



## Jewish Humanitarian Mission to **CUBA**

*An unforgettable exchange with the people, culture, music, history and legacy of this tragic and triumphant community.*

**March 12-19, 2024**

**Led by ALEPH Executive Director SooJi Min-Maranda  
and Reb Cantor Lisa Levine**

(As of 4/3/23)



## Day 0: Monday, March 11, 2024: MIAMI PRE-NIGHT

- Pre-arrival stay near the Miami airport (separate cost).

## Overnight in Miami

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## Day 1: Tuesday, March 12, 2024: OUR JOURNEY BEGINS/WELCOME TO CUBA!

- We depart Miami on our morning flight to Cuba.
- We arrive at the **Jose Marti Airport** and meet our English-speaking guide and driver.
- Upon arrival, we enjoy 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. We also pass by the **Rosenberg Memorial**, Lennon Park and Havana University.
- We enjoy **lunch** at **Buenaventura**.
- After lunch, we visit **Vocal Clave del Sol**, a community project founded in 2009 aimed to develop vocal and instrumental skills and promote Cuban traditional music in children 5 to 19 years old. Here, we interact with students and teachers and learn about the importance of this program to the community.
- We check into our hotel and enjoy a **welcome drink and orientation** with our guide.
- After a chance to freshen up, we enjoy a delicious **welcome dinner** at **Bahia Restaurant**.



## Overnight in Havana (L, D)

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## Day 2: Wednesday, March 13, 2024: GETTING TO KNOW HAVANA/HAVANA VIEJA

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we visit the impressive **Fuster house/studio** to see the unique mosaic masterpiece and learn about the artist's project to beautify his hometown.
- We continue our day with a visit to a **cigar factory**. Here, we learn about the history of tobacco and the tradition of cigar rolling in Cuba and interact with some of the rollers.
- We stop for **lunch** at local private restaurant **ChaChaCha**.
- This afternoon, we set out on a walking tour of **Old Havana (Havana Vieja)**, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Along the way, we learn about the history of Havana as we visit city highlights and colonial plazas. We take a peek into the **cathedral** if it is open, then visit Jewish points of interest, such as the Jewish-themed **Hotel Raquel**.
- We continue to the **Patronato**, where we meet with community leaders, tour the center and learn about the **pharmacy** and **Sunday school** with time to deliver our gifts and aid.
- We return to our hotel to freshen up, then set out to enjoy **dinner** at private restaurant **Café Laurent** tonight.

## Overnight in Havana (B, L, D)



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### Day 3: Thursday, March 14, 2024: HEMINGWAY IN HAVANA

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Today, we begin at the **Sephardic Center** to meet with community leadership and some of their members to whom we deliver our gifts and aid. While here, we also walk through the **Holocaust exhibit**, the only of its kind in Cuba.
- Next, we visit **Finca Vigia**, the villa that Hemingway called home for 21 years. His home is now a museum supported by many non-governmental and independent organizations and still holds many of his personal belongings. We interact with the caretakers and learn about the life and work of the writer when he lived in Cuba.
- This afternoon, we visit the organic farm **Finca Yoandra** and learn about their community project while enjoying a **mojito making and tasting experience**, followed by **lunch at Il Divino** on the premises.
- We continue to the **Jewish cemetery in Guanabacoa**, including a moment for reflection at the small Holocaust memorial.
- We return to the city and visit the iconic **Hotel Nacional** for a guided tour of this famous property and a mojito in the “Hall of Fame”.
- Enjoy an evening at leisure to discover the vibrant city of Havana and have dinner on own (reservation assistance provided).



### Overnight in Havana (B, L)

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#### Day 4: Friday, March 15, 2024: ARTISTIC HAVANA

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we meet with the fascinating **Camilo Garcia Lopez-Trigo** who will share with us his insight about the Cuban economy past and present, as well as US/Cuba relations and the impact of the longstanding US embargo upon the island nation.
- Next, we visit **Habana Compas Dance** to enjoy a performance and interact with the dancers and instructors.
- We stop for **lunch** together at **La California**.
- This afternoon, we enjoy a guided tour of the **Fine Arts Museum (Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes)** with a local specialist and view the Cuban art collection.
- Time permitting, we visit the beautiful Catholic **Iglesia de Jesus de Miramar**. It is an opportunity for discussion about religious freedom and Cuba's journey through secular atheism to a more tolerant stance on religion today.
- We return to our hotel to relax and refresh.
- As the sun sets, we join together for **Shabbat services** at **Patronato Beth Shalom Congregation** with members of the community, then enjoy **Shabbat dinner** at **La Mansion Castillo**.

