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 a 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: Jorge I. Domínguez is Antonio Madero Professor for the Study of Mexico and chair of the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies. He is the author or editor of various books, among them Cuban Economic and Social Development: Policy Reforms and Challenges in the 21st Century, Debating U.S.-Cuban Relations: Shall We Play Ball?, La política exterior de Cuba, 1962-2009, and many other books and articles on domestic and international politics in Latin America and the Caribbean. A past president of the Latin American Studies Association and a past board chairman of the Latin American Scholarship Program of American Universities, he currently serves on the editorial boards of Political Science Quarterly, Foreign Affairs Latinoamérica, Cuban Studies, Foro internacional, and Journal of Cold War Studies. He was series editor for the Peabody Award-winning Public Broadcasting System television series Crisis in Central America. His current research focuses on the international relations and domestic politics of Latin American countries.

GROUP SIZE: 12 to 25 guests

PRICING: $6,795 per person double occupancy / $910 single supplement
THURSDAY, APRIL 21
INDEPENDENT ARRIVALS IN MIAMI

Since the flight to Havana may depart early in the morning on Friday, April 22 we suggest you arrive in Miami no later than Thursday, April 21.

You are responsible for your own travel arrangements to Miami and for your own hotel reservations on April 21. 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.

SATURDAY, APRIL 23
SANTIAGO

Take the full day to explore Santiago.

Begin at the Museo de Arte Colonial, said to be the oldest house in Cuba. It was built in 1516 as the home of Cuba’s conqueror, Diego Velázquez. Stop next at Casa Heredia, the birthplace of Santiago’s most famous poet, perhaps best known for his poem “Ode to Niagara”, and at the Carnival Museum to learn about this major event that has been part of the city’s traditions since 1669.

At Plaza Dolores, perhaps Santiago’s most charming square, visit the Jesuit Dolores College where Fidel Castro was educated as a youth. Then stop at the Cementario Santa Ifigenia, which has been in use since 1868. Among the many notable figures buried here are Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, Emilio Bacardi, and Cuba’s national hero, José Martí.

Nearby is the original Bacardi Factory that was founded in 1838 and nationalized in 1959—at which point Bacardi moved to Puerto Rico. The Cuban government continued to make rum under the Bacardi name, but Bacardi later sued and won. Ever since then, the rum produced at this factory has been sold as “Havana Club.” While the factory is closed to visitors, a small shop is open to sample rum.

Drive past the Moncada Barracks, which was stormed by Fidel Castro and 79 soldiers dressed in Cuban Army uniforms on July 26, 1953. The building now houses a museum that tells the tale of the attack, the Revolution, and subsequent history. Also drive by the Plaza de la Revolución, dominated by a massive
monument to Antonio Maceo, the hero-
general of the War of Independence.

After lunch drive to the Basilica del Cobre, 
which takes its name from the large copper 
mine the Spanish established in the 16th 
century. The church, Cuba’s only basilica, is 
known for its offerings and as the shrine to La 
Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre (Virgin of 
Charity), patron saint of Cuba, to whom 
miraculous powers are ascribed. In 1952, 
Hemingway dedicated his Nobel Prize for 
Literature to the Virgin, although the medal is 
now in the custody of the Archbishop of 
Santiago.

Dinner this evening is at Café Matamoros, 
located on the Plaza Dolores.

Overnight: Casa Granda Hotel (B, L, D)

SUNDAY, APRIL 24
BARACOA

This morning take a spectacular drive from 
Santiago to Baracoa, along the east side of 
Guantanamo Bay, overlooking the 
Guantanamo US Naval Base. It is not possible 
to stop in the area for security reasons, but 
you can catch glimpses of the base from the 
road. Arrive in Baracoa in time for lunch time 
at the Hotel Castillo.

Baracoa is an attractive town surrounded by 
rich, tropical vegetation. Christopher 
Columbus arrived here in 1492 and was 
moved here in 1514, the same year that the 
capital of Cuba was moved from Baracoa to 
Santiago de Cuba by Diego Velazquez. 
Baracoa was the first of the seven cities 
founded by Diego Velazquez and, as such, is 
considered to be the oldest colonial city in the 
Americas. Between 1639 and 1742, Baracoa’s 
three forts – El Castillo, Fuerte de la Punta and 
Fuerte Matachin – were built by the Spanish to 
protect the city from invasion. After the 
revolution in Haiti in the early 19th century, 
Baracoa became a refuge for French exiles 
who brought with them coffee and cacao 
farming techniques as well as their own style 
of architecture.

Spend the afternoon exploring the city. Visit 
Baracoa’s museum, whose displays trace the 
history of the region since pre-Columbian 

TUESDAY, APRIL 26
Havana

Take a morning flight to Havana. 
Upon arrival, drive into Havana stopping en 
rout at the Plaza de la Revolucion, the most 
politically important square in Cuba and one of
the largest city squares in the world. The square has witnessed many rallies and revolutions that have altered the course of Cuban history. Presiding over the square is an almost 60-foot statue of José Martí.

Next, stop 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.

In front of the hotel is the Maine Memorial, a monument to the victims of the USS Maine. It was built in 1926 to honor the American sailors who died in the 1898 explosion that served as the pretext for the United States to declare war on Spain, thus starting the Spanish-American War.

