travel insurance for your trip with Altaï Cuba as soon as your booking is confirmed. We advice you to purchase a travel insurance policy which covers flight cancellations, luggage loss and emergency health care. Please look carefully at which activities are covered by your insurer and do not forget to bring all necessary documents and information with you (name of the company, name of the contract, insurance policy number, telephone number...)

PRACTICAL INFO

Staff

This trip is supervised by a Cuban Spanish speaking driver who is part of our Altai Cuba team. During the stay, your driver will be assisted by Spanish speaking expert local guides.

Food

Breakfasts, lunches & dinners

All breakfasts are included, served at our accommodation. For days when lunches are not included you can choose to purchase a picnic or to eat in a restaurant. Somtimes our hosts prepare lunches for us. Homestay accommodation often includes a homecooked evening meal prepared by our hosts. When dinners are not included you will discover restaurant options for every budget.

Eating Out

Due to the American embargo that has been raging in Cuba for many years now, state-owned hotels and restaurants offer simple Cuban cuisine, often limited in terms of variety. Menus served in state restaurants normally include chicken, fish or pork accompanied by congri (rice and kidney beans) and plantains (cooking bananas). Private restaurants are beginning to emerge, offering richer and more refined cuisine.

Homestay Meals

Homestay dishes are significantly more varied and plentiful. You will have a chance to sample local products like breadfruit, cassava, plantain, mango, guava, pineapple, papaya, coconut, pork, chicken, fish and sometimes lobster.

Drinks

In Cuba, we find excellent seasonal fruit juices, local beers (Bucanero and Cristal) and of course rum which features in many Cuban cocktails like mojitos, daïquiris and pina coladas. During your stay, all drinks, including mineral water, are your responsibility. You can fill your water bottles in villages, springs and hotels. We advise that you treat water with purifying tablets and avoid the purchase of plastic bottles which must then be recycled. If wish to buy bottled water, we advise you to invest in a large bottle or two (5 or 10 litres; available to purchase in Havana, Santiago or other main cities), from which to fill your personal water bottle up from as you go.

Accommodation

Homestay

For the most part you will stay in Casa Particular accommodation. You will be welcomed into the homes of local Cuban families. You sleep in a double / twin rooms; mostly with private bathrooms although in some places the bathroom is shared between 2 rooms.

Hotels

For some stages, we have chosen local 3-star category hotels with standard comfort. Please note that hotels in Cuba belong to the state meaning that we have no control over the quality of the services delivered. The rooms are always clean and spacious with private bathrooms but it may be that in some establishments, the rooms are not up to international 3* standards.

Other Accommodations

In Sierra, some steps require sleeping in rustic shelter accommodation with basic comforts. You sleep in a dormitory of 4 to 6 people. Blankets are provided but we advise you to bring a sleeping bag liner and or sleeping bag for cooler nights depending on the season.

Transportation

Transportation is provided by private air-conditioned vehicles. For some routes we use 4x4 vehicles.

Budget & exchange

Two currencies circulate: the Cuban peso (CUP) and **the Cuban convertible peso (CUC)** which is the only currency usable by foreigners.

1 CUC is more or less equivalent to 1 USD. Visit www.xe.com for the latest currency converter and exchange rates. Only Visa and Master Cards are accepted by hotels. You will find cash machines which accept only Visa cards in Havana and Santiago. To exchange your cash, go to one of the many "casa de cambios" at the airport or you can exchange money at hotels in the main cities of the country. Please not that American Dollars are not accepted.

Tips

An example of good tipping etiquette in Cuba is...

- 3 CUC per day and per participant for your English-speaking guide
- 2 CUC per day and per participant for your driver
- 1 CUC per day per participant for your Spanish-speaking local guide

Please note that tipping is not obligatory. It should be adapted according to the standard of living and the duration of your trip and it should be left to the discretion of each individual.

