



Detours With Matt presents:

Cuba's Culture and Jewish Community with Matt and Miriam

What happens when your trip is designed by two Jews – a linguist and an artist – who between them have logged over 30 trips to Cuba? You get a cultural journey rich in art, music, and community... and a direct, personal experience built on the friendships they've developed over the years.

Day 1 – Saturday, November 28 Arrive in Miami

Fly in to Miami on your own. From the airport, catch a complimentary shuttle to our hotel. If you have extra time to play with, you can explore Miami, relax at the hotel, or run errands at nearby shops.

At 6 pm you'll meet up with your fellow travelers and your fearless trip leaders, Miriam and Matt, at a welcome reception at our hotel. Besides getting to know each other, we'll review some key points about traveling in Cuba and the details of our flight the next day.

Dinner is on your own at the hotel or one of several nearby restaurants.

Day 2 – Sunday, November 29 Fly to Cuba, Introduction to Cienfuegos

Today we head back to the airport and catch a flight to Cienfuegos, Cuba! The city of Cienfuegos is known as “the Pearl of the South” for its colonial beauty, like the building pictured at right, and its location on Cuba's southern coast.



Our Cuban guide and our driver will meet us at the airport. They'll both be with us for the entire trip.

We'll start with lunch, then get acquainted with Cienfuegos by bus and on foot. To get a feel for the town, we'll visit the *malecón*, the sea wall where people relax along the water; El Prado, the main street with its businesses and pedestrian promenade; the boulevard downtown where people do their most important shopping; and the main square with its cathedral and other historic buildings.

Right on the main square sits the Provincial Museum of Cienfuegos, where we'll meet the Concierto Sur chamber orchestra. This performance group is composed entirely of teachers from a local music school, who welcome us to Cuba with an orientation to varied Cuban music, from classical music to popular rhythms. When they play a cha-cha, it can be hard to stay in your seat! Matt's uploaded one of their songs to YouTube: <https://youtu.be/Op6LbKapPzs?t=1m28s>

Next we'll check into our hotel, the Jagua, overlooking the Bay of Cienfuegos. You'll have some time to get situated, and then we'll have dinner at a local private restaurant.

Looking to go out on the town? Tonight and every night, we'll make suggestions for fun things to do after hours.

Day 3 – Monday, November 30 Cienfuegos' Art, Music, and Jewish Community

Today we'll skip the bus and travel like locals: on foot, bicycle taxis, horse taxis, in cars... We'll visit the local chapter of UNEAC, the national union of artists and writers, an important influence in Cuban society. We'll then visit a number of UNEAC artists in their nearby homes and studios. We'll learn about their work, their politics, and what it means to be an artist in Cuba.

After lunch at a private restaurant, we'll enjoy a performance by the Singers of Cienfuegos chamber choir. Miriam is a big fan of this celebrated group, one of Cienfuegos' best! Besides hearing their beautiful music, we'll speak with them about their work and their country.



The Graphics Workshop in Cienfuegos. This will be our first stop after UNEAC!

Next we'll visit with members of the Jewish community of Cienfuegos at the home of the congregation's president. Her home is where they meet for community gatherings and religious services. We'll also be delivering much needed supplies for their community. After our official visit is over, we'll bring them with us to a private restaurant for more intimate conversations over dinner.

Day 4 – Tuesday, December 1
Santa Clara

Today we'll visit the nearby province of Villa Clara and its capital, Santa Clara. Santa Clara is famous as the site of the Revolution's final battle, led by Che Guevara. We'll learn some of this key revolutionary history, then meet with several community groups to develop our perspective on Cuban culture and society:

- The “Joy of Living” seniors' club
- The Jewish community of Santa Clara
- A local organic farm cooperative

We'll drive back to Cienfuegos for some down time, followed by our final dinner in Cienfuegos at a private restaurant on the bay.



The memorial to Che Guevara in Santa Clara reads “Until victory, always”

Day 5 – Wednesday, December 2
Heading to Havana, Music School, Cuban Religions and the Hotel Nacional

This morning we drive towards Havana, where we'll have lunch at a private restaurant.

