

Weekend in Havana: With Special Guests Chris & ShawnTe Welch

Day 1 • Arrive Havana / Welcome Reception & Dinner / Cuban Art Factory

- Depart to Cuba via your own arranged flight.

You should plan to arrive in Havana by mid-afternoon of your first tour day. Your guide will have your flight information and be monitoring your flight arrival in case there is a delay. Your first tour activity will be the Welcome Reception Dinner.

- On Havana airport arrival proceed through Cuban Immigration. Your carry-ons will be scanned.
- Collect your bags and go through Customs.
- You will meet at the airport, after Customs, by our representative holding a "Cuba Explorer" sign.

A quote paraphrased from Lonely Planet: "No one could have invented Havana. It's too audacious, too contradictory and - despite 65 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 wars of independence, a revolution, and a U.S. trade embargo that has lasted longer than any in history; 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."

- Transfer to your hotel with free time to settle in and get oriented.
 - Your hotel, Inside Habana Cathedral, is on Cathedral Square, one of Old Havana's four main historic plazas. It is comfortable and an ideal base for exploring. The rooftop, with its swimming pool, is reputed to have the best view overlooking Havana Harbor.
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- Chris and ShawnTe Welch will serve as special guests, hosting your Welcome Dinner at Boutique Casa Italia in the tony Miramar neighborhood of Havana. On their third trip to Cuba with Global Relations, they will be joined by family and friends. You will enjoy a self-serve tapas buffet dinner in the outdoor garden under pergolas and the open sky. Live Cuban music will accompany the evening, adding rhythm and warmth to the dining experience and offering a chance to mingle with fellow travelers from across Illinois.
- After dinner—Havana by night—you move to the highly acclaimed Fábrica de Arte Cubano (Cuban Art Factory – F.A.C.), a unique fusion of nightclub and art gallery housed in a former cooking oil plant built in 1910 in the Vedado district. This dynamic arts space spans several floors and features bars, live theater, jazz, contemporary dance, concerts, DJs, and rotating art exhibitions. They are open until 3:00 a.m.

Your guide and motorcoach will take you to F.A.C., where you will be free to explore at your own pace. A departure time will be set for the motorcoach to return to the hotel. Those who wish to leave early or stay longer can easily take a taxi back to the hotel. Transportation, entrance fee, and guide escort will be offered.

Day 2 • CLE / Tour Old Habana / Cigar Shopping / El Capitolio / Museum of the Revolution / Havana's Top Restaurant

- Breakfast is hosted at your lodging.
- A morning Continuing Legal Education session will introduce attorneys to Cuba's legal system, tracing its evolution from post-revolutionary reforms to its present-day socialist constitutional framework. Through an examination of the organization and jurisdiction of Cuba's courts—including the Supreme People's Court and specialized tribunals—attorneys will gain insight into the roles of both professional and lay judges, as well as trial procedures, evidentiary standards, and interpretative methods. The program is presented by the Unión Nacional de Juristas de Cuba (UNJC—Cuban National Union of Lawyers), offering firsthand perspectives from Cuban legal practitioners on how law is implemented, interpreted, and experienced within the country's unique judicial structure.

This session is part of the CLE programs offered during the tour. Non-attorneys are welcome—and encouraged—to attend. The session offers insight into the distinctive legal culture of Cuba.

Those who do not to join the morning program will have independent time.

- Following the morning CLE session, all participants—including those who did not attend—will meet up for a guided morning stroll through Old Havana.

Hola, La Habana Vieja [Hello, Old Havana], “In terms of beauty, only Venice and Paris surpassed Havana,” penned Ernest Hemingway. He was alluding to Havana’s incredible architecture, art, and, of course, the spirit of its people. Old Havana’s four colonial plazas are full of color and personality, with a mix of palatial buildings, monuments, museums, galleries, churches, lively entertainment, restaurants, and bars. Together, the four plazas of Old Havana contain the most extensive collection of Spanish colonial-era architecture in Latin America. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, restoration and care of Old Havana’s wonders lies with the Office of the Historian of Havana.

Cathedral Square is the most beautiful 18th-century colonial plaza in Latin America. Its centerpiece is the baroque masterpiece Catedral de San Cristóbal de La Habana erected in 1748 by the Jesuit order and showcases towers of unequal height. Christopher Columbus' remains lay in the Cathedral between 1796 and 1898 before they were taken to Seville Cathedral, Spain.