After lunch, take a city orientation tour by bus (and foot) led by Ayleen Robaina, an architectural historian. See the city garden of El Vedado and stop at the steps to the University of Havana. Drive along Avenida 23 (La Rampa), climbing past the offices of Cubana, the Hotel Havana Libre (the former Havana Hilton), and several Art Déco and streamline moderne apartments influenced by South Beach in Miami, to Parque Copelia, an entire block of lush, green park that hosts the iconic ice cream parlor of the same name. A highlight of the tour is the Riviera Hotel, considered a marvel of modern design when it opened in 1958. Parts of the public areas of the hotel have recently been restored to recapture its 1950s ambience.

End the afternoon at the Parque Central, ideally located in old Havana.

Enjoy a private cocktail reception on the rooftop of the hotel followed by dinner.

Overnight: Hotel Parque Central (B, L, D)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27
HAVANA

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

End the morning at the Plaza Vieja, a beautiful old square whose former decay is being reversed through caring restoration. Lunch will be at a local restaurant called Moneda Cubana.

After lunch visit the 331 ArtSpace studio 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: Hotel Parque Central (B, L, D)

THURSDAY, APRIL 28
HAVANA

This morning attend a lecture and discussion on US/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.

After the lecture drive a very 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 a delicious lunch at El Divino, a restaurant attached to an urban garden.

After lunch, visit Ernest Hemingway’s home, 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.

Dinner is on your own this evening. Restaurant recommendations and reservation assistance will be provided.

Overnight: Hotel Parque Central (B, L, D)

FRIDAY, APRIL 29
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.

Continue to 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.

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, 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 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.

Overnight: Hotel Parque Central (B, L, D)

SATURDAY, APRIL 30
CIENFUEGOS

Depart Havana this morning for Cienfuegos. En route stop at the Bay of Pigs where in 1962 about 1,300 heavily armed CIA-trained Cuban exiles came ashore, fully equipped to provoke a counter-revolution to topple the Castro regime.

Enjoy lunch at a wonderful private restaurant where there will be a chance to talk to the owner about operating a small business in the current climate.

After lunch, explore Cienfuegos. Founded by French settlers in 1819, its historic center was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2005. Its superb architectural ensemble reflects the new ideas of modernity, hygiene, and order in urban planning in the early 1800s.
Admire the historic area around its central square, the Parque Marti, as well as the lavish Cathedral and the Tomas Terry Theater, which opened in 1890 and boasts magnificent seats made from Cuban hardwoods and an impressive ceiling fresco. Also stop at the Taller Grafico, a cooperative of young Cuban artists who can be found working on their lithographs over stone matrices in the large, airy building.

End the afternoon at the Museo Historico Provincial to attend a performance of Cantores de Cienfuegos, a versatile, 23-member choral group with an eclectic repertoire.

Check-in to the hotel followed by dinner at a local restaurant.

Overnight: TBD (B, L, D)

SUNDAY, MAY 1
TRINIDAD

Spend the day exploring Trinidad, the fourth of the seven cities founded by Diego de Velasquez, who used the city as a base for expeditions into the “New World.” Today it is maintained as a living museum, just as the Spaniards left it in its period of greatest opulence. With its fine palaces, cobbled streets, and tiled roofs, it is a national monument—and, since 1988, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Begin at the Plaza Mayor in the center of town and elegantly adorned with glazed earthenware urns. You may visit the Museo Romántico, with its 19th-century furnishings, a fine collection of china, and various other period pieces, or perhaps the Museo de Arquitectura Colonial. Also, visit the cathedral, Iglesia Parroquial de la Santisima Trinidad, the largest church in Cuba. Built in the later 19th century, it is renowned for its acoustics.

Explore the Palacio Cantero, housed in a mansion that once belonged to the wealthy Borrell family before eventually coming to a German planter named Justo Cantero. Cantero’s vast wealth from his sugar estates is well displayed in the stylish neoclassical decoration of the rooms. The wonderful view of Trinidad from the top of the tower is not to be missed.

Meet with artist Yami Martinez who will talk about freedom of speech and being a female artist in Cuba. Martinez makes critical paintings and sculptures—her work focuses on Cuban women and their “invisible labor”.

Enjoy lunch just off the Plaza Mayor at a new private restaurant called Sol Ananda. Engage with staff to learn how the owner, Lazaro Orellana, has taken advantage of the relaxed regulations in Cuba to set up his private enterprise.

Continue to the home of Julio Muñoz, a dynamic and charismatic Cuban who comes from a line of prominent Spanish immigrants. Julio was trained as an electronic engineer, but today is a renowned photographer and a proud Workers Union representative. He has more recently become known for his skills as a “horse whisperer” and for running the Diana Project, which promotes better equine care and educates local farmers and cowboys in humane horse-training techniques.

After lunch, continue to the Valle de Los Ingenios, a living museum of the sugar industry. The area features 75 ruined sugar mills, summer mansions, barracks, and other facilities related to the field. The famous Manaca-Iznaga Tower, built in 1816, is 45m high, and the tolling of its bells once marked the beginning and end of working hours on the sugar plantations.

Return to Cienfuegos and enjoy a farewell dinner at El Lagarto.

Overnight: TBD (B, L, D)

MONDAY, MAY 2
RETURN TO THE U.S.

Depart the hotel this morning and drive 1 ½ hours to Santa Clara.

Upon arrival in Santa Clara, visit the Che Guevara Mausoleum, which houses the remains of executed Marxist revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara and twenty-nine of his fellow combatants killed in 1967 during Guevara’s attempt to spur an armed uprising in Bolivia. Guevara was buried here in 1997
after his exhumed remains were discovered in Bolivia and returned to Cuba.

Have lunch at a local restaurant before driving to the Santa Clara airport for your flight to Miami. (B, L)