



Cuba

The People, Culture & Art

A People-to-People Educational Exchange

June 14-22, 2015



The Association
OF FORMER STUDENTS

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY®

Traveling Aggies



Howdy, Ags!

A subject of mystery, fascination and deliberation for decades, Cuba has been forbidden to American travelers — until now. We are pleased to offer you an exceptional opportunity to **visit Cuba yourself on a remarkable eight-day exploration**. In this **people-to-people exchange**, you will discover Cuba through the resource that has kept the country vibrant through decades of political strife and isolation from the world: **the Cuban people**. Their joys, challenges and unique world outlook will unfold for you through personal meetings and enjoyment of their arts and culture in this program.

Encounter Cuba through **intriguing excursions, exciting performances, informative discussions** led by knowledgeable experts and **personal contact with a variety of Cubans** including painters, dancers, teachers, students, medical professionals and everyday people.

Explore **Havana's** timeless streets, architecture and famous landmarks. **Venture into Cuba's countryside** across impossibly verdant landscapes to plantations and a socialist community before visiting the dazzling southern coast. Enjoy two nights in lovely **Cienfuegos** and discover the jewel that is **Trinidad**. Savor local cuisine, talk with Cubans about their way of life and visit their homes, a medical clinic and schools, with access unavailable to individual travelers. This program will show you Cuba's unexpected delights and the very real struggles of its people.

Join us on this pioneering people-to-people educational exchange program, authorized by the U.S. Treasury Department's Cuban Assets Control Regulations. Your guides are experts in the country and will share their personal connections with its people and places with us. Every measure has been taken to ensure our comfort and convenience during the journey. **Space is very limited, so make your reservations today!**

Gig 'em!

Jennifer Bohac

Jennifer Bohac '87, Ph.D.
Director, Travel Programs
The Association of Former Students

Upper: Dancer, Havana

Lower: University of Havana





Clockwise: Tobacco fields, Cuban countryside; local woman; Havana

Cuba in all of its color, controversy and history is now open for you to discover in an exciting journey to this fascinating country. There is no better way to discover Cuba than through its people, their culture and their art. Feel the hope of Cuba's youth through its energetic young dancers and musicians. Experience the strength and spirit of older generations through their openness and warmth. Marvel at opulent colonial architecture frozen in time as much as Cuba's vintage automobiles. The Bay of Pigs bakes in the Caribbean sun now as Cuba moves into the 21st century. Jump at the chance to see this amazing place and share personal moments with its people.

Program Highlights

- Embark on a truly unique travel adventure — **an in-depth exploration of Cuba**, now open to Americans after decades of isolation.
- Experience the exceptional opportunity to **personally meet and talk with local Cubans** from various walks of life, with access to venues not available to individual travelers.
- Enjoy an array of cultural and arts events, including a visit to Cuba's leading art academy, the **National Museum of Fine Arts**, and the famous **Lizt Alfonso Dance Cuba** company.
- Explore three of Cuba's finest cities — all of which are home to UNESCO World Heritage sites — **Havana, Cienfuegos and Trinidad**.
- Savor traditional Cuban cuisine at celebrated restaurants as part of a convenient **all-inclusive meal plan**.

Operated in accordance with regulations issued by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the U.S. Treasury Department. This exclusive program, developed by AHI International Corp., opens the door to a neighbor country long closed to American travelers. It is designed to promote people-to-people contact and cultural exchange.



Cuban Music and Dance

Cuba's complex heritage of European, African, Chinese and Amerindian roots — along with the significant influence of the 1959 Cuban Revolution — have permeated every aspect of its culture, including its music and dance.

Fernando Ortíz, the country's famous folklorist (1881-1969), described Cuba's musical innovations as rooted in the percussive instruments and polyrhythmic sounds created by the African slaves who worked the huge sugar plantations, along with influence from the Spanish and Canary Islander tobacco farmers who favored the Spanish guitar. Europeans also lent Western melody and compositional techniques to the distinctive sounds of what has become the music and dance of Cuban son, habanera, the guaracha, danzón, rumba, bolero, cha-cha-chá, mambo and punto, among many other variations, including Cuban jazz.

