

# THE COLORFUL CULTURE OF CUBA

Arts, Dance, Music, Spirituality

*With Susan Duval Seminars*

**Dates: April 3-7, 2019**

Cuba, a subject of mystery, fascination and deliberation for decades has been forbidden to American travelers – until recently. We are pleased to offer you an exceptional opportunity to visit Cuba on a remarkable 5-day spiritual and cultural exploration. In this people-to-people exchange, you will discover how Santeria was derived from Yoruba and how it is practiced and celebrated in Cuba. Santería, (The Way of the Saints), also called La Regla de Ocha (The Order of the Orishas) was brought to Cuba during the Atlantic slave trade of the Yoruban nations of West Africa. The need to preserve their traditions and belief systems in a hostile cultural environment prompted those enslaved in Cuba to merge their customs with aspects of Roman Catholicism; evolving into Santeria.

This unique tour will take you to places not visited by the typical tour to Cuba. You will see and participate in lectures, dancing and ceremonies performed by Santeria priests and religious authorities and visit their house-temples. Join Susan Duval and other like-minded, kindred-spirits on this remarkable, one of a kind, Cuba tour experience.

## **Program Highlights:**

- ◆ 5 days - 4 nights' accommodation at the Riviera Hotel
- ◆ Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily
- ◆ Meals at top Private Paladars (restaurants)
- ◆ Hamels Alley – Afro-Cuban music and dance
- ◆ Visit to Guanabacoa – Famous for Santeria
- ◆ Nacional Hotel and Hall of Fame
- ◆ Visit to Mantanzas – Alley of Traditions, Dance and Presentations
- ◆ UNESCO World Heritage sites – Old Havana and Matanzas
- ◆ Ferry to Regla Museum and Orishas Museum
- ◆ Visit to Catholic, Russian Orthodox and Greek Churches in Havana
- ◆ Famous ceramist Jose Fuste

**Day 1- Apr 03, 2019 (D)** Arrival Havana. Proceed through customs and board private motor coach for a panoramic tour of Havana. We will see the historic Revolutionary Square, the University of Havana, the U.S. Embassy, the famous Malecon, and the Statue of Jesus and more. We will drive around to the other part of Havana and visit Morro Castle a fortress guarding the entrance to the Havana harbor. “Morro” means rock and is very visible from the sea. Built in 1589 in response to raids on Havana harbor, el Morro protects the mouth of the harbor.

We will take a cool stop at the famous Nacional Hotel which showcases old Cuban traditions for luxury and service and suggests that they have not been completely forgotten in the wake of the 1959 Revolution. Located on a small knoll overlooking the entrance to Havana Bay, this stylish Havana accommodation was originally built in 1929-30 through a joint agreement with the Cuban government and U.S.-based banks. American companies designed and built the Nacional, and as soon as it was completed, tourists from America flooded the hotel's spacious reception areas, dining rooms and gardens. It was "the" place to be in Havana. This hotel was frequented by film legends like Frank Sinatra, Errol Flynn, Clark Gable, and Ava Gardner. We will enjoy a complimentary mojito as we visit the HALL OF FAME where pictures of movie stars and gangsters who once roamed these halls are hanging.

Hotel check-in at the RIVIERA HOTEL with welcome cocktail. Meet in lobby at 6:00pm

Welcome dinner at one of the best paladars in Havana, SAN CRISTOBAL. (or similar) President Obama and his family ate at this amazing paladar when they visited Cuba. Later this evening you may wish to visit one of Havana's famous Jazz Club such as the LA ZORRO Y EL CUERVO. (The fox and the raven). It opens around 10pm, there is a minimal admission charge, but is known for its' top jazz musicians.

**Day 2- Apr 04TH (B,L,D)**

Breakfast is served at your hotel from 6:30am-10:00am

Then enjoy a morning, a guided walking tour of Old Havana. This is a great opportunity to meet and interact with local Cubans going about their everyday lives on the city streets.

In 1982 Old Havana was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site and it's brimming with a variety of historical landmarks and interesting things to do. Just walking the streets in this area is a favorite pastime and will surely result in an unforgettable experience with plenty of chances to meet the locals and to take advantage of myriad photo ops. The four squares including a visit to LA CATEDRAL, THE VINTAGE PHARMACY, THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY AND THE PALACE OF THE GENERALS.