According to local lore, one of Ernest Hemingway’s favorite drinks was the Mojito, which he drank often at one of his frequented bars, La Bodeguita del Medio, near Cathedral Square in Old Havana.

- Visit Taller Experimental de Grafica (Experimental Graphics Workshop), Cuba's oldest print making studio.

Paraphrased from Smithsonian Magazine: “Lithography arrived in Cuba to protect the integrity of the country’s cigar industry. By the early 1800s, Cuban cigar exports had a prestige that made them valuable throughout the world, and they wanted to protect the Cuban industry from counterfeiters. Using lithography, they could make seals and rings that both decorated their products and distinguished them from those of competitors. Cuba imported thousands of lithographic limestones from Germany in the 1800s. In the 1950s, shortly before the Revolution, aluminum replaced lithography, and the stones fell into disuse.

Campeños (farmers) used the stones to make walking paths through muddy fields. During the Cuban Missile Crisis Habaneros (people from Havana) laid the lithographic stones and other rocks around the city to serve as barricades against an invasion.

Cuban lithography would have died but for the few artists who lobbied the new Revolutionary government to protect the stones. In 1962, as minister of industry and in the name of art, Che Guevara signed a mandate to provide materials, space, and machines to Cuban lithographers. The Taller Experimental Graphics Workshop was born.

Plaza Vieja [Old Square] was the only civic square of colonial times. In contrast to the churches and government buildings of the other plazas, only opulent aristocratic 17th-century mansions surround the 'Old Square.' Today, with its small cafes, it is a buzz for nightlife.

Plaza de San Francisco [San Francisco Square] is one of the oldest plazas in the historical quarter. The Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi, with its construction beginning in 1548 is a striking example of Cuban baroque architecture.

Plaza de Armas [Square of Arms] was a military parade ground for Spanish soldiers. It is the site of the Palace of the Captain Generals, built between 1776 and 1792, and served as the residence of the Spanish colonial governors. Today, it houses the Museum of the City of Havana, showcasing artifacts from Cuba's rich history.

Ernest Hemingway lived near Plaza de Armas at the Hotel Ambos Mundos for several years in the 1930s. He rented room number 511 on the upper floor of the hotel for \$1.50 per night until mid-1939 before moving to Finca Vigía, west of Havana. The historic estate is where he began his work on *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), finished his book *Death in the Afternoon* (1932), and started his novels *Green Hills of Africa* (1935) and *To Have and Have Not* (1937). The room where the Nobel Prize-winning writer stayed at Hotel Ambos Mundos has been transformed into a small museum, displaying several of his personal belongings. It is open to visitors during the day.

As you stroll the historic cobblestone streets of Old Havana you will experience the sensations Ernest Hemingway felt amongst century's old architecture.

- Lunch is open. Close to your hotel is El Rum Rum, and your guide will take you there at the conclusion of your walking tour. The private restaurant is known for its excellent seafood, live music, and welcoming staff. You are welcome to have lunch there or at any of the paladares in the area.

You will have the opportunity to visit the Salón de Humo—smoke lounge of El Rum Rum—with its broad selection of premium cigars. You can choose your Habanos with the advice of an experienced Cuban aficionado while sipping rum or rich Cuban coffee.

Osiris, the owner of El Rum Rum, is a certified Habanos Sommelier, which requires completing 480 hours of formal instruction. Training begins with wine—covering appreciation, service, and restaurant operations—before shifting to tobacco. Candidates visit growing regions and farms, meet producers, and gain access to cigar factories typically closed to the public. There, they smoke alongside rollers and consult with Cuba’s leading tobacco experts.

Sommelier training includes cigar construction, cutting, lighting, and tasting, as well as understanding how time of day influences cigar strength and enjoyment. Before recommending a cigar or pairing spirit, the sommelier considers the smoker’s habits and preferences. All 289 vitolas across 27 Habanos brands are studied in detail.

- All will meet at the hotel to board the motorcoach for a visit to Cuba’s National Capitol Building. Please be on time for departure.
- Tour El Capitolio, the Capitol Building of the Republic of Cuba. Constructed between 1926 and 1929, it served as the seat of the Cuban Congress until the Cuban Revolution in 1959, when Congress was dissolved. From 1959 to 2013, it housed the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment.