These Cuban forms of music and dance are now famous throughout the world, loved for the rousing way that dominant percussion joins song and dance to express the trials and joys of life. This meeting of European and African cultures is a creolization that permeates every aspect of Cuban culture, from its arts to religion to its daily lifestyle.



Discover the lively cities of Havana and Cienfuegos and their environs, and meet the people who have created Cuba's diverse, vibrant culture. This people-to-people exploration is brimming with opportunities to meet everyday people, ranging from artists and musicians to religious leaders and their congregations to teachers and students.

Included meals indicated each day as
B I L I D = Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner

Day One

MIAMI

Arrive in Miami, Florida. Check in to the Crowne Plaza Miami International Airport.

Day Two

L I D

HAVANA

Depart Miami, where you will board a direct-chartered flight for Havana, Cuba.

Excursion: *Historic Havana.* Visit Revolution Square and the historic center for lunch. Continue to the Museo de la Revolución to see extensive exhibits of Cuba's history, including the Bay of Pigs and the Declaration of the Socialist Character of the Revolution. Check in to the Hotel Telégrafo.

Excursion: *Contemporary Commerce.* This afternoon, stroll down vibrant Obispo Street — famous throughout Cuba for its timeless feel — and chat with the cuentapropistas (self-employed shopkeepers).

Later, attend a Welcome Dinner at a lovely nearby restaurant.

Day Three

B I L I D

HAVANA

Excursion: *Habana Vieja.* In Old Havana, a UNESCO World Heritage site, explore the city's oldest square, the Plaza de Armas, and the Palacio de los Capitanes Generales, home of the Spanish colonial governors. Walk to the Plaza de la Catedral, dominated by the baroque Cathedral of Havana, which the Jesuits began building in 1748. Visit the Plaza de San Francisco to see the white marble Fountain of Lions.

Excursion: *Future, Present and Past.* Gain a glimpse into Havana's future before learning how many of its citizens live tied to the past. First, enjoy a fascinating look at Cuba's education system with a visit to a local elementary school in Plaza Vieja,* where you can talk with students and teachers. Then continue your journey to some of the quieter streets of Old Havana with well-known Cuban architect, Miguel Coyula, as your guide. He will show you gracious old homes, now dilapidated, and tell you about the plight of the families that live there.

Educational Focus: *Architectural Stories.* Mr. Coyula will lead a more in-depth discussion, "Urban Planning and the Architectural Challenges of Havana," after your walk, followed by lunch at a nearby restaurant.

Cultural Event: *Color and Rhythm.* "Muraleando" means mural-making and also is the name of an exciting community arts project. Visit its cultural center and talk with members about how they learned to paint vibrant murals on drab neighborhood walls to express their joys and struggles. Continue on to a local dance studio where staff and young dancers who were born and raised in Havana have made the rhythms of Afro-Cuban dance their life. They now teach tango and salsa. Try a few steps yourself!*

Enjoy dinner tonight at a paladar, a privately owned and operated restaurant.

Day Four

B I L I D

HAVANA

Begin the day with an invigorating ride through Havana's historic district in an antique convertible, one of Cuba's most enduring icons.



Liza Alfonso Ballet School

Excursion: Jewish Havana. Visit a local Jewish center and its beautiful temple. Learn about Judaism in Cuba through a discussion with some of its members, many of whom sell handicrafts to support the temple's operations.

Cultural Event: Red-Hot Cuban Dance. We have a special opportunity to visit the Ebony Contemporary Dance Studio to watch the dancers rehearse and speak with them afterward. Then go to the Cuban ballet school, Liza Alfonso. Meet and talk with instructors and students before the company's management describes exporting Cuban dance culture in spite of political and financial challenges.*

Excursion: Campus Life. After lunch, walk the campus of the Universidad de la Habana to see where many Cuban college students receive their education. You will have the chance to talk with someone from the school.

Educational Focus: U.S.-Cuban Relations. Attend a discussion about relations between the United States and Cuba, with a focus on the Cuban economy. Professor Juan Triana, of the University of Havana, will moderate.

