



INTERNATIONAL EXPEDITIONS

World Leader in Nature Travel®



CUBA

People-to-People Program

DAY 1 ARRIVE MIAMI Our Cuba people-to-people travel program begins in Miami with an overnight and welcome reception.

DAY 2 MIAMI / CIENFUEGOS After an orientation meeting, board our charter flight to Cienfuegos. Head into the heart of the city, and later enjoy dinner at Club Cienfuegos. Joining us are parents and members of the Cienfuegos Youth Choir. Sing along with the choir before trying out our Salsa dance skills at Café Cantante Benny More. Spend tonight at the Hotel Jagua or similar. (B,L,D)

DAY 3 CIENFUEGOS / TRINIDAD Visit the Soledad Botanical Garden. Once known as the Harvard Biological Laboratory, the garden is maintained by the Cuban Academy of Science's Institute of Botany. Explore the garden with a member of the Institute of Botany, joined by garden staff and volunteers. Drive along the coast to Trinidad, an architectural jewel proclaimed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

During a visit to the Cienfuegos Caritas distribution center, meet Caritas Cuba volunteers, learning about the work they do on behalf of disadvantaged Cubans. Through this engaging dialog, we compare and contrast the American volunteer service with the service of the Cuban volunteers. Stroll along Calle Simon Bolivar, visiting an art incubation studio where we meet budding artists, see their work and present the studio with art supplies. Spend two nights at Hotel Ronda, Las Cuevas or similar. (B,L,D)

DAY 4 TOPES DE COLLANTES / TRINIDAD Enjoy a spectacular morning drive into the Sierra de Escambray on our way to Topes de Collantes National Park, a densely forested area occupying some of the highest elevations in Cuba at 3500 feet above sea level. A short nature walk reveals abundant birdlife, including a large number of parrots and an impressive array of vegetation including orchids, tree ferns and bamboo. Join local naturalists and spend much of the day with them exploring the



World's smallest bird — the bee hummingbird

park. Visit Hacienda Codina and the Gallery Topes de Collante, seeing examples of the work of some important artists. On our way back to Trinidad, meet Joaquin and Olga Pomes, who have gathered their neighbors to chat with us over pie and coffee. (B,L)

Day 5 TRINIDAD / ZAPATA WETLANDS / PLAYA LARGA / BAY OF PIGS The Zapata Peninsula encompasses Cuba's most important wetland area. There are 900 species of flora, 171 species of birds (18 endemics), 31 species of reptiles and many mammal species calling the Zapata Wetlands home. The world's smallest bird, the bee hummingbird, is here as are species such as the endemic tanager, Zapata sparrow, Zapata rail and Zapata wren. Join Dr. Felipe Rodriguez for a hike into the swamp.



Vinales Valley



Musicians in Havana

Later, the families of the park's staff and volunteers join us for a picnic. Search for manatees and freshwater turtles during a boat excursion on the Hatiquanico River. Spend tonight on the Bay of Pigs at Playa Larga Las Terrazas or similar. (B,L,D)

DAY 6 PLAYA LARGA / BOCA DE GUAMAA / FINCA VIGIA / PINAR DEL RIO PROVINCE Set out for Pinar del Rio Province. Our first stop is Boca de Guamaa and a large scale crocodile farm. While here, learn about the fate of the fish in the famous Laguna del Tesoro — Treasure Lake — once thought to be the home of world's record largemouth bass. Stop to pay homage to Ernest Hemingway at his former home Finca Vigia, preserved as it was on the day of his death. Continue into one of Cuba's most environmentally interesting regions. In the ecological community of Las Terrazas we meet with local naturalists and farmers, discussing life in this planned community. Spend two nights at La Moka, Villa Soroa, Los Jazmines or La Ermita. (B,L,D)

DAY 7 VINALES Spend our morning with the owner of a private orchid garden in Soroa before winding our way into the Sierra de los Organos Mountains. From the Las Jazmines overlook, we gaze over the Vinales Valley below and dramatic skyscraper-scale mogotes — limestone karst outcroppings. While

here, visit Vinales Botanical Garden, where the owner shares openly about the garden's joys and difficulties. Explore an operating tobacco farm, meeting the entire family at this farm, as well as some of their neighbors. Over tea with the farmers learn why Cubans feel their cigars are so famous worldwide. Enjoy a boating excursion into one of the huge limestone caves running through a mogote. The natural beauty of Vinales is in stark contrast to the very curious Mural de la Prehistoria commissioned by Fidel Castro, which was painted on an exposed mogote cliff face. (B,L,D)

DAY 8 VINALES / HAVANA Begin our day at the Antonio Nunez Jimenez Foundation for Nature and Humanity. This non-profit organization was established to address Cuban environmental issues. Drive along the oceanfront Malecon Avenue and into the newer part of town, seeing Revolution Square, Miramar Vedado and Havana University. Visit an elementary school, where students, teachers and parents have succeeded in greening the grounds. Join parent volunteers to discuss issues faced by both countries when introducing environmental education into schools. After visiting with the staff of the National Museum of Natural History, discover the atmospheric squares of Old Havana. Spend two nights at Hotel Telegrafo or similar. (B,L,D)

DAY 9 HAVANA Strolling the streets of Havana is like being on a movie set. Begin our day at Our Lady of Monserrat Church, discussing humanitarian assistance programs with Caritas Cuba, an independent social services organization. Drive to the Havana Aquarium, meeting with the director, some of his staff and volunteers. Over lunch, discuss the coral reef conservation efforts of the aquarium and the close cooperation between researchers here and with other aquariums in the United States. Following a behind the scenes look at the aquarium, continue to an urban garden, meeting community members who both support and benefit from the garden. Our last stop is the studio of Frank Hernandez, where we meet young, aspiring artists and view their work and donate art supplies to the studio. (B,L,D)

DAY 10 HAVANA / MIAMI Board our charter flight to Miami, where you connect with flights home. (B)

***Please Note:** IE's people-to-people program itinerary and/or specific hotel accommodations may vary depending on changes in license regulations or other local conditions. Remember, we are not traveling to a typical "tourist" destination and must plan to be flexible. Our hotels will always be comfortable and you will enjoy a truly engaging experience while meeting Cuba's people.*