After that we visit Guanabacoa, a municipality of Havana with several claims to fame. Miriam's and Matt's favorite is the Guillermo Tomás Conservatory, where students ages 8 to 18 train for careers in music. The GT students have completely stolen our hearts, and they're super talented to boot! We bring them desperately needed supplies, as in the picture at right... and they love us for it. Part of the students' musical education is performing for an audience – so during our visit, we'll serve as their audience! It's a tough job...

Afterwards we'll learn about some of Cuba's religions. First we visit the municipal museum of Guanabacoa, famous for its Afro-Cuban religions collection. Then we'll make a stop at Havana's Jewish cemetery to learn about the area's Jewish history and pay our respects.

Next we head to the historic Hotel Nacional. We'll take a brief orientation tour around the hotel and get checked in. After some time to get situated in your room, we'll walk to a nearby private restaurant for dinner.



Miriam delivers hundreds of violin strings for the students of the Guillermo Tomás conservatory. The principal (pictured here) held up a pack of the strings and told us, “This is gold.”

Day 6 – Thursday, December 3

Old Havana, Graphic Arts, Modern Dance, and Havana's Sephardic Community

We spend the morning in Old Havana, the oldest of Havana's municipalities and a study in contrasts. It caters to both tourists and locals, with an art gallery on the same block as a local fast food joint, or a beautifully restored colonial hotel down the street from a dilapidated tenement house. We'll visit the Cathedral of Havana and a few key plazas, plus a studio where artists practice lithography and other printmaking techniques. If you're shopping for art, this is a place to keep your eyes open!

Lunch is on your own in Old Havana, which has numerous dining options in easy walking distance. There are also art galleries, street performers, souvenir shops, and plenty of other stuff to keep you busy... plus lots of local life going on as usual.

This afternoon we head to the home of Havana's Sephardic community. We'll meet the modern dance group Malpaso ("Misstep"), which rehearses in the old Sephardic sanctuary, for a private performance and interactive discussion. Malpaso is one of Cuba's premiere dance companies. They've earned some attention in the U.S. through a collaboration with the Joyce Theater in New York City and a recent tour.

Right next door is the Sephardic Hebrew Center, where we'll visit with local Sephardic leaders and learn about their community's past, present and future. To show our solidarity, and in recognition of how difficult life can be in Cuba, we'll make a gift of supplies for the congregation.

From here, it's back to the hotel. Dinner this evening is on your own. We can help you arrange reservations at one of Havana's fine restaurants, or you can fend for yourself and see what you discover!



Daile Carrazana Gonzalez is one of Malpaso's founding members

Day 7 – Friday, December 4

ISA, La Fábrica, and Shabbat Dinner

We start the day with a visit to ISA ("Superior Institute of the Arts"), the most prestigious university in Cuba for the arts. Its departments include visual arts, music, dance, theater, and more. Built on the former grounds of a country club, ISA is an important symbol of the populist Revolution. What was once a playground for the wealthy was reborn as a state-funded university to preserve and advance the arts for all of Cuba. We'll learn some of the university's history and meet professors and students in ceramics, printmaking, and painting. Some of the art we see may be for sale...

After lunch, we'll visit [La Fábrica de Arte Cubano](#) – the "Cuban Art Factory." Originally a cooking oil factory, the building has been repurposed as a huge art gallery/nightclub with numerous performance spaces, bar areas, and art exhibits. It's kind of hard to explain, but very, very cool. We'll be there for a

private tour of their current exhibit.

We'll spend this evening with the Patronato Ashkenazi congregation – the largest in Havana – for Shabbat services and dinner. After services in the sanctuary, we'll all head downstairs and eat Shabbat dinner. After dinner, you'll have a decision to make: Whether to head back to the hotel or take your Shabbat celebration out on the town? Maybe we can even get some members of the congregation to join us for a drink...



Inside the Patronato synagogue, Havana. The door leads into their library and office.