Enjoy dinner tonight at a paladar.

Day Five

B I L I D

HAVANA

Excursion: The Finer Things in Life. It may be early for a smoke, but morning is a great time to visit a local cigar factory to witness the art of rolling fine cigars. Talk with the workers and learn about Cuba's most famous industry. Then explore the National Museum of Fine Arts, where you can take in Cuban art dating from colonial to current times.

Educational Focus: Contemporary Arts in Cuba. Learn about the contemporary arts and culture of Cuba from Wilfredo Benítez, a director of the Ludwig Foundation, a non-governmental, non-profit institute that supports Cuban artists.

Excursion: Private Studio. This afternoon finds you at the cooperative, Studio 7 y 60, where several artists work and jointly promote their art. They welcome you for a discussion about the new artistic opportunities in Cuba, as well as the challenges of opening a private studio there.

Savor local dishes tonight at a Havana restaurant.

Day Six

B I L I D

HAVANA

Excursion: Socialism and Life in the Cuban Countryside. Travel to the western province of Pinar del Río. Drive through the beautiful countryside, past rural communities and famous tobacco plantations. Visit Las Terrazas, a model socialist community developed in the 1980s. Tour their organic vegetable gardens and mark the occasion by helping to plant a tree with your fellow travellers. Meet and talk with the local gardeners and workers and visit a local art studio.

Lunch is served at an eco-restaurant that prepares dishes with locally and organically grown vegetables. Enjoy a discussion on Cuba's agricultural industry led by the establishment's chef.

Excursion: Havana's Eldest Citizens. Upon your return to Havana, meet witnesses to Cuba's legendary past at La Quinta Santa Venía, a private religious home for senior citizens. Talk with the nuns who manage the home, and share experiences and activities with the home's residents.*

Dinner this evening is at a well-known Havana restaurant.

Day Seven

B I L I D

HAVANA | CIENFUEGOS

Excursion: Journey to the Pearl of the South. Make a few discoveries after breakfast as you travel to Cienfuegos. First, stop by La Cabana Fortress to admire its dramatic exterior and admire the views of Havana Bay. Then stop at a former sugar cane factory to



Rolling fine Cuban cigars



Cuban art



Cienfuegos



Trinidad



Medical clinic visit



Cuban Cuisine

Cuban cuisine is largely a product of the countryside, often cooked from memory rather than recipes. A blend of Spanish, African and Caribbean influences flavor the national dish, *ajiaco criollo*, pork cooked in bitter orange and garlic. Yucca or potatoes, plantains, black beans and rice often accompany the dish. Chicken and saffron-laced rice are popular, too, cooked with a delicious combination of lime juice, olive oil, tomatoes, pimientos, cumin and bay leaf.

As for drinks, the mojito is famous for its easy-to-sip blend of rum, sugar, lime and yerbabuena, an herb in the mint family. Perhaps Cuba's most underrated drink is its coffee, hand-harvested in nearby hills and served with lively conversation.

Speak with retired mechanics, engineers and administrators to hear about its history and the current sugar cane industry in Cuba. Continue to the Bay of Pigs, site of the infamous failed invasion in 1962 by 1,300 CIA-trained Cuban exiles who wanted to overthrow Fidel Castro's government. Visit the Museum of Playa Girón to learn more about the invasion. Enjoy lunch at a beautiful ocean-side location known for excellent scuba diving.

Your journey takes you to your ultimate destination today, Cienfuegos, named a UNESCO World Heritage site for its being one of the best examples of 19th-century Spanish urban planning in this part of the world.

Upon arrival, settle into your room at the Hotel Jagua.

Excursion: *Gathering Places.* Enjoy an introduction to this beautiful city with a walking tour of the central square, Parque Martí. Its gracious, white-fronted buildings, handsome cathedral, terra cotta-topped domes and palm trees hint at the easy-going nature of this bayside town.

Excursion: *Casa de la Cultura.* On the western side of Parque Martí stands this cultural center, once the Palacio de Ferrer, a fanciful neoclassical structure built in 1918. We will go inside to learn how locals have converted it into a vital center for the city's performing arts groups.

