EXPLORING HAVANA, CUBA
OCTOBER 15-19, 2021
DETAILED ITINERARY

This four-day trip focuses on Havana—the cultural, political, and economic center of Cuba where significant changes are expected as Raul Castro steps down from power. While staying at the wonderful Parque Central, and enjoying meals at the city’s finest restaurants and private homes, our exclusive program features engaging lectures, private performances, artistic demonstrations and interpretations, and informal conversations with local Cubans. From the waves crashing against the Malecon, to the Afro-Caribbean beat, to the iconic ‘50s cars, Cuba is a feast for the senses, as well as a challenge for the intellect. Now is the time to experience Cuba as it is today—there simply could not be a more exciting time to visit this “time-capsule” nation before its landscape changes forever.

Despite the June 2019 changes made to the regulations governing travel to Cuba, it is still possible on programs booked prior to the June 2019 changes, to travel on a People to People/Support of the Cuban People program. These programs differ from more traditional trips in that every hour must be accounted for. Each day on the HAA program has been structured to provide meaningful interactions with Cuban people or educational or cultural programming. Please note that the Harvard Alumni Association and Distant Horizons intend to fully comply with all requirements of the general license. Travelers must participate in all group activities. Each traveler is required to keep a copy of their final program which could be requested by OFAC officials at any point in the next five years.

GROUP SIZE: Up to 20 guests

PRICING: $4,295 per person double occupancy / $5,180 single occupancy

STUDY LEADER: Jonathan Hansen is the Senior Lecturer on Social Studies and Faculty Associate, David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, at Harvard University. An intellectual historian, he is the author of Young Castro: The Making of a Revolutionary (Simon & Schuster, 2019), Guantanamo: An American History (Hill and Wang, 2011), and The Lost Promise of Patriotism: Debating American Identity, 1890-1920 (Chicago, 2003), along with articles, op-eds, and book reviews on U.S. imperialism, nationalism, cosmopolitanism, and race and ethnicity published in the New York Times, Huffington Post, Guardian, and Cognoscenti, among other places. Currently, he teaches a year-long Introduction to Social Thought and a junior tutorial entitled Justice and Reconciliation after Mass Violence. In recent years, he has taught a freshman seminar on PTSD in American history and seminars (with Robert Mnookin) on reconciliation and intractable conflicts at the Harvard Law School. His interest in peace and reconciliation stems from roots in U.S. history, as well as from yearly trips (since 2010) to Rwanda, where he is laying the groundwork for a biography of president Paul Kagame.
SCHEDULE BY DAY
B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15
HAVANA, CUBA

Independent arrivals in Havana, Cuba.

In Havana, your first stop will be at the Plaza de la Revolucion, the most politically important square in Cuba.

Next visit the iconic Hotel Nacional, which opened in 1930 when Cuba was a prime travel destination for Americans. Enjoy a traditional Cuban lunch at La Barraca Restaurant located on the hotel grounds.

After lunch, visit Ernest Hemingway’s home, which was inhabited by the writer from 1939 to 1960. 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 view of the interior.

Transfer to the Hotel Parque Central to check in and meet for introductory comments and a lecture by your Harvard study leader.

This evening, enjoy a welcome dinner 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.

Overnight: Hotel Parque Central (L, D)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16
HAVANA

This morning, begin exploring Old Havana by foot. Many of Havana’s 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. Over 300 landmark buildings have been refurbished, from colonial fortresses to famous nightspots of the city’s swinging era just before the Cuban revolution. End the morning at the Plaza Vieja, a beautiful example of successful restoration.

Stop in to attend a rehearsal of the Camerata Romeu, an all-women group of musicians who play stringed instruments. Founded in 1993 by director Zenaida Romeu, Camerata Romeu plays music from Cuba as well as from all over the world. Composers chosen range from Leo Brouwer and Esteban Salas to Bach and Mozart.

Enjoy lunch at La Moneda Cubana.

After lunch, watch 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 rhythms of Cuban rumba and syncopation of Spanish flamenco.

Dinner this evening is at the home of artist Sandra Ramos who graduated from the Higher Institute of Arts of Cuba in 1993. Her works focus on the recovery of a social and individual memory, linked to the difficulties of daily life in Cuba. She is an outspoken critic of the political manipulation of Cuba’s history and uses her art to express this.

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

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17
HAVANA

This morning, enjoy a round-table discussion on “the Cuban Economy” by Professor Jorge Mario Sanchez. Dr. Sanchez is a macro-economist and professor at the Center for the Study of the Cuban Economy at the University of Havana. He has also been a visiting professor at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies.

After the discussion, walk a short distance to the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes: Arte Cubano (Cuban Collection). Lucila Hernandez, a contemporary art curator, will accompany the tour.

Enjoy lunch at the 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 NostalgiCar, a classic car mechanic shop. Meet with the owner of the shop who will talk about his business.

From the shop, drive in the classic cars to Vivero Alamar to look at one of Havana’s many urban gardens. Coordinating this visit is Miguel Angelo
Salcines, farm manager, and Eudes Rodriquez. The effects of the Special Period and consequent food shortages have had greatest repercussions in the city of Havana. With approximately 2.5 million people, Havana has about one fifth of Cuba’s total population. While Havana’s urban agriculture has taken on many forms, ranging from private gardens (huertos privados) to state-owned research gardens (organoponicos).

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

Overnight: Hotel Parque Central (B, L)

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19
RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES
Depart the hotel this morning for the airport and your return flight to Miami/Fort Lauderdale. (B)

MONDAY, OCTOBER 18
HAVANA
This morning attend a lecture and discussion on US/Cuban Relations led by Professor Raul Rodriguez from the University of Havana.

End the afternoon with a private Salsa class. Salsa has its origins in Cuba where the blending of African drum rhythms and Spanish guitar evolved into a variety of Latin American music: Son, Danzón, the rhythms of Carnival, Cha Cha Cha, Mambo, Salsa and even Tango came out of Cuba. The Salsa movements originate from the Cuban Son dancing of the 1920s. Today’s Salsa dancing is a rich blend of Latin-American and Western influences.

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

After lunch, visit the Presidential Palace, now 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. 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 farewell dinner at L’Atelier, one of Havana’s wonderful paladares where chef Neuris has won accolades for her traditional Cuban cuisine.

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