EXPLORING HAVANA, CUBA
APRIL 4–9, 2016

While relations between the United States and Cuba have taken an incredible turn over the past few months, it is still illegal for most Americans to travel to Cuba on their own. As diplomatic and economic ties are reformed over the next few years, the landscape of Cuba will dramatically change. It is now more important than ever to experience Cuba as it is today. The Harvard Alumni Association is operating this educational program under the General License authorized by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). This program differs from more traditional trips in that every hour must be accounted for. Each day has been structured to provide meaningful interactions with Cuban people or educational or cultural programming. Please note that Harvard University intends to fully comply with all requirements of the General License. Travelers must participate in all group activities.

Please note that we fully expect this program to change so that we can accommodate the changing schedules of the people meeting with the group. The below program includes examples of speakers and visits but there may be other guests and visits added as we develop the program. We will have an updated itinerary in early 2016.

STUDY LEADER: To be announced

GROUP SIZE: 12 to 25 guests

PRICING: $4,795 per person double occupancy / $795 single supplement

SCHEDULE BY DAY

SUNDAY, APRIL 3
INDEPENDENT ARRIVALS IN MIAMI

Since the flight to Havana may depart early in the morning on Monday, April 4 we suggest you arrive in Miami no later than Sunday, April 3.

You are responsible for your own travel arrangements to Miami and for your own hotel reservations on April 3. We strongly suggest the Miami Airport Hotel as it is located within the airport and will allow you easy access to the charter flight check-in area, but there are several other hotels in the airport vicinity.

MONDAY, APRIL 4
HAVANA

Depart Miami on a charter flight to Havana. This short flight takes about 45 minutes.

Upon arrival in Havana proceed through immigration and collect your luggage. Your local Cuban guide and your tour manager will be waiting for you outside in the arrivals area.

The first stop will be at the iconic Hotel Nacional. Designed by the New York firm McKim, Mead and White, Hotel Nacional opened in 1930 when Cuba was a prime travel destination for Americans. It had a storied run up to the Cuban Revolution (and it continues today as attested by its Hall of Fame). Enjoy a traditional Cuban lunch at La Barraca Restaurant located outside in the grounds of the hotel.
After lunch visit the Presidential Palace, now known as the home of the Revolutionary Museum. The history of Cuban political development is illustrated here from the slave uprisings to joint missions with the ex-Soviet Union. Although undergoing renovation, the Revolutionary Museum is still open for visits. The Granma Memorial, which preserves the vessel that brought Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and other revolutionaries from Mexico to Cuba in 1956, is across the street.

Transfer to your nearby hotel, the Hotel Parque Central. After checking in, meet for some introductory comments and a lecture by your Harvard study leader.

Dinner this evening will be at the hotel in the rooftop restaurant.

Overnight at the Hotel Parque Central (L, D)

TUESDAY, APRIL 5
HAVANA

This morning begin exploring Old Havana by foot. Admire the many squares, its cathedral, and a scale-model of Old Havana. The model serves as an excellent introduction to the layout of the city.

Of all the capital cities in the Caribbean, Havana has the reputation of being the most splendid and the finest example of a Spanish colonial city in the Americas. Restoration work in the old part of the city helps reveal the glories of the past. Many of its palaces were converted into museums after the Revolution and more work has been done since the old city was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982. While much of Cuba’s infrastructure has crumbled and its economy has limped along, more than 300 landmark buildings in Old Havana have been refurbished. From fortresses built in the colonial days to famous nightspots and hotels of the city’s swinging era just before the Cuban revolution, the key to the renaissance of the old city has been a strategy of restoring old hotels, restaurants and historic sites to attract tourists, then using the revenue from tourism to finance more restoration. Restoration of the historic center is one of the city government’s priorities and your time here will allow ample opportunity to evaluate the progress.

End the morning at the Plaza Vieja, a beautiful old square. Although the square was in a sad state of repair for many years, that decay is being reversed through caring restoration.

Lunch is at a local restaurant and will be accompanied by local music.

This afternoon continue exploring Havana with Ayleen Robalyna, an architectural historian on a city orientation tour by bus. Explore the city garden of El Vedado; drive along La Rampa, which climbs past the offices of Cubana; and stop at the steps to the University of Havana and climb up to view the campus. Close by are 1950s hotels like the former Havana Hilton as well as Art Déco and Streamline modern style apartments influenced by South Beach in Miami. Admire Havana’s tall office buildings from the 1950s, some of which were award-winning. Also visit the wonderful Riviera Hotel which was considered a marvel of modern design when it opened in 1958 (it was owned at the time by Meyer Lansky). Parts of the public areas of the hotel have recently been restored to recapture its 1950s ambience.

During the tour, stop at the 331 Gallery to view the works of three young and emerging artists: Adrian Fernandez, Frank Mujica, and Alex Hernandez.

Dinner is at Café Oriente, an elegant government-run restaurant located in the heart of old Havana.

Overnight at the Hotel Parque Central (B, L, D)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6
HAVANA

This morning attend a lecture and discussion on U.S./Cuban Relations led by Professor Raul Rodriguez from the University of Havana. Dr. Rodriguez has written extensively on US-Cuban Relations including an article written for the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies.

