

## CUBAN BASEBALL PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE EXPERIENCE

**5 days, 4 nights, 3 games, plus**

**Possible Dates (NOT CONFIRMED until the Cuban Baseball Federation releases the 2019-2020 season schedule)**

Thursday, August 29, 2019	to	Monday, September 2, 2019
Wednesday, September 11, 2019	to	Sunday, September 15, 2019
Wednesday, September 18, 2019	to	Sunday, September 22, 2019
Wednesday, September 25, 2019	to	Sunday, September 29, 2019
Thursday, October 10, 2019	to	Monday, October 14, 2019
Wednesday, October 23, 2019	to	Sunday, October 27, 2019
Wednesday, October 30, 2019	to	Sunday, November 3, 2019

**Duration:** 5 days and 4 nights in Cuba, organized by Global Relations Travel Club (GRTC). GRTC is an authorized sponsor of Cuba travel in accordance with the US Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) section 31 C.F.R. § 515.572(a)(1).

**PRICE \$1999 per person in a double, \$2299 for a single. Please see note on what is Included/Not**

### **Accommodation:**

- *Hotel: Presidente, Havana*

**Island transportation:** Private Coach

### **DAY 1 – ARRIVAL CUBA / WELCOME DINNER (DINNER)**

\* Depart to Havana via your own arranged flights.

You should plan arriving Havana by mid-afternoon. It may take you some time to clear Cuban Immigration, get your bag and go through Customs. You will be met

in the arrival hall, after clearing Customs, by our Cuban representative holding a 'Cuba Explorer' sign to take you to your hotel. They will have your name and will be monitoring your flight arrival in case there is a delay. Your first tour activity will be the welcome dinner and your guide will finalize details with you on arrival to your hotel. On departure from Cuba you will be asked to be at the airport 3 hours in advance.

\* Havana's International Airport arrival hall does have bathrooms. They may not have seats or tissue. This is normal in Cuba, so you may wish to bring packets of tissues. It is suggested to use the restroom on your flight before landing.

\* On arrival at Havana's José Martí International Airport proceed through Immigration. Your carry-on will once again be scanned.

\* Give your 'Health' form to the nurses in white uniforms after you go through Immigration & screening. The important question they may ask is if you have been exposed to Ebola.

\* Collect your bags and go through Customs giving them your blue customs form.

\* You will be welcomed at the airport exterior lobby after you exit Cuban Customs. Look for the person holding signage of 'Cuba Explorer.'

Tour participant's arrival times may vary throughout the day. Airport transfers will be arranged for each flight.

\* You can change your money into CUC (the convertible currency used on the island) at the airport on arrival, at a Cuban bank, an official exchange bureau or at your hotel. Your guide will be of assistance. Your passport is necessary to exchange currency. Do not exchange money on the street or with an individual Cuban.

Quote from Lonely Planet: *"No one could have invented Havana. It's too audacious, too contradictory and – despite 50 years of withering neglect – too damned beautiful. How it does it is anyone's guess. Maybe it's the swashbuckling history still almost perceptible in atmospheric colonial streets; the survivalist spirit of a populace scarred by two independence wars, a revolution and a US trade embargo; or the indefatigable salsa energy that ricochets off walls and emanates most emphatically from the people. Don't come here with a long list of questions. Just arrive with an open mind and prepare for a long, slow seduction."*

\* Hotel Presidente check in with assistance from your guide. (Included) The Hotel Presidente is on the Avenida de los Presidentes and close proximity to the Malecon, in the Vedado area of Havana.

- \* Free time to settle in and get oriented with your hotel and area.
- \* Enjoy a wonderful dinner at El Aljibe, which features a 6 decades-old secret recipe for roast chicken that has drawn the likes of Hollywood star Jack Nicholson and former President Jimmy Carter. It is one of the busiest restaurants in Havana. The recipe includes garlic and bitter orange as well as other secret ingredients. (Included)
- \* Evening is free to explore the sights and sounds of Old Havana.

## **DAY 2 – BRIEFING ON CUBAN BASEBALL / OLD HABANA WALKING TOUR / FIRST GAME (BREAKFAST)**

- \* Breakfast in hotel. (Included)
- \* Morning briefing with your guide on the veranda about the Cuban baseball teams, the players, the baseball culture in Cuba, how the season runs and procedures/protocol for the games. (Included)
- \* Walking tour of Old Havana, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. You will visit the historic plazas that make Havana unique in the Western Hemisphere. It contains the largest collection of remaining colonial-era architecture. This is a private tour led by your Cuban guide. (Included)
- \* San Francisco Square, one of the oldest plazas in the historical quarter. The square is named after magnificent Iglesia y Monasterio de San Francisco de Asís dating from the 16th century. The basilica is a striking example of Cuban baroque architecture.
- \* Visit the Museum of Chocolate, a small shop with intriguing artifacts relating to the history of chocolate production in Cuba. You can watch chocolates being made at the back of the premises while you sip a warming cup of hot chocolate or a soothing glass of cold chocolate. The Museo del Chocolate also sells artisanal chocolates singly or boxed. (Optional, Included)
- \* Plaza Vieja, the only civic square of colonial times. Absent are churches and government buildings and is in contrast surrounded by opulent aristocratic 17th century residences.
- \* Visit the cigar shop La Casa del Habano at the Conde de Villanueva boutique hotel, which may be the best cigar shop in Old Havana. It is hidden on the mezzanine which was once slave quarters. Cigar aficionados can enjoy the patio with its vegetation, mahogany rocking chairs and peacocks. The building was the

colonial mansion of the Count of Villanueva, leader of the creole Havana society in the 19th century. (Optional, Included)

