

Ayelet's Traveling University Presents an unforgettable tour to **CUBA**

with Professor Stephen Berk

December 3-10, 2023

(As of 3/29/23)

Cuba: land frozen in time - so close, yet decades away. A Jewish community dedicated to its heritage across half a century of isolation and prevalent atheism. A rich and vibrant island culture, filled with dance and song, classic cars and donkey carts, rum, and cigars. Experience all this and more as we step back in time together.



Day 0: Saturday, December 2, 2023: PRE-NIGHT

- Pre-arrivals overnight at the Courtyard Marriott Miami Airport.

Day 1: Sunday, December 3, 2023: DEPARTURE/WELCOME TO CUBA!

- Pre-arrivals can take their grab and go breakfast
- We depart Florida on our non-stop flight to Cuba – AA1755.
- We arrive at the Abel Santamaria Airport in **Santa Clara** and meet our English-speaking guide and driver.
- We begin with a **panoramic tour of Santa Clara**, an important city founded in the 1600s. Here, in 1958, Che Guevara and his troops won a crucial battle in securing victory for the Cuban Revolution. We stop at the **Che Guevara memorial** for a photo opportunity in the square.
- This afternoon, we meet with **Victor Tacher**, a leading representative of the Santa Clara Jewish community to deliver our gifts and learn about the community he has lived and worked in for many years.
- We enjoy **lunch** together at **La Aldaba** private restaurant with Victor.
- After lunch, we travel to **Trinidad**. Upon arrival, we check into our hotel, with a chance to refresh before coming together again for a **welcome drink and orientation**, followed by **dinner** together at our resort hotel.



Overnight in Trinidad (L, D)

Day 2: Monday, December 4, 2023: TOURING TRINIDAD

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We begin with a **lecture by Professor Stephen Berk**.
- Today, we set out in a walking tour of **historic Trinidad**, a 500-year-old city with Spanish architecture. Only a few square blocks in size, historic Trinidad is famous for its lovely cobblestone streets, pastel houses with wrought iron grills, as well as beautiful palaces and plazas. Along the way, we visit some of the village landmarks, including **Plaza Mayor** and **La Parroquial Mayor Church**.
- We watch rumba being played at **Palenque de los Congos Reales**, then visit a **rationing store “bodega”** and learn how the locals buy staple foods.
- Next, we visit **Yudit Faife’s private art gallery**, where we meet the artist and learn about his work.
- We stop for **lunch** at private restaurant **San Jose**.



- Following lunch, we head to the workshop of the famous **Santander family**, well-known local potters who have been making handmade pottery for over 100 years.
- The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure to explore the village and enjoy the atmosphere of this quaint town or return to our hotel to relax and freshen up.
- **Dinner** included at the restaurant of your choice at our resort.

Overnight in Trinidad (B, L, D)

Day 3: Tuesday, December 5, 2023: TRINIDAD to CIENFUEGOS

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- This morning, we travel to **Cienfuegos**, Cuba's "Pearl of the South". Here, we meet with **Rebecca Langus**, leading representative of the city's Jewish community and deliver our aid.
- We continue with an interactive walking tour around **Cienfuegos' historic center** to vie the landmarks such as **Jose Marti Memorial Park**, **Palacio Ferrer** and the **Terry Theater**.
- Next, we visit the **Cantores de Cienfuegos choir** at **Museo Provincial** and enjoy a performance and a chance to interact with the singers.
- We drive to **Playa Larga**, a tranquil village set on the beach at the head of the Bay of Pigs. It was here that the failed April 1961 CIA sponsored invasion took place.
- After **lunch** together a local paladar, **Casa de Enrique**, we meet with a **naturalist** to discuss the **Cienaga de Zapata Biosphere Reserve**,
- We drive to **Havana**, where we check into our hotel and freshen up.
- This evening, we enjoy a **buffet dinner** at our hotel or at private restaurant **L'Atelier**.



Overnight in Havana (B, L, D)



Day 4: Wednesday, December 6, 2023: GETTING TO KNOW HAVANA

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Our day begins with a **lecture** by Professor Berk.
- We depart the hotel and visit a **cigar factory**, where we learn about the **history of tobacco** and the tradition of cigar rolling in Cuba and interact with some of the rollers and locals.
- We continue to the **Sephardic Center**, where we meet with community leader **Mayra Levy** for an update and to deliver gifts. We then walk through the Holocaust exhibit, the only of its kind in Cuba.
- We enjoy **lunch** at private restaurant **La California**.
- After lunch, we enjoy a **walking tour of Old Havana** (Havana Vieja), a UNESCO World Heritage site. We learn about the history of Havana as we visit highlights of the city and the colonial plazas. We also visit Jewish points of interest, such as the Jewish-themed **Raquel Hotel**.
- Later this afternoon, we stop at **Almacenes de San Jose craft market**, where we stroll through the stalls of arts and crafts made by the locals, an excellent opportunity to interact with the artisans, learn about their challenges and purchase souvenirs!
- After returning to our hotel for time to relax and refresh, we set out again for **dinner** at private restaurant **Al Carbon**.

