

# KER & DOWNEY

EXPERIENTIAL. LUXURY. TRAVEL.

A BESPOKE JOURNEY TO

# CUBA



PREPARED ESPECIALLY FOR:

**Rowland Hall Auction**

## A BESPOKE JOURNEY TO CUBA

### JOURNEY AT A GLANCE

DATE	ITINERARY	ACCOMMODATION	MEALS
Sun, Feb 2	Havana	La Reserva Vedado	D
Mon, Feb 3	Havana	La Reserva Vedado	B, D
Tue, Feb 4	Havana	La Reserva Vedado	B, L, D
Wed, Feb 5	Havana	La Reserva Vedado	B, L
Thu, Feb 6	Havana	La Reserva Vedado	B, L, D
Fri, Feb 7	Havana	La Reserva Vedado	B, D
Sat, Feb 8	Havana	Depart	B

**Sunday, February 2, 2020**

**Havana**

**La Reserva Vedado**

**Dinner**

Welcome to Cuba! Welcome to Cuba! Today you arrive in one of the world's most vibrant cities, Havana. Upon arrival, you will process customs and pick up your luggage (Purchasing the \$30 VIP services is highly recommended). Once you have exited the arrivals terminal your guide and/or driver will be waiting outside, and it is time to explore the resilient time capsule that is Havana and discover her magnificent people along the way.

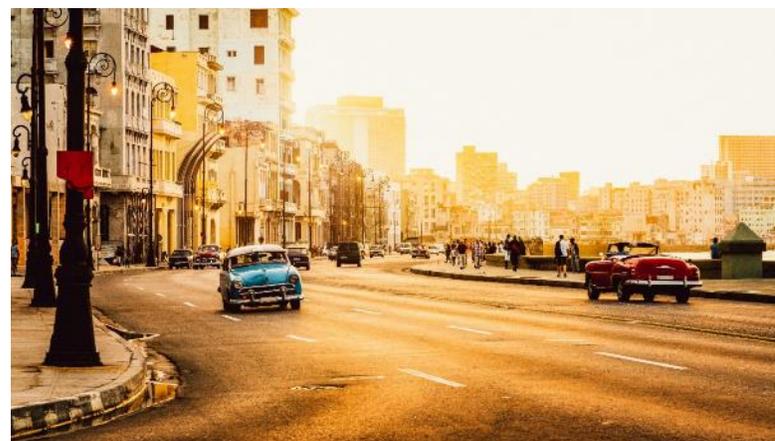
Cuba is a country that is unlike any other in The Americas, as it has existed in its own micro-universe for the past 50, or so, years. The country's economy is developing slowly and travelers must keep this in mind and adjust their expectations accordingly. Hotels, although comfortable, tend to be modest and do not typically meet international luxury standards. Variety and ability to meet special dietary requirements is generally limited due to the restrictions on trade Cuba still faces. Delays and/or changes in the itinerary may happen. However, the Cuban people will share the best they have and the experience will be rewarding and possibly even life-changing.

Throughout your stay, you will be hosted in a house on a residential street that will just make you feel like a local. Boutique Hotel No. 1 is ideally located in cosmopolitan Vedado, the true heart of Havana and just one block from the main street called Calle 23 (23rd street). It features an entrance Art Gallery offering selected works of contemporary Cuban artists. A spacious courtyard, offers a garden, a terrace, a bar and grill and several lovely private spaces where you can enjoy meals or simply to relax with a Cuban coffee or a refreshing cocktail.

Perched above the sea sits Hotel Nacional with its enormous Cuban flag flying sentry over the property. Its grand lobby has welcomed statesmen, royals and VIPs for over 85 years. And, many times, mistresses and lovers accompanied the well-to-do adding scandal and intrigue to the hotel's legacy.

Before sunset today, you will visit Nacional, tour the hotel's beautiful lobby, check out the famed Hall of History, and enjoy a refreshment while taking in the stunning views from the gardens overlooking the Havana's seaside avenue, El Malecon, and Havana Bay. Visiting Hotel Nacional lends tremendous perspective into what Havana was like during the days of Lucky Luciano and Frank Sinatra.