Day 8 – Saturday, December 5 Cuban Classical 101, Museum of the Revolution, and Farewell Dinner

This morning we enjoy a private performance by pianist Marita Rodriguez. Marita is a dear friend of Miriam, a member of the Patronato synagogue, and a professor at ISA. She and a colleague have developed a Cuban Chamber 101 program for us, introducing us to Cuban chamber music and how it fits into the larger world of chamber and classical music.

We'll eat lunch at one of Havana's leading private restaurants before visiting the Museum of the Revolution. Originally Cuba's Presidential Palace, the majestic building includes secret escape passages, sweeping ballrooms, and decor designed by Tiffany & Co. The museum details key aspects of Cuba's unusual history, with an emphasis on the years around the 1959 Revolution. There's also an outdoor exhibit of military fighters and the famous Granma yacht, which carried Fidel Castro and fellow revolutionaries to Cuba in 1956.

Afterwards, you can head back to the hotel – or take advantage of a number of opportunities within walking distance. Cross the street to the Museum of Fine Arts, step into Old Havana, check out classic cars near the Capitol building, or visit the Saturday art sale along the Prado promenade.

This evening, we wrap up the trip with a farewell dinner. We'll be at the Cafe del Oriente, one of the finest state-run restaurants in Havana, and a favorite spot for celebrating the end of a very special trip. There's a live band, and every once in a while they play something danceable...

Day 9 – Sunday, December 6 Return to the U.S.

Bags packed and passports in hand, we'll head to the airport for the end of our Cuban adventure.

Terms:

Begin: November 28, 2015, Miami, FL

End: December 6, 2015, Miami, FL

Cost: \$4775 single occupancy, \$4225 double occupancy

Trip Includes:

One night at an airport hotel in Miami, with complimentary airport shuttle

Round-trip charter flights from Miami to Havana

One checked bag to Cuba and up to 44 pounds in weight

Cuban tourist visa

Lodging at the Hotel Jagua in Cienfuegos and at the Hotel Nacional in Havana

All meals except one lunch in Miami, one lunch and one dinner in Havana

Bottled water daily

Transportation by private motor coach within Cuba

Activities as described in your itinerary

Emergency medical insurance within Cuba (up to \$1000)

Gratuities for your driver and Cuban guide

In compliance with OFAC regulations:

- Traveling under a People-to-People license under the auspices of Detour Travel, LLC
- Minimum 6 hours per day of programmed activities, with an emphasis on direct and meaningful encounters with Cuban nationals
- Accompanied by trip leader Matt Smith (pictured below) during all programmed activities

Not Included:

Air travel from your home to/from Miami

Tips for hotel housekeeping

Fees for any extra luggage

Strictly kosher food – please talk with us if this is a concern



This is trip leader Matt Smith. We know, he doesn't sound Jewish.

Booking Your Trip:

To learn more about this trip or reserve a spot, contact Matt at:

Phone: (512) 900-9080

Email: matt@detourwithmatt.com

Reservations require a \$1000 deposit per person, payable by check or credit card. Payment in full is due 60 days prior to departure, payable by check.

Cancellation Policy: You may cancel up to 60 days prior to the trip for a full refund minus \$100 processing fee. At 60 days, we start committing funds to third parties, such as airlines and hotels. For cancellations between 60 and 30 days, we refund 50% of the total cost. Within 30 days of departure, we refund 25% of the total cost. If you'd like to protect your investment against the chance of a late cancellation, we recommend purchasing third-party trip insurance.

Legalese and Disclaimers:

Group size: Minimum 10 passengers, maximum 20.

This trip may be cancelled if we fail to reach the minimum number of passengers. The trip will either be guaranteed or cancelled no later than 55 days prior to departure.

Like any Cuba itinerary, this one is subject to change. Cuba is special that way.

This trip is a people-to-people educational exchange program in compliance with 31 CFR 515.565. You will be traveling under a general license for Cuba travel under the auspices of Detour Travel.