Following an extensive restoration started in 2013 the building reopened in 2019 in time to celebrate Havana’s 500th anniversary and resumed its role as the seat of Cuba’s legislative branch. The building now houses the Cuban National Assembly, the first time since 1959.

The striking resemblance to the U.S. Capitol often draws attention, but El Capitolio is uniquely Cuban. Beneath its dome lies a replica of a 24-carat diamond, marking the point from which all highway distances in Cuba are measured. You will have the opportunity to see the opulent hallways, the chamber of representatives, and the solemn Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

- The Museum of the Revolution- As the museum’s interior undergoes renovation, you will see the exterior exhibits. Inside a glass enclosure is the historic Granma boat, which played a pivotal role in the Revolution. She transported 82 revolutionaries, including Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, Camilo Cienfuegos, and Che Guevara, from Mexico to Cuba in the failed 1956 insurgence. The museum showcases planes, cars, jeeps, tanks, rockets, and even an ambulance used in the Revolution.
 - Return to your hotel.
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- You will be joined by special guests Chris and ShawnTe Welch as you dine at the exceptional private restaurant, La Guarida. The location served as the backdrop for the internationally acclaimed film *Strawberry and Chocolate*, the only Cuban film ever to be nominated for an Academy Award (Best Foreign Language Film, 1994). La Guarida has hosted numerous international personalities: Queen Sophia of Spain, Tom Jones, Beyoncé, Rihanna, Conan O'Brien, Richard Gere, Jack Nicholson, Paris Hilton, Bon Jovi—and now you. Consistently rated as the #1 restaurant in Havana by TripAdvisor, it offers a unique rooftop where you can enjoy an after-dinner refreshment with a memorable view of Havana at night.
- Independent evening of Jazz at La Zorra y El Cuervo (the Fox & Raven). One of the best jazz clubs in Havana. It is small and intimate. The entrance to the underground club is through a British telephone booth. They open at 10pm, the show is at 11pm, and it closes at 2am. Jazz pulses through the veins of Cuba—a rhythm that transcends mere music. Picture the 1940s: Cuban drummer Luciano “Chano” Pozo and American jazz trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie collide in a creative explosion. Their collaboration generated something extraordinary—the fusion of Afro-Cuban rhythms and jazz melodies. This groundbreaking blend danced across borders, creating the genre we now know as Latin Jazz.

Day 3 • CLE / Vintage American Cars / Stroll Paseo del Prado / Internationally Acclaimed Tropicana

- Breakfast is hosted in your hotel.
- Professor Marta Núñez, a Cuban sociologist and retired University of Havana professor, will present a morning CLE program on *Empowering Women in Cuba: the progress, challenges, and opportunities*. Professor Nunez has dedicated decades to researching gender relations, women’s employment in Cuba, and the portrayal of women in Cuban media. Her work has been influential in shaping discussions on gender equality in Cuba. She has served as a consultant to the United Nations.

Being one of the CLE programs offered during the tour, her session qualifies for one hour of Illinois Professional Responsibility MCLE credit.

Professor Marta is a dynamic and engaging speaker, widely recognized for her expertise in women’s empowerment. Non-attorneys are strongly encouraged to attend the morning presentation.

Those who choose not to join the session will have independent time.

- Step back in time as you glide through Havana in iconic 1950s vintage American cars. The cruise along the Malecon, a picturesque esplanade, roadway, and seawall, evokes the golden era of Cuba's beauty and allure. At the conclusion, you will be dropped off near Parque Central in Old Havana.
- Leisurely stroll Paseo del Prado, a picturesque boulevard, where emerging artists gather on the weekends to exhibit their works. You'll encounter a diverse range of art forms, including paintings, sculptures, crafts, photography, and textiles. Many of the artists will be present during these displays, allowing you to engage with them, learn about their inspirations, and discuss their artistic processes. These impromptu exhibitions along the promenade offer glimpses into Cuban creativity, reflecting local culture, history, and daily life.
- Lunch is open and there are several private paladares in the area.
- Independent stop at the original Sloppy Joe's, a historic Havana bar once frequented by Ernest Hemingway. Established in 1917, it reopened in 2013 after a 48-year closure. During Prohibition, American tourists flocked to Havana's nightlife, and owner José "Sloppy Joe" Abael y Otero shifted focus from food to cocktails, drawing Hollywood icons like John Wayne, Clark Gable, and Frank Sinatra.