\* Square of Arms, a military parade ground for Spanish soldiers, surrounded by impressive buildings.

\* Visit La Casa de los Artistas, Estudio La Mina the studio-workshop and exhibition space for five of the significant figures of Cuban art: Zaida Del Rio, Angel Ramirez, Carlos Guzmán, Ernesto Rancaño, Pedro Pablo Oliva and Roberto Fabelo. The colonial mansion that houses the art studio was built in the sixteenth century and was the residence of the bishops of Havana. (Optional, Included)

\* Cathedral Square, the most beautiful and private 18th century colonial plaza on the island. Named after the masterpiece of Cuban baroque architecture: the Catedral de San Cristóbal de la Habana, was built by the Jesuit order.

\* As you stroll through the historic cobblestone streets of Old Havana you will experience the sensations Ernest Hemingway felt and those of the colonialists' centuries earlier.

\* Lunch (Not Included). Select a cafe off of the Plaza to enjoy the outdoor seating.

\* Return to hotel.

\* First Game - Details and time to be determined - game times are 2:15, 4:15 or 7:15 – schedule may change. (Included)

\* Return to hotel.

\* Dinner (Not included). This is a perfect evening to explore Cuba's famed paladares or visit one of the many cafes within easy walking distance of your hotel. Enjoy the island experience.

Your guide can help arrange tickets to the Tropicana or Buena Vista Social Club if you like. We suggest informing your guide soon on arrival to ensure tickets. (Optional)

### **DAY 3 – CIGAR FACTORY / BASEBALL FORUM / SECOND GAME (BREAKFAST)**

\* Breakfast in hotel. (Included)

\* Visit the Romeo y Julieta / H. Uppman Factory which makes internationally famous Cuban cigars. Rollers receive their carefully portioned leaves for their

blends from the storeroom. A small quality-control area sits off to the side where draw machines test the finished product for the day. As in all Cuban cigar factories, a podium is set up for a lector who reads the news to workers. Two half-hour-long periods later in the day are devoted to novels, or fiction books which the workers select. (Included)

\* Participate in the baseball Peña at Parque Central, known as La Esquina Caliente (Hot Corner), which is an open street forum about Cuban baseball that takes place every day in the heart of Havana's Central Park, in front of the Jose Marti Statue. Along the marble benches on the south side of the plaza, where trees provide a little shade, baseball fans meet and debate the sport. They are loud, heated and simultaneous making it difficult to have a coherent understanding of the conversations that occur. You will be able to observe and interact with locals while enjoying their knowledge.

\* Lunch (Not Included)

Perhaps you would like to visit the original Sloppy Joes, a historic bar, eatery and Hemingway haunt, a short walk to the Pena. The advent of Prohibition in the United States spurred its original owner, Jose Garcia Abeal, to change the emphasis from food service to liquor service. American tourists would visit Havana for the nightlife, the gambling and the alcohol they could not obtain back home. During the 1940s and 1950s it became a favorite haunt of American tourists and film stars like John Wayne, Spencer Tracy and Clark Gable as well Frank Sinatra and boxer Joe Lewis. It was for a time one of the most famous bars in the world and highlighted in the 1959 film 'Our Man in Havana'.

\* Return to hotel.

\* Second Game - Details and time to be determined - game times are 2:15, 4:15 or 7:15 – schedule may change. (Included)

\* Return to hotel.

\* Dinner open for you to check out a privately owned paladare or café of your choice. (Not included)

\* Evening is free to explore the sights and sounds of the city.

\* Your guide will let you know some evening entertainment options for your personal exploring.

**DAY 4 – MUSEUM OF RUM / MARINE WAREHOUSE & SHOPPING /  
THIRD GAME / LAST NIGHT IN HABANA (BREAKFAST)**

\* Breakfast in hotel. (Included)

\* Visit the Museum of Rum. An important cultural site where historians affirmed it was built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (1772-1780). Your guide will show you all the steps in the manufacture of the original Cuban rum. The explanation goes from the raw material in the sugar cane field, history, slavery and up to today's distribution. In conclusion you will enjoy a toast with Havana Club Rum in the tasting bar. (Included) The shop has all the options of Havana Club available for purchase.