It's time to enjoy cocktails, Cuba's vibrancy, and the emerging exceptional local cuisine at one of the city's finest paladares (privately owned and operated restaurants). Paladares are a great way to welcome you to Cuba and begin your discovery of this unique island. Your guide will accompany you to answer questions about your starting journey, and ensure you are enjoying your first paladar experience.



**Monday, February 3, 2020**

**Havana**

**La Reserva Vedado**

**Breakfast and Dinner**

Havana will be 500 years old in 2019. The rich story of the city is best understood through the countless architectural styles on display in the four main squares of Old Havana. Today, you will start exploring the streets of Old Havana as they come to life, while its residents get ready for the day and tourists are still sleeping. This offers the most authentic experience and helps to avoid the crowds.

Your journey will begin in Plaza de la Catedral. Havana's Cathedral sits on one of its corners, with its unique baroque design and walls built from coral rock. The picturesque plaza usually provides an opportunity to snap a photo with local Habaneros dressed in traditional costumes.

Next, you will head to Plaza de Armas. This is the oldest of the four squares and considered the place where Havana was founded. The square was laid in the 1520's where it was originally called Plaza de La Iglesia. The name changed in the 16th century when the captain-general of the city began using it for military exercises. Many of the cobblestones in front of the former captain general's residence have been replaced with wood so the horses moving through the square would not bother his wife.

You then meander the narrow cobblestone streets to Plaza de San Francisco, stopping to pay respects to the bronze statue of El Caballero de Paris (the Gentleman of Paris) and learn about the interesting story of why he was immortalized. Finally, you will end up in Plaza Vieja to take in the unique statues and beautiful buildings that line the square.

Lunch will be served nearby in one of Old Havana's best-known paladares. Reservations were made for you today and lunch will be payable directly to the paladar.

After lunch, you are scheduled to visit Havana's capitol building. The building recently reopened to tourists and locals alike after a multi-year renovation. The restoration is still ongoing but the work that has been completed is impressive.

There is time to explore more of Old Havana or relax and refresh after a busy morning.

Your evening begins in style on board a classic convertible car. This marvelously preserved automobile from the early 1900s will take you through old and modern districts of Havana: Miramar (where the wealthy once lived during Havana's heyday), down the Malecon (Havana's seawall avenue), Vedado. Pass by the recently appointed U.S. Embassy, the Capitol building, the Grand Theater, Central Park, Paseo del Prado (a wide avenue separating Old Havana from the central city where Chanel recently displayed their 2017 Cruise collection.). Ride across the bay for views of the city and the 17th century Morro Castle.

Next, dinner is included tonight at one of Havana's most iconic paladares.



**Tuesday, February 4, 2020**  
**Havana**  
**La Reserva Vedado**  
**Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner**

Today you will venture 20 minutes east of Havana to visit Cojimar, sip a refreshing drink at one of Ernest Hemingway's favorite bars, and enjoy one of Cuba's most famous stews at the paladar named after the dish.

Understanding Hemingway's life in Cuba is not complete unless you visit his favorite fishing town: Cojimar. This is where Hemingway kept his fishing boat Pilar and acted as the inspiration of one of his most renowned works, *The Old Man and the Sea*.

Hemingway was so cherished by the local fishermen that they fashioned a bust in his likeness from old boat propellers which remains in the town square today. You will see his bust and stop for a refreshment at his favorite local tavern: La Terraza.

This morning, you are scheduled to take part in a cooking lesson and lunch at Ajiaco. This paladar is famous for the ajiaco stew they create using farm-to-table ingredients. Ajiaco is one of Cuba's unique dishes loved as dearly by locals as Americans love the hot dog.

You will then be driven a short distance to San Francisco de Paula this afternoon, to visit Ernest Hemingway's estate in Cuba, Finca Vigia. A local Hemingway expert guides you through his life in Cuba and shares some interesting stories. It was at Finca Vigía that he wrote much of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (a novel of the Spanish Civil War which Hemingway had covered as a journalist with Gellhorn in the late 1930s—the novel was started at the *Ambos Mundos*, and some were also written in Idaho). Hemingway would later buy the property out of some of the first royalties from the book, published in 1940.