Relax over dinner tonight with live music at a colonial mansion.

Day Eight

B I L I D

CIENFUEGOS | TRINIDAD

Excursion: *The Many Faces of Trinidad.* Discover petite and lovely Trinidad, a 500-year-old Spanish colonial city and UNESCO World Heritage site. Stroll the Plaza Mayor in the center of Old Trinidad, home to Cuba's largest church, the Iglesia de la Santísima Trinidad, with its 14 wooden altars. Explore the nearby Museo de Arquitectura Colonial and the Museo Romántico de Artes Decorativas, housed in the sparkling Palacio Brunet. Visit a Santería temple, where a local santero (priest) will discuss the Santería religion.

Before returning to Cienfuegos, refresh yourself over a buffet lunch in a restaurant on the Plaza Mayor. Its stately 18th and 19th century buildings were financed from riches generated by the sugar trade.

Cultural Event: *Music of Generations.* Later this afternoon, enjoy a performance by Coro Cienfuegos, one of Cuba's most famous choirs, at the Teatro de Cienfuegos, an Italianate structure of Carrara marble, carved Cuban hardwoods and elaborate ceiling frescos. Meet the singers to talk about their training and music.

This evening, celebrate your Cuba adventure at a Farewell Dinner, hosted by the owners of a paladar, who will talk about life in the city and what it is like to run a privately owned restaurant in Cuba.

Day Nine

B I L

Excursion: *A Cuban Policlínico.* This morning, visit one of Cuba's 400 policlínicos (medical clinics). Talk with doctors and nurses about Cuba's health system, which is renowned for offering quality care in often third-world surroundings.

You will take a short trip then to the charming town of Santa Clara, where lunch will be served.

Excursion: *Building on Tradition.* This afternoon, see the Escuela de los Oficios, a trade school where students learn modern and traditional building skills. Talk with the director and students to hear how they master various techniques to continue local construction traditions and the restoration of their lovely city.

Afterward, depart for the Cienfuegos airport and your return flights home.

Note: *Itinerary may change, but any canceled events will be replaced with another people-to-people event. Many excursions in this program involve walking on cobblestones, unpaved paths or other uneven surfaces.*

**The arts and cultural organizations, school, medical clinic, and senior citizens' home we visit in Cuba both greatly need and appreciate monetary or in-kind donations.*



Hotel Telégrafo Havana

This stately hotel, built in 1888 on its present location in Old Havana, is Cuba's oldest hotel. Steps away from some of the city's finest colonial architecture, it offers the wonderful ambience of old Cuba along with modern amenities. The lobby's high ceilings and dramatic brick arches are a lively contrast to modern furnishings. Spacious rooms and a fine restaurant on the premises make the Hotel Telégrafo a very comfortable pied-à-terre in Havana.



Hotel Jagua Cienfuegos

Enjoy the sun-soaked southern coast of Cuba with beautiful views of the Bay of Cienfuegos from every room at the Hotel Jagua, which offers the spaciousness and clean lines of 1950s Cuban modern architecture. Located in the quiet residential area of Punta Gorda minutes from central Cienfuegos, the hotel offers a sleek, light-filled multilevel lobby, restaurant and cabaret-bar, fitness center and dazzling outdoor pool and deck beside the bay.



Included Features

Transportation

- Round-trip, chartered flights between Miami, Florida, and Cuba

Accommodations | Ground Arrangements

- **One night** in Miami, Florida at the **Crowne Plaza Miami International Airport** (includes airport shuttle)
- **Five nights** in Havana at the **Hotel Telégrafo**
- **Two nights** in Cienfuegos at the **Hotel Jagua**
- All motor coach transfers in Cuba.

Activities and Services

- Interact with locals during daily people-to-people exchanges. All excursions in the itinerary are included.
- Learn about Cuban culture, history and more during informative educational discussions with local experts.
- Travel with an experienced Program Director throughout your journey.
- Enjoy open and frank conversations with locals with the help of English-speaking guides and translators.
- Welcome and Farewell dinners.
- Tipping of excursion guides and drivers.