Overnight in Havana (B, L, D)

Day 5: Thursday, December 7, 2023: HEMINGWAY IN HAVANA

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we listen to a **lecture** by Professor Berk.
- Today, we visit **Patronato Beth Shalom**, where we meet with community leaders. We tour the center and learn about the Pharmacy and Sunday school, with time to deliver our gifts and aid.
- This afternoon, we head to **Café Ajiaco** and begin with a visit to their organic farm for a **“mojito” making and tasting class** prior to **lunch**.
- Next, we visit the **Jewish cemetery in Guanabacoa**, including a special stop to the site of the Holocaust memorial.
- We continue to **Finca Vigia**, former home of **Hemingway** for over 20 years and now a museum. We peruse the museum, which is supported by several non-governmental and independent organizations and meet the caretakers to learn about his life and work as a writer in Cuba.
- We return to our hotel for dinner on own.
- **Optional:** Attend the world-famous show at the **Tropicana Cabaret**, an old-world Vegas-style show in production since 1939 (separate cost).



Overnight in Havana (B, L)



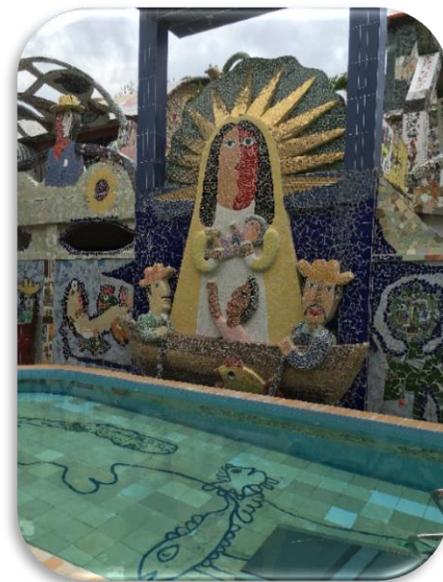
Day 6: Friday, December 8, 2023: DANCING INTO SHABBAT

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Professor Berk begins the day with another informative **lecture**.
- We set out for a panoramic overview of the city, including **Revolution Square**, dominated by the José Martí Memorial. This square is where Fidel Castro delivered the majority of his lengthy political addresses. Along the way, we pass by the **Rosenberg Memorial, Lennon Park, and Havana University**.
- We continue with a guided tour of **Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (National Museum of Fine Arts)**, including a visit to the Cuban art collection.
- We enjoy **lunch** at **ChaChaCha**.
- This afternoon, we the headquarters of **Habana Compas Dance** to enjoy a performance and interact with the dancers and instructors.
- We return to our hotel for time to prepare for Shabbat
- This evening, we join together for **Shabbat services** at the **Patronato Synagogue** with community members, followed by **Shabbat dinner** at **La Mansion Castillo**, a nearby private restaurant.

Overnight in Havana (B, L, D)

Day 7: Saturday, December 9, 2023: A HAVANA SHABBAT

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We hear a final **closing lecture** by Professor Berk this morning.
- Today, we visit the impressive **Fusterlandia** to see the unique mosaic masterpiece and learn about the artist's ongoing project to beautify his hometown.
- We continue to **Vocal Clave del Sol**, a musical education program for children ages 5 to 19, founded in 2009. We meet and interact musically with some of the students and teachers and learn about the importance of this program to the students here.
- We enjoy **lunch** together at **Buenaventura Restaurant**, then return to the hotel to refresh.
- We gather this evening and enjoy a **classic car ride** from our hotel to our **farewell dinner** at **Vista Mar Restaurant**, where we savor our closing dinner as a group and recall all that we have experienced together on this enlightening journey.
- The hearty among us will set out after dinner for a late evening visit to the artists of **Fabrica D'la Arte (FAC)**, a former cooking oil factory, which comes alive on weekend nights and features the best avante garde art in the country.



Overnight in Havana (B, L, D)



Day 8: Sunday, December 10, 2023: DEPARTURE

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We transfer to the airport for our flight back to Florida.

The Memories Last Forever!!

**Itinerary subject to change*