The bar appeared in the 1959 film *Our Man in Havana*. A separate Sloppy Joe's opened in Key West in 1933, named by Hemingway in honor of the Havana original. Though unrelated in ownership, the two share a storied past.

- Visit the rooftop of the Parque Central Hotel for a refreshment and the sweeping views of the area's neoclassical architecture, the Gran Teatro, and El Capitolio.
 - Your guide will meet you in the lobby of the Parque Central Hotel at the designated time for transport back to the hotel. Those that wish to stay longer may take taxis on their own.
 - Independent afternoon.
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- Begin your memorable evening at Paladar Vistamar, a refined paladar perched on the edge of the sea with its terrace extending over a rocky shoreline in Havana’s upscale Miramar neighborhood. Set against the backdrop of the Caribbean Sea, this elegant restaurant offers a serene, open-air dining experience where the sound of waves and the scent of salt air mingle with the aromas of fresh seafood and Cuban-Caribbean fusion cuisine.

The restaurant’s signature feature—a sleek infinity pool—blurs the line between terrace and ocean, creating a stunning visual. Inside, the ambiance is stylish yet relaxed, with soft lighting, attentive service, and a menu that highlights local ingredients with international flair.

- **TOUR HIGHLIGHT:** The Tropicana is a Cuban international icon. The cabaret dates to 1939 and served as the center of Cuba's jet-set nightlife during the 1940s and 1950s. It’s a glimpse of pre-revolution Cuba, where Carmen Miranda, Josephine Baker, Nat King Cole, and others dazzled wealthy guests with Latin dance numbers. Women with 10-pound headdresses performed. It is located on a tropical six-acre garden estate in the Miramar neighborhood, the most glamorous section of Havana during the 1950s.

The Tropicana helped spread Cuban culture globally and the performers created the showgirl-era. The lavish costumes and vibrant dance styles quickly spread from Cuba to Las Vegas, New York, and Paris.

A full orchestra, loud colors, sultry rhythms, contortionists & acrobats provide a stunning production as more than 200 singers and dancers entertain you under the stars. There is a dress code of ‘casual elegance’; ladies should not wear shorts and gentlemen should not wear jeans. Transport, premium seating, and complimentary cola & rum are provided.

Day 4 • CLE / Cooking Class / Organic Garden / Hemingway By The Sea / Panoramic of Habana Harbor / Your Last Night In Cuba – Enjoy!

- Breakfast is hosted in your hotel.
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- The morning CLE session will be led by Ambassador Carlos Alzugaray—former Cuban Ambassador to the European Union and Professor of International Relations at the University of Havana—as he explores U.S.–Cuba relations. He will trace the developments from the Spanish–American War, through the Cuban Revolution, to today’s political landscape. His presentation will offer a candid perspective on the evolving dynamics between the two nations.

Non-attorney travelers are encouraged to attend the Ambassador’s presentation as he examines the shifting U.S. policy from the Oval Office across presidential transitions.

- All will travel to Cojimar, a charming fishing village east of Havana. This quaint coastal enclave held a special place in Ernest Hemingway’s heart, as it was his favorite fishing port in Cuba and served as the inspiration for his iconic 1952 novel, *The Old Man and the Sea*. The novel itself achieved great acclaim, earning the Pulitzer Prize in 1953 and Hemingway was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1954. In a generous gesture, he donated the Nobel medal to the Cuban people, emphasizing his deep connection to the island.

- **UNIQUE Lunch:** In this picturesque fishing village, just a few blocks from the bay, you’ll find yourself at the paladar El Ajiaco, where a culinary experience awaits. It wears its humble charm with pride, a place where flavors matter more than frills. Food networks from around the world have sought out its unassuming warmth, and even notable celebrities like Kevin Bacon and Sigourney Weaver have stepped through its doors.

