Abercrombie & Kent



SECRETS OF CUBA

Vibrant and alluring, Cuba is the Caribbean’s diamond in the rough and on this journey you’ll experience the quintessential charm of the place, its vintage cars, its cigars, its rich colonial history and avant-garde art scene.

Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries

Latin America, Cuba

13 days Call for a quote pp

Private

Journey Overview

Vibrant and alluring, Cuba is the Caribbean’s diamond in the rough and on this journey you’ll experience the quintessential charm of the place, its vintage cars, its cigars, its rich colonial history and avant-garde art scene. Dig deep and discover the haunts of Hemingway, UNESCO World Heritage Sites, fields of tobacco and nature at its most picturesque.

Journey Highlights

- Rewind the clock in the Valley of the Sugar Mills
- Journey through Viñales Valley’s green hills and working tobacco farms
- Marvel at Neoclassical architecture in the city of Cienfuegos
- Taste true Cuban culture at Havana Club Museum of Rum
- Explore Havana with your own Vintage 1950’s car and driver



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Havana

Welcome to Havana, the largest city in the Caribbean, and the political hub of Cuba. With its rich history, stunning architecture and captivating music Havana will charm you. Receive VIP airport arrival service before you meet your local A&K representative who will accompany you to your luxury accommodation. Relax in the hotel or ease into local time with a leisurely stroll on your own around the local neighbourhood. Alternatively, explore more with your own Vintage American 1950's car, driver and guide, yours for the duration of your stay in Havana. Later, head across the street and sip cocktails at the legendary El Floridita, world-renowned author Ernest Hemingway's favourite bar, and birthplace of the daiquiri.

Gran Hotel Manzana Kempinski La Habana

Day 2: Havana

Unpeel the layers of Havana's rich colonial past with a private morning walking tour of La Habana Vieja, or Old Havana. Navigate the web of narrow streets and plazas lined with gelato-coloured houses that comprise this UNESCO World Heritage Site. With your expert guide offering insightful anecdotes, visit Plaza de Armas laid out soon after the city was founded in 1522, Plaza de San Francisco, the second oldest plaza in Havana, Plaza Vieja, originally used for military exercises and Plaza de la Cathedral, where most of the buildings date back to the 18th century.

Later discover Hemingway's Cuba, possibly the only American to have achieved idol status amongst the Cuban locals. Start at the writer's villa on the outskirts of Havana, preserved exactly as it was when he lived there with hundreds of personal belongings. Continue cruising in your classic American vehicle to Cojimar fishing village, the picturesque town that inspired Ernest Hemingway to write the novel 'The Old Man and the Sea' and whose fishermen he dedicated his Nobel prize to. Return to the city and absorb the views from El Morro Castle across Havana Bay. This famous landmark guards the entrance to Havana and was built between 1589 and 1640 to protect from pirates and foreign invaders.

Gran Hotel Manzana Kempinski | Meals: B

Day 3: Havana

Join a Cuban home chef to source the freshest ingredients in the local market. Then, learn how to turn these ingredients into Cuban delicacies in a private cooking lesson. Spend time over your prepared lunch discussing Cuban cuisine and gaining insights into Cuban life. Following lunch, delve into the fascinating Afrocuban culture with renowned author and expert in the Santería religion, Valentina Porras. Visit her home and learn about the deities, what they represent and how the religion was brought over by African slaves. Tonight, enjoy a display at Havana's mighty fortress, Fortaleza de la Cabana, built around 1774. Watch as actors re-enact the firing of a cannon over the harbour to symbolise the official end of the day and the time to close the city gates for the night.

Gran Hotel Manzana Kempinski | Meals: BL

Day 4: Havana

Uncover Havana's astonishing variety of architectural styles, from Art Nouveau and Art Deco to the flowering of high modernism. See masterpieces of Cuban architecture before and after the revolution, including the grand Hotel Nacional de Cuba, the University of Arts of Cuba, the Columbus Cemetery, and more. Enjoy an afternoon at leisure. Spend time relaxing in your hotel, stroll the nearby narrow streets and plazas or continue exploring this historical city in your Vintage vehicle with your driver and guide.

Gran Hotel Manzana Kempinski | Meals: B

Day 5: Havana – Viñales

Following a morning at leisure, transfer privately with your driver to Viñales. En route stop at a private tobacco farm personally chosen by Fidel Castro to be the sole producer of the country's finest tobacco. Learn about the fascinating tobacco growing process and appreciate the intricate artistry of cigar making. Get an up-close view as experts' hand-roll what are considered to be the world's finest cigars. Your journey from Pinar del Rio continues through the green hills of the Valley of Viñales to your accommodation. Just how green the Valley of Viñales is has been recorded by the vivid prose of Cuban writer Garcia Valdes and the striking canvases of Domingo Ramos.

Hotel E Central Viñales or similar | Meals: BL

Day 6: Viñales

Explore this bustling farming town on a relaxed walk before finding solitude among the hills. Hike between towering mogote mountains and watch guajiros working in the tobacco fields, before a traditional lunch. Return to town and enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure to capture the essence of this truly amazing location. Grab a bicycle, ride a horse, find yourself a hiking trail and appreciate the beautiful landscape around Viñales. Alternatively, you may choose to take a short trip to the Cave of the Indian, a limestone cave carved out of the hills by early inhabitants. Board a boat and venture deeper into the cave along the underground river.