Meals

- Sample authentic local cuisine with an all-inclusive meal plan in Cuba: seven breakfasts, eight lunches and seven dinners. Tea or coffee is included with all meals, plus a local beverage at dinner.

Pre-Departure Benefits

- Consultation services of a dedicated Passenger Service Representative prior to departure.
- Detailed travel and destination information to assist in your planning.
- Complimentary travel wallet

Note: The U.S. Department of Transportation has not yet approved the flights, so this brochure cannot identify them.

LAND & AIR PROGRAM

June 14-22, 2015

Special Price \$4,695

All prices quoted are in USD, per person, based on double occupancy and include air transportation costs (unless otherwise stated). Single accommodations are an additional \$475 (limited availability).

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF AHI INTERNATIONAL CORP./ THE ASSOCIATION OF FORMER STUDENTS

NOT INCLUDED - Fees for passports are not included in the Land Program price, nor are personal gratuities; laundry and dry cleaning; excursions, wines, liquors, mineral waters and meals not mentioned in this brochure under included features; travel insurance; all items of a strictly personal nature.

MOBILITY AND FITNESS TO TRAVEL - The right is retained to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of this trip who, in the opinion of AHI International Corp. is unfit for travel or whose physical or mental condition may constitute a danger to themselves or to others on the trip, subject only to the requirement that the portion of the total amount paid which corresponds to the unused services and accommodations be refunded. Passengers requiring special assistance, including without limitation those who permanently or periodically use a wheelchair, must be accompanied by someone who is fit and able to assist them, and who will be totally responsible for providing all required assistance.

AIR TRANSPORTATION - If connecting flights to the Cuba charter flight are requested, special promotional fares may be used, in which case penalties of as much as 100% may be assessed by the airlines if reservations are changed or canceled after ticketing. After departure, if the reservations are changed, you will be charged the higher, all year Economy class fare. VARIATIONS TO THE GROUP ITINERARY MUST BE REQUESTED NO LATER THAN 60 DAYS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE.

CANCELLATION - In addition to airline cancellation penalties, all cancellations for any reason whatsoever will be subject to a \$250 per person cancellation fee. Cancellation from 120 days to 76 days prior to departure will result in forfeiture of 10% of the entire cost of the trip per person; 75 days to 30 days, 50% of the trip cost per person; cancellation from 29 days up to the time of departure will result in 100% forfeiture of the entire cost of the trip. TRIP CANCELLATION INSURANCE IS AVAILABLE. AN APPLICATION WILL BE SENT AFTER YOU RESERVE. All cancellations must be submitted in writing to AHI International Corporation. We strongly suggest purchasing travel insurance. Travel insurance information will be sent to you with your confirmation letter from The Association of Former Students.

BAGGAGE - All baggage including checked and carry-on cannot weigh more than a combined total of 44 lbs. All checked bags will cost \$20 USD and if total luggage is overweight, then \$2 per pound overweight fee. This fee is payable in cash only and 70 pounds total weight is the maximum. These terms are subject to change.

AUTHORITY TO USE IMAGES AND AUDIO RECORDINGS - On occasion, AHI International Corp. obtains, from its staff, or from trip participants, photographic or video images of passengers and trip activities. By participating in this travel program, you authorize AHI International Corp., without providing compensation to you, or obtaining additional approvals from you, to include photographic and video recordings of you, as well as voice recordings included with any videos, in AHI International Corp.'s sales, marketing, advertising, publicity and/or training activities.