#### Overnight in Havana (B, L, D)

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#### Day 5: Saturday, March 16, 2024: MUSIC, CLASSICAL CARS AND SHABBAT

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We come together this morning for **Shabbat services** at our hotel (or on the Malecon!) with Reb Lisa (or choose to attend services at Patronato).
- We'll enjoy **study sessions** and reflect with Reb Lisa as we consider our Cuban experiences thus far from a Jewish perspective.
- For those interested, join us for an afternoon visit to **Almacenes de San Jose market**, where we stroll through the stalls of arts and crafts made by the locals. This is an excellent opportunity to interact with the artisans, learn about their challenges and purchase souvenirs.
- This evening, we gather for **Havdallah** together at our hotel, and then set out on a **classic car ride**, meeting private owners and taxi drivers of the classic American cars. We learn about their daily challenges to keep these relics running as we cruise the streets of Havana on a scenic ride in pre-1959 classic American cars. Our ride takes us to our **farewell-to-Havana dinner** at **Vistamar**.
- **Optional:** Attend the world-famous show at the **Tropicana**, an old-world Vegas-style show in production since 1939 (separate cost - \$125/person).



#### Overnight in Havana (B, L, D)

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## Day 6: Sunday, March 17, 2024: SANTA CLARA – CIENFUEGOS - TRINIDAD

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- Early today, we depart for **Santa Clara**, an important city founded in the 1600's. Here, in 1958, Che Guevara and his troops won a crucial battle in securing victory for the Cuban Revolution.
- Upon arrival in Santa Clara, we stop at the **Che Guevara memorial** for a photo opportunity in **Plaza Che Guevara (Che Guevara Square)**, see the eternal flame lit in his memory, then visit the **Che Museum** underneath.
- Next, we meet with **Victor Tacher**, a leading representative of the Santa Clara Jewish Community, which we learn about as we deliver our gifts.
- We come together at the **Santa Clara Cemetery and Holocaust Memorial** for a brief service.
- We take a break for **lunch** together at **La Aldaba** paladar with Victor as our guest.
- After lunch, we depart for **Cienfuegos**, Cuba's "Pearl of the South". Here, we meet with leading Jewish community representative **Rebecca Langus** to deliver our aid and hear her story.
- We continue to the beautiful colonial town of **Trinidad**, a charming city settled in 1514 and a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1988.
- We check into our humble private home stays (Casas Particulares) and refresh for our last **dinner** together at restaurant **San Jose**.



### Overnight in Trinidad (B, L, D)

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## Day 7: Monday, March 18, 2024: TRINIDAD

- Breakfast at our home stay.
- This morning, we enjoy a **walking tour of historic Trinidad**, which is a 500-year-old city with Spanish colonial 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 village landmarks such as **Plaza Mayor** and **La Parroquial Mayor Church** and watch **rumba** being played at **Palemque de los Congos Reales**. We will also visit a rationing store "bodega" and learn how locals buy staple foods.
- Next, we visit **Yudit Vidal Faife's private art gallery**. Yudit is a native of Trinidad and we will interact with him and learn about his work and challenges.
- We enjoy **lunch** at **Los Conspiradores**.
- This afternoon, we meet with the famous **Santander family**, well-known local potters, and visit their workshop and gallery. These artists have been making handmade pottery for over 100 years.
- The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure. Explore the village and enjoy the special atmosphere of this quaint town or return to your home stay to relax.
- This evening, we join together one final time for a festive **sunset farewell dinner** at private restaurant **Ojo del Toro**, followed by an opportunity to explore the Trinidad nightlife.

### Overnight in Trinidad (B, L, D)



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**Day 8: Tuesday, March 19, 2024: FAREWELL CUBA**

- Breakfast at our home stay.
- We transfer to Santa Clara airport for our return flight, landing later today.

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**The Memories Last Forever!!**

*\*Itinerary subject to change*