Next, attend a dance rehearsal of the Danza Contemporanea de Cuba. This extraordinary dance group melds the techniques of classical
ballet and American modern dance with the rippling spines and head rolls of traditional or folkloric, Afro-Cuban dance; the complex rhythms of Cuban rumba; and the twirling hands and syncopation of Spanish flamenco.

Enjoy a private lunch at the home and studio of artist Jose Fuster, who has turned his neighborhood into one enormous piece of mosaic art. Fuster is dedicated to his creations, a vast array of artwork from ceramics evoking the nation’s African roots, as represented in the Santeria religion, to whimsical paintings drawn from ordinary life in Cuba.

After lunch, drive to see the campus of the Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA), a center of advanced studies in the fields of theatre, dance, music, visual arts and communication art. Originally the grounds of the Havana Country Club, President Fidel Castro converted it into an arts complex in 1961.

End the day at Ernest Hemingway’s house, which was inhabited by the writer from 1939 to 1960. The house was designed by Spanish architect Miguel Pascual y Baguer in 1922. Lovingly preserved by the Cuban government, the house is just as Hemingway left it, with the books on the tables and many of his favorite photographs on display. While it is not possible to go inside the house, the windows are left open for a decent view of the interior.

Enjoy dinner at L’Atelier, one of Havana’s wonderful paladars where chef Neuris has won accolades for her traditional Cuban cuisine. Overnight at the Hotel Parque Central (B, L, D)

THURSDAY, APRIL 7

HAVANA

This morning visit Vivero Alamar, a state-owned research garden to learn more about urban gardening in Havana. The effects of the Special Period and consequent food shortages have had great repercussions in the city of Havana. With approximately 2.5 million people, Havana has about one fifth of Cuba’s total population. Havana’s urban agriculture has taken on many forms, ranging from private gardens (huertos privados) to state-owned research gardens (organicponicos) and this morning there will be a chance to learn more about how these gardens, located near urban areas, grow and distribute their freshly-grown produce. Meet with manager Miguel Angelo Salcines and other staff at the garden.

Next, visit a community project called Artecorte, which is run by Gilberto Valladares (Papito). Papito’s interest in the barber trade led him to start an unusual collection of hairdressing artifacts, which are exhibited at his private salon as a sort of “interactive museum.” Since 2002, Papito has also been running a community project, actively restoring the neighborhood with cooperation from the city—as well as opening a school for barbers in the area. Here, learn about Papito’s community work, see what a rations store looks like, and visit a senior center.

Enjoy lunch at a paladar called El Figaro, located in the heart of the ArteCorte community.

After lunch, meet with Dr. Norma Guillard who is featured in the documentary film La Maestra, which tells the personal stories of the youngest women literacy workers who went to the mountains and valleys across the island to teach—and found themselves deeply transformed in the process. Dr. Guillard is now a social psychologist and works on the issues of gender, race, sexual orientation, as well as issues of diversity & identity in a Cuban and Caribbean context. She is a past president of the Cuban Association of Psychologists and an Advisor to UNESCO and UNDP on the issues of gender in the prevention of HIV/AIDS. She is a principal collaborator at the National Center for the Prevention of AIDS and the National Center for Sex Education (CENESEX), which is spearheading the historic work to educate against homophobia and lobby for civil unions.

This afternoon attend a reception at the Ludwig Foundation, an organization committed to the promotion of art in Cuba. One of the foundation’s officers will address the group and guests will then have an opportunity to mingle with several young Cuban artists who will be on hand to explain their work. Please note that there is only one small elevator to access the foundation which is located on the 5th floor of the building.
FRIDAY, APRIL 8
HAVANA

After breakfast this morning attend a lecture and discussion with Professor Ricardo Torres on *The Changing Forces of Cuba's Economic Structure*. Professor Torres is a macro-economist at the Center for the Study of the Cuban Economy at the University of Havana. He has also been a visiting professor at Harvard’s David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies.

After the lecture walk a short distance to the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes: Arte Cubano (Cuban Collection). The museum’s origins date back to 1842 when the San Alejandro Art Academy started its collection, forming the nucleus of the museum founded in 1913. It expanded greatly after Castro took over in 1959, notably with works from the private collections of Julio Lobo and Oscar Cintas. The tour this morning will be accompanied by Lucila Hernandez, a contemporary art curator.

Enjoy lunch at the lovely home of curator Milagros Borges Gomez where you can also admire the works of several Cuban artists including Kunta, Ruben Rodriguez, Salvador Corratge, and Orestes Hernandez.

After lunch, visit Havana’s art and craft center located in the former Almacenes de San José on the Port of Havana. This harbor-side warehouse was built in 1885 and is considered the oldest depository in Old Havana. After a painstaking restoration process of almost three years, the huge edifice is now the Centro Cultural Antiguos Almacenes San José. Conceived as a cultural center with art exhibitions, theatrical performances and recreational activities for children, it has also become a place for local crafts people to display their wares.

This evening the farewell dinner is at La Guarida. This well-known restaurant served as the setting for the main apartment in the film *Fresa y Chocolate.* Please note that there is no elevator in this building and the restaurant is located on the 3rd floor of the building.

SATURDAY, APRIL 9
RETURN TO THE U.S.

Depart the hotel this morning for the airport for your return flight to Miami. (B)