Hotel E Central Viñales or similar | Meals: BL

Day 7: Viñales – Cienfuegos

Journey to Cienfuegos, founded by French settlers and known as Cuba's "Pearl of the South" because of its lovely location on a picturesque Caribbean bay. Stop en route at the Bay of Pigs and learn about the failed military invasion in 1961. View the landing beach, explore the small museum and learn about this critical event from a Cuban perspective. Drop your bags off before you venture into the jungle-clad forests of Cienega Zapata on a horse and cart. Considered the best network of hiking trails in Cuba, enjoy walking through this protected wooded area with your local guide and learn about the unique geology and ecology of the area. Along the way there may be opportunities to spot several of the local flora and fauna, much of which is endemic to the island, the including the Jutia, a small mammal that looks part squirrel, part rat and part otter.

Hotel La Union | Meals: B

Day 8: Cienfuegos

Wander through this seductive colonial port town and laid-back maritime city with a lazy, tropical atmosphere. Marvel at its eclectic Neoclassical architecture. Appreciate the French and Italian influences of the Tomas Terry Theatre and the extravagantly decorated Arabian Nights–like Palacio de Valle, amongst others, on your private walking tour. Home to Benny More, one of Cuba's most famous musicians, seek out some of the city's great musical traditions along the way. Return to your hotel and enjoy the afternoon at leisure.

Hotel La Union | Meals: B

Day 9: Cienfuegos – Trinidad

Continue onwards to UNESCO World Heritage listed Trinidad, the jewel in Cuba's colonial crown. Stroll through the historic centre rich with your private guide and admire the stunning colonial architecture, stroll the quaint cobbled streets and enjoy the friendly, vibrant atmosphere. Later, rewind the clock with a visit to the Valley of the Sugar Mills, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Step inside the once lavish homes and imagine a time during the 18th and 19th Century when slave-worked sugar plantations plumped up the coffers of the local sugar barons. See the ruins of the distillery, the slave barracks, and the mill of the plantation owner.

Iberostar Grand Hotel | Meals: B

Day 10: Trinidad

Spend a day visiting Topes de Collantes, a beautiful nature reserve. Wander along its hiking trails taking in caves, rivers, canyons and natural pools and learn about the scientific value it holds for Cuban botany, zoology and ecology. Then, take a well-deserved dip under the waterfalls. This afternoon join your personal guide to delve into the rich traditions of local artisans. Visit pottery and ceramic workshops and witness beautiful and intricate needlework and embroidery work. Later this evening, you may like to join the locals for dancing at Casa de la Musica.

Iberostar Grand Hotel | Meals: BL

Day 11: Trinidad – Havana

Depart Trinidad for Havana, stopping en route to pay homage to the revolutionary Che Guevara at a memorial marking the site of the Battle of Santa Clara victory. Wander through the mausoleum which houses the remains of the revolutionary hero and twenty-nine of his fellow combatants killed in 1967 in Bolivia, and the explore the small museum with an interesting exhibit of Che´s life. Arrive in Havana ready to be transported into the golden era of Son music. Sway to seductive sounds of traditional Cuban music inspired by the Buena Vista Social Club tonight, in the famous Hotel Nacional.

Gran Hotel Manzana Kempinski | Meals: B

Day 12: Havana

Taste true Cuban culture at Havana Club Museum of Rum in the heart of Habana Vieja. Journey back on this shard experience to the origins of Cuba’s most famous beverage, from freshly cut stalks of sugar cane to the distillery and ageing cellar. Find the museum bar for a rum cocktail or two while enjoying the sounds of Cuban music. Later, find your own rhythm with a talented Cuban percussionist in a private drumming lesson. The remainder of the day is at leisure.

Gran Hotel Manzana Kempinski | Meals: B

Day 13: Depart Havana

Take a leisurely stroll along the Malecón, a broad esplanade along the coast in Old Havana or perhaps one final drive in your Vintage 1950’s car with your driver and guide before transferring to the airport for your onward journey.

Meals: B

Map


Havana
Viñales
Bay of Pigs
Cienfuegos
Santa Clara
Trinidad
CUBA
CARIBBEAN SEA
ARRIVE/DEPART
ROAD

Accommodation

Gran Hotel Manzana Kempinski La Habana



Overlooking Parque Central, Gran Hotel Manzana Kempinski's central location and the city's first true five-star hotel, is ideal for exploring Old Havana and the rest of the capital. The grand whitewashed hotel, a former 19th century building owned by a sugar baron, has a raft of restaurants and bars and a rooftop pool offering mesmerising views of the city.

Hotel La Union, Cienfuegos



A privately-owned mansion built in 1869, Hotel La Union has been painstakingly restored. Located just one block from the main square, a rooftop bar area offers great views over the city’s colonial buildings to the beautiful bay. Rooms are comfortable and well presented, and guests can enjoy a selection of international fare at the onsite restaurant. The hotel includes access to a gym and sauna, and guests can relax with a massage or a few laps in the outdoor pool after a day exploring.

Iberostar Grand Hotel, Trinidad



In the heart of Trinidad, Iberostar Grand Hotel offers boutique-style accommodation in the UNESCO World Heritage city. This attractive hotel uses a very sympathetic design to blend in with the surrounding 16th century architecture with all the modern comforts of a first-class hotel. With well-appointed and tastefully furnished rooms, the hotel benefits from its own restaurant and a smoker’s room for those wishing to sample Cuba’s most successful export.

Hotel E Central Vinales



Located centrally within Vinales, Hotel E Central Vinales put you steps away from sights such as the main square, art gallery, Valle de Vinales and Polo Montañez Cultural Center. The hotel has its own restaurant, and a lounge bar to enjoy a drink while you relax in the Cuban atmosphere.

All 23 rooms feature TVs with satellite channels, and you can enjoy WIFI, coffee/tea makers and free bottled water. Minibars provide refreshments, and room service is also available.

The restaurant, Amanecer, is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, serving tantalising Cuban fare. Additionally, you'll find Wi-Fi in public areas and a 24-hour front desk.

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