\* Time to shop for souvenirs at Centro Cultural Antiguos Almacenes de Depósito San José, a giant craft market offering some of the most iconic objects of Havana: garish-colored paintings by local artists, guayaberas (short-sleeve, open-neck Cuban shirts), sculptures, leather, jewelry, and various trinkets & gadgets bearing the image of Che Guevara. The souvenirs are high quality, which is why you will see as many locals as tourists among the shoppers. The metal-framed is an old maritime warehouse, retro, art deco and worth the visit alone. (Included)

\* Lunch at a café or privately owned paladare of your choice. (Not Included)

\* Return to hotel.

\* Third Game - Details and time to be determined - game times are 2:15, 4:15 or 7:15 – schedule may change. (Included)

\* Return to hotel.

\* Dinner (Not included). Evening is free to visit the vibrant cafes within easy walking distance of your hotel for a snack or dinner.

\* Visit the vibrant plazas of Old Havana to enjoy street music, dancing and the island experience.

\* It is your last night in the Republic of Cuba, so enjoy!

**DAY 5 – HAVANA DEPARTURE / HOME  
(BREAKFAST)**

\* Breakfast in hotel. (Included)

\* Hotel check-out.

\* Transfer to José Martí International Airport in Havana for flight home.  
(Included)

\* Airlines recommend you be at your departure airport 3 hours before takeoff.  
Please prepare accordingly. Your guide will meet you in the lobby of your hotel.

\* It is prohibited to take Cuban currency (CUC) out of the country. After your  
airline check-in there is a currency exchange available for you to change your  
CUCs into US dollars (or another currency). Be sure to do so before entering  
Immigration.

\* After you clear Cuban Immigration, you will be screened and your carry on will  
be scanned. In the departure hall there is a duty free shop, places to buy snacks and  
drinks, as well as souvenirs. They will accept U.S dollars.

\* When arriving to your U.S. entry airport you will need to clear U.S. Immigration  
and U.S. Customs. If asked by an Immigration Officer about your trip to Cuba,  
note that you were on a sanctioned Tour. If asked what you did, tell the truth and  
explain it was an opportunity to directly engage with Cuban people, learn about  
their life and country. **To be clear: You were not on a vacation.**

\* Memories of a wonderful visit to the Pearl of the Antilles: Cuba! (Included)

Cuba Travel is a challenge. GRTC staff and Cuban partners work hard to make  
your tour unfold seamlessly despite Third World conditions on the island.  
Sometimes things don't go as planned. Flexible travelers understand this is part of  
their Cuban Adventure.

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Tours: <http://globalrelations.ourcuba.com/>

## **CUBAN BASEBALL PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE EXPERIENCE**

### ***INCLUDED AND NOT***

**Important:** for entry into Cuba one must have a valid passport with expiration no earlier than six months from scheduled Cuban departure. A Cuban Visitor Visa is also required for entry into Cuba. Global Relations Travel Club will process your Visa for the standard fee and as a member benefit there is no charge for shipping and handling.

### **Included in tour package:**

- \* A Certificate of Legal Cuba Travel, per participant, in accordance with the US Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) section 31 C.F.R. § 515.572(a)(1)
- \* As a GRTC member you will receive a series of briefing e mails before departure to assist you in preparing for the trip.
- \* All taxes; amounts are quoted in US dollars.
- \* Fly to Cuba and you will be met at the airport for transfer to your hotel. On your last day of the tour the transfer to the Cuban airport is included.
- \* Airport departure tax from Cuba and the Cuban mandatory Emergency Insurance coverage during your island stay is usually covered in the cost of your U.S. airfare.
- \* Hotel in Cuba as listed in your itinerary, or similar.
- \* All breakfasts and dinner as per itinerary.
- \* All activities and services, as described in tour itinerary except those noted as “Optional” or “Not included.”
- \* Air-conditioned transportation and a Cuban professional driver dedicated to you.
- \* Cold bottled water on board.

- \* An expert Cuban English-speaking guide who will also serve as interpreter.
- \* As a GRTC member you will receive ongoing travel support from the Global Relations team before and after your stay.
- \* Emergency collect call access to the United States while in Cuba.

**Not included in tour package:**

- \* Global Relations Travel Club (GRTC) \$29 one time membership is not included. Membership is a requirement, by Rule, to participate in GRTC tours.
- \* As a GRTC member you will have expedited processing of the needed Cuban Visitor Visa at the standard Visa price of \$85 and no fee for shipping and handling.

*Please write check to Global Relations in the amount of:  $\$29 + \$85 = \$114$  per person and mail it to: GRTC, 320 North Plum Street, Pontiac, IL 61764.*

- \* Gratuities for your Cuban tour guide, coach/van driver, chambermaids, restaurant staff, porters, etc. are not included.
- \* Airfare is not included; you select your commercial flights and book them to and from Havana.
- \* Optional travel interruption and cancellation insurance. See <http://globalrelations.ourcuba.com/insurance/>