RESPONSIBILITY - AHI International Corp. (AHI) and The Association of Former Students do not own or operate any entity which provides goods or services for this program, and act only as agents for the independent suppliers of travel conveyance, transport, accommodations or other services. All such persons or entities are independent contractors. As a result, AHI International Corp. and the Sponsoring Association are not liable for any negligence or willful act of any such person or entity or any third person. In addition and without limitation, AHI and the Sponsoring Association are not responsible for any delays, delayed departure or arrival, missed carrier connections, loss, death, damage or injury to person or property or accident, mechanical defect, failure or negligence of any nature howsoever caused in connection with any accommodations, transportation or other services or for any substitution of hotels or of common carrier equipment, with or without notice, or for any additional expenses occasioned thereby. Dates, Program Details and Tour costs, although given in good faith and based on tariffs, exchange rates and other information current at the time of printing, are subject to change at or before the time of departure. No revisions of the printed itinerary or its included features are anticipated; however, the right is reserved to make any changes, with or without notice, that might become necessary, with the mutual understanding that any additional expenses will be paid by the individual passenger. Baggage and personal effects are the sole responsibility of the owners at all times. If the entire program is cancelled for any reason, participants shall have no claim other than for a full refund. By forwarding the deposit, the passenger certifies that he/she has no physical, mental or other condition of disability that would create a hazard for himself/herself or other passengers and accepts the terms of this contract set out herein and in more specific pre-departure passenger information. The airlines and other transportation companies concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event, during the time passengers are not on board their conveyances. The passage contract in use, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the company(ies) and the passenger and/or purchaser of this trip.

ITINERARY PARTICIPATION - The general license for this program, administered by the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), requires that people-to-people educational exchange travelers participate in a full-time schedule of activities that will result in meaningful interaction with the Cuban people, and imposes on AHI the obligation to ensure that participation. By registering for this program, you certify that you will adhere without deviation to the program itinerary. OFAC may require you to provide a report about the educational exchange activities, and requires that you maintain copies of your records relating to this Exchange for a period of five years.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE CHARTER FLIGHTS

A Charter Operator with an OFAC Carrier Service Provider license will arrange the charter flights to and from Cuba. Exchange program participants should refer to the Charter Operator's Operator-Participant Contract for further information on the charter program conditions. AHI International Corp. will provide this information as soon as the U.S. government approved flight schedules are available.

Reserve your trip to Cuba today!

Send to: The Association of Former Students

Attn: Traveling Aggies

505 George Bush Drive

College Station, TX 77840-2918

Phone: 979-845-7514

Fax: 979-845-9263

Toll Free: 800-633-7514

Trip #: 3B-22773

Full Legal Name (exactly as it appears on passport)

(1) _____
Title First Middle Last Date of Birth

E-mail: _____

(2) _____
Title First Middle Last Date of Birth

E-mail: _____

Street Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

Home: (_____) _____

Cell: (_____) _____

Sharing with _____ (Form sent separately.)

Name(s) you would like on your name badge(s):

(1) _____
Class Year

(2) _____
Class Year

I/we authorize you to make my/our reservations as follows:
Land & Air Program

Please contact me/us to discuss connecting domestic air flight options.

I prefer single accommodations at an additional \$475 (limited availability).

I request assistance in securing a roommate but will accept a single, if one is available at this time, and pay the single supplement. Should a roommate be found, I understand the supplement will no longer apply.

Reservations are subject to availability and processed on a first come, first served basis. I/we have read the general information section of this brochure and understand and agree to the terms and conditions stated herein:

Signature _____ Date _____

Reservations are to be paid in full by April 30, 2015 (45 days prior to departure). Reservations received after this date must be accompanied by payment in full. Final payment may be made by personal check, MasterCard or Visa. Make checks payable to AHI International.

AHI Travel has assumed all costs for the printing and distribution of this promotion. This program is exclusively arranged by AHI Travel, 8550 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., Suite 600, Chicago, IL 60631. No funds donated to The Association of Former Students or to Texas A&M University have been used in the production or mailing of this travel brochure; all such costs are covered by the tour supplier.

Enclosed is my/our booking fee in the amount of _____ (\$600 per person required) to reserve _____ place(s).

Accept my check made payable to **AHI International**.

Charge my booking fee to: MasterCard Visa Discover Expires _____/_____/_____

Card # _____

(Signature as it appears on credit card)

Please note: Any payment to AHI International Corp. constitutes your acceptance of the terms and conditions set out herein, including but not limited to the cancellation terms.

800-633-7514 or 979-845-7514