Vital equipment

- A sleeping bag liner (or sleeping bag) for your night in a shelter (blankets provided)
- Water purification tablets
- A refillable water bottle or 2 (2L)

From head to toe

- A sun hat
- A bandana, to protect your neck
- A pair of sun glasses (good quality, 3 or 4)
- Thermal tops and bottoms
- T shirts, shorts and trousers suitable for hiking
- Appropriate underwear and pyjamas
- A warm layer
- A coat / jacket
- A rain coat (good quality, breathable with hood)
- Water proof trousers
- A swimsuit & fast drying towel
- A pair of hiking boots
- Thick socks for hiking
- A pair of casual shoes for evenings/gentle strolls
- 1 pair of shoes for wearing in water for snorkeling, swimming, etc

Material

We prefer that you do not wear cotton clothing, including underwear, when participating in activities. When cotton gets wet from water or sweat it ceases to insulate and it does not dry fast. The best materials for outdoor activities are fast drying materials like polyester or materials which are warm when wet like wool. The most powerful materials against the wind and rain are 'breathable' materials like Gore-Tex or Nikwax.

Helpful equipment

- Your personal toiletries
- Sun-cream (body and lips)
- Head torch and spare batteries
- A pair of hiking poles
- A waterproof bag cover (or plastic bags) to protect your belongings

Luggage

Please bring two bags; a small rucksack to use as a day bag and a larger bag (35L min) to store the rest of your belongings in. Your day bag should be comfortable to walk with and big enough to carry your lunch, water, swim stuff, spare layers and any personal belongings/medications. We ask that your larger bag is a flexible rucksack or holdall bag rather than a hard cased suitcase for easy transportation. Please note that it is possible to do laundry in the middle of your trip.

Medicine

Our guides are all certified First Aiders and will carry a First Aid Kit in case of emergencies. We recommend that you bring a small personal first aid kit containing any medication you may need such as inhalers, plasters, antiseptic and painkillers.

Passport

Most travellers require a passport which is valid for at least two months beyond the proposed duration of their stay. It is your responsibility to confirm your specific passport requirements and please be aware that proof of onwards travel may be required.

Visa

Most travellers need a tourist visa known as a Tourist Card and proof of onwards travel may be necessary. The tourist card enables travellers to stay in Cuba for up to 30 days; it can be obtained from your Cuban Consulate in person or by post (£39). It is your responsibility to confirm your specific visa requirements.

Mandatory vaccines

No mandatory vaccinations are required. Recommended vaccines include Tetanus, Diphtheria, Poliomyelitis, Polio, Typhoid, Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B. A consultation with your doctor is a prerequisite for any trip.

Health information & recommendations

Please take the usual precautions to avoid being bitten by mosquitos. The risk of Malaria is very low but other mosquito-borne and spread viral disease are present - follow your doctors advice. Tap water is not drinkable in Cuba. Please take extra care to observe basic hygiene measures effectively such washing your hands frequently and before each meal and take care to properly disinfect any skin wounds.

Weather

The subtropical climate of Cuba is influenced by the mild trade winds of the northeast. Temperatures vary very little throughout the year and only two seasons are clearly identifiable:

- The wet summer which lasts from May to October.

- The drier winter is from November to April. Average temperatures range from 22°C (71°F) in February to 30°C (86°F) in July and August

The east of the island is slightly warmer than the west. September and October hold rain records and correspond with the peak of the hurricane season.

Electricity

Most electrical outlets are flat 110V two pin plugs as in the USA. Some places are also equipped with 220V round two prong plugs as in Europe. Always check before plugging anything in and use appropriate adapters.

Local time

Coordinated Universal Time (UTC)/ Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) - 5 hours. Daylight Saving Time (DST) is observed.

Sustainable tourism

Altaï always aims to have as little impact on the environment as possible. As adventure and wilderness travel experts who run trips to some of the most remote parts of the world, we take responsible tourism very seriously.

Since the beginning, we have advocated for responsible tourism and the importance of equitable and sustainable principles. Harmonising these fundamentals ensures a fair distribution of economic benefits, improved working conditions for local teams and an increased awareness of the importance and practice of environmental protection.

We kindly request that you adopt the following simple actions when travelling with Altaï Cuba in order to support our ethical, sustainable and responsable tourism policies:

- Avoid dropping litter use bins or carry your rubbish with you.
- Use drinking water sparingly avoid wasting water, take showers not baths, report leaks, etc..
- Support the preservation of cultural sites resist the temptation to touch statues, moves stones etc..
- Exchanges are prefarable to donations generations gifts can destabalize the local economic balance.

- When walking, be aware of fragile ecosystems, observe wildlife from a distance, stick to trails, limit trampling and do not steal from the nature resist the temptation to pick flowers, collect fossils or stones...
- Some hotels have air conditioning to avoid excessive energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, please use sparingly and remember to cut the aircon when you are not in the room.