LUNCH at the infamous CAFÉ DEL ORIENTE restaurant. Afterward continue the walking tour and visit the rum factory and cigar factories; a great opportunity to purchase fine cigars and Cuban rum. Then we visit the Association of Yoruba in Havana. If we are lucky we may catch a Yoruba performance. The museum-cum-cultural-center will help us understand the mysteries of Santería. Besides sculpted models of the various orishas (deities), the association also hosts tambores (Santería drum ceremonies). **Note** that there's a church dress code for the tambores (no shorts or tank tops). Dinner this evening at one of Havana's top paladars.

**Day 3- APR 05TH (B,L,D)**

After breakfast we visit MANTANZAS; the capital of the Cuban province known for its poets, culture and AFRO-CUBAN music, folklore and the birth place of Rumba. We will visit a private dance studio where we will see and participate in a performance for Rumba, Salsa, and learn how the African culture has influenced various types of dance, art and religion on this Cuban culture. Lunch at private paladar in Mantanzas.

After lunch we take a walking tour of Mantanzas. We will visit art galleries and private shops before departing back for Havana. Dinner at private paladar. Optional evening Tropicana show, tickets and transportation additional cost

**Day 4 - APR 06TH (B,L,D)**

This morning we visit embark on some Afro-Cuba culture at Havana's Hamel alley; a small backstreet located in the neighborhood of Cayo Hueso, Centro Habana. An important socio-cultural project divulging Afro-Cuban culture through music, theater, visual and other arts. You will be introduced to the Santería Religion and how its West African roots are intertwined into the Afro-Cuba culture. Santería practice comes in various forms: individual divination sessions; initiation into various levels of worship; collective gatherings in honor of different gods; and syncretic public rituals which incorporate visiting Catholic places of worship. Next we head to GUANABACOA, a township in eastern Havana famous for its historical Santería and home to the first African Cabildo in Havana. We visit the Ally of Traditions for a lecture on the murals and how they were influenced by the Afro-Cuban culture including a traditional musical exchange by dancers and musicians of this practice. Lunch at private restaurant.

Next we visit the Museo de Regla and Orishas Museums. This is a visit to the fascinating church and museum in Regla just across the water from old Havana by ferry. The religious and historical pieces and artifacts on display on the 2nd floor and at the museum nearby were emblematic of the synchronization of belief systems that took place between the Spanish colonizers and their African slaves. Spanish Catholicism and African Orisha worship meshed over the centuries to form the present-day Cuban religion. This is a required stop while in Havana for those interested in history, religions, spiritualism and culture. If time permits, we will see the Orishas Museum and the Martin Luther King Center in Havana. Farewell Dinner this evening at a wonderful private restaurant.

**Day 5 - APR 07th -(B,L)**

Breakfast then check-out. This morning we will visit the famous FUSTERLANDIA. Fuster specializes in unique ceramics, paintings, graphic design, and his work has expanded beyond his home to the neighborhood and this very important community project. He has turned this poverty-stricken village into a whimsical and colorful community project that residents are proud to be a part of. Our last lunch in Cuba before having to depart.

**Tour arrangements handled by: Carlson Maritime Travel** is an OFAC compliant travel service provider as authorized by OFAC to provide travel to, from, and within Cuba for those who are licensed to engage in travel-related transactions involving Cuba either under a general or specific license. This group will travel under general license 515.565b of People-to-People legal general category.

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Airfare from your home city to Havana, Cuba will be handled by CMT when it is time to book flights.

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**TOUR COST:** \$2,789.00 PP in double room / \$3,189.00 in single room (minimum of 12 guests)

**A \$500.00 deposit is required with the Travel Affidavit and Registration Form in order to confirm your space**

**Price includes:**

- \*5 Days hotel at the Riviera Hotel
- \*Airport transfers
- \*Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner Daily with drink packages at each meal
- \*Meals at some of the best paladars (private restaurants)
- \*Venues, entrance fees mentioned herein
- \*Visits to UNESCO World Heritage sites
- \*Fully escorted by travel professional/ Carlson Maritime Travel
- \*Major gratuities to private guide and driver
- \*Medical Insurance while in Cuba
- \*License and Travel Affidavit

**Price does not include:**

- \*Cuban Visa +\$85.00
- \*Round-trip air from your home city
- \*Minimal tips for lunch and dinner to your servers
- \*Items of a personal nature
- \*Optional cancellation, delay, baggage, medi-vac insurance

**Contact Journeys of Discovery – Gayle Lawrence**

If you have questions or need more information about this tour

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