Your cooking and mojito-making classes take center stage. Imagine working side by side with humorous and talented chefs, shaping dishes that celebrate Cuba’s flavors: Lobster, succulent and brimming with ocean essence, Ropa Vieja, the tender shredded beef stewed in aromatic spices, and Ajiaco soup, a hearty blend of root vegetables and herbs. But there’s more—the barkeep beckons. You’ll craft a special Cuban mojito, balancing mint, lime, honey, and rum. Sip it slowly, savoring the moment.

This experience isn’t just about food; it’s about connecting with Cuba’s soul, one delicious bite at a time.

- Explore the charming organic garden tended to by brothers Jesus and Julio. Here, they unveil the art of cultivating herbs, vegetables, and fruits, most destined for the private restaurant you will soon be and to the local senior center. You will see Mango trees, their golden skins ripe with tropical sweetness, Bananas, curving gracefully from sturdy stalks, Plantains, versatile and awaiting transformation into dishes, Squash, in the sun-kissed soil, Avocado trees, their leaves casting dappled shade, Coffee plants, their glossy leaves promising a rich brew. If fortune smiles upon you, perhaps you will get a glimpse of the Cuban Emerald Hummingbird flitting amidst the foliage.

The organic garden, nestled within a quiet residential neighborhood, serves as both a vital supplier for the local restaurant and a source of produce for the family. Witness firsthand how sustainable practices flourish, bridging the gap between nature's bounty and culinary creativity.

And here's a thoughtful touch: If you have donations you wish to give this would be a good place. The brothers give part of their garden harvest to the local school and a senior center, and they will see the gifts are properly distributed.

- Drive by Cojimar's harbor, you'll see where Hemingway's legendary boat, Pilar, was once moored. It was from this spot that Papa (as Hemingway was affectionately known) and Cojimar native Gregorio Fuentes, his trusted companion, would set sail on daring expeditions—whether in pursuit of marlins or even on covert missions to track German submarines during World War II.

At the water's edge, a metal bust of Hemingway stands, a tribute lovingly donated by the local fishermen. Capture this poignant moment with photos against the backdrop of the 17th-century Spanish Lookout Fort, which has witnessed centuries of maritime history.

La Terraza, a rustic fisherman's bar perched on the Bay of Cojimar, played a pivotal role in Hemingway's life. Here he would dock his beloved boat, Pilar, and spend afternoons in the company of the local fishermen. Among them was Fuentes, who some believe served as the real-life inspiration for *The Old Man and the Sea* novel's central character—Santiago.

And then there's the intriguing connection to Manolo, the young boy in Hemingway's tale. Some say that Manolo was modeled after the young son of La Terraza's owner, aptly named Manolito.

- En route back to Havana, you will pause to take in a panoramic view of the city and its bay from across the water.
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Casablanca, the small hamlet below on the water's edge, traces its origins to 1762. It is where shipbuilders toiled, shaping vessels that would sail across the ocean. These galleons, laden with spoils from South America, were destined for the royal court of Spain. Overlooking the Bay of Havana, stands the Christ of Havana—Cristo de La Habana. The colossal statue carries a tale of its own—a promise made by the wife of dictator President Fulgencio Batista. After an assassination attempt on the US-backed leader in 1957, she commissioned the monument to be a symbol of faith and protection. It was crafted in Italy and the 67 white marble blocks were blessed by Pope Pius XII himself.

Irony dances in the details: On Christmas Day 1958, the statue was unveiled and one-week later Batista fled Cuba in the early morning hours as the Revolutionary army entered Havana.

- Return to your hotel for independent time.
- Dinner is open. After enjoying excellent food throughout your tour, take this opportunity to dine at a privately owned restaurant you've been curious about.
- Your last evening in Cuba. Disfruta de la noche (enjoy the night)!

Day 5 • Havana / Salida

If you would like to arrive early or extend your stay in Havana, hotel accommodations can be reserved—including breakfast—and airport transfers arranged. The additional time will be independent and self-guided. Details on booking your extension will be provided once your tour registration is received.

- Breakfast is hosted in your hotel.
 - Transport will be provided to José Martí International Airport in Havana for your flight home.
 - 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.
 - 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. You may log in for a free half hour of Wi-Fi.
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- When you arrive at 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 Support of the Cuban People tour. If asked what you did, tell the truth, and explain it was an opportunity to directly engage and support the Cuban people, to 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)
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