Ernest Hemingway is best known for his incredible works of literature throughout the world. He was a writer second in the mind of Cubans. Most who still remember him in Havana recall his love for two things: women and rum.

This afternoon we will visit three of his most beloved taverns in Old Havana. Each location offers an interesting story about Hemingway and treasures fascinating pieces of memorabilia from the era before the Cuban Revolution.

Tonight, you will explore the new, emerging restaurant scene in Havana with an included dinner at a paladar famous for their tapas style selections. It is a good night to relax, reflect on your journey thus far over a couple cocktails and enjoy tasting several different dishes. Options will range from traditional Cuban to nouveau fusion dishes.



**Wednesday, February 5, 2020**

**Havana**

**La Reserva Vedado**

**Breakfast and Lunch**

Early today you will be driven west into the countryside in Pinar del Rio, Cuba's westernmost province, with its breathtaking landscapes and the best tobacco growing areas in the world. Approximately two and a half hours ahead of us is Viñales Valley with its rugged mogotes - limestone karst outcroppings with caves and rivers running through. You will take in the views from Los Jasmine's lookout: the mogotes, the red soil, and the lush vegetation in perfect harmony create a magical landscape that images fail to replicate.

Viñales has been recently named one of the 10 most breathtaking landscapes by the Lonely Planet. A visit to a tobacco farm is a must to learn about the cigar making process from where it begins. The farm owner proudly shows us his farm and tells us about the intricacies of growing tobacco in Cuba and selling it to the only authorized buyer: the Cuban government.

Next, you will learn about one of the key steps in cigar-making, Despalillo. This is the de-stemming process where leaves have their stems cut or removed, and are sorted by leaf type, quality, and size.

Enjoy lunch this afternoon at a local farm which produces all their ingredients organically. Lunch will be served here today giving you a chance to experience true Cuban farm-to-table cooking.

Viñales is a very picturesque town full of beautiful countryside, houses painted in exuberant Caribbean colors and local markets. Here, you explore the town and stop at a CUC store and a bodega- a ration bookstore where locals buy subsidized goods in Cuban pesos-, to understand the contrast between the two currencies and the products you can buy with each.

Following the stop in town, you will journey back to Havana taking in the countryside along Cuba's national highway. It is very common to see horse-drawn carriages alongside the speeding cars. It is a gentle reminder of how simple many Cubans live to this day.

Tonight, dinner is on your own. Your in-country-concierge and your guide are available to make suggestions and reservations.



**Thursday, February 6, 2020**  
**Havana**  
**La Reserva Vedado**  
**Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner**

An art expert hosts you today as you embark on a journey through Havana's local art scene. First, you will visit Bellas Artes, the Cuban Fine Arts Museum, which holds the island's most complete collection by famous Cuban painters. The museum walks the attentive through the various artistic styles, but also through Cuba's history and social changes.

Next, your host takes you to studios where you have the opportunity to speak to emerging and contemporary artists, who share their stories while sharing their techniques and recent works.

Lunch is included in a paladar located inside of a converted colonial mansion boasting many beautiful works of arts on its walls.

Not far from Club Habana, you will have an encounter with art at Jose Fuster's home and neighborhood in Jaimanitas. His unique work in tile and ceramics has transformed the community. Fuster has been dubbed the "Picasso of the Caribbean" and his work is world famous. His tile work also reminds us of Gaudi's Park Güell in Barcelona.

This evening, be ready to experience night life the way Habaneros - Havana residents- do!

First, you will have dinner at 8pm at Tierra, a restaurant serving cuisine from all of Latin America, located inside Fabrica de Arte Cubano. Because of its affordable prices, Tierra is frequented by Cubans as well as foreign visitors, creating an inviting atmosphere.

Open only Thursday thru Sunday is the iconic Fabrica de Arte Cubano (F.A.C.). This amalgamation of an art exhibition, local meeting place, and entertainment mecca is uniquely Cuban but has captured the attention of celebrities and VIPs from around the world. F.A.C. has become an especially great location to mingle with local, artistically minded young Cubans.

After dinner, it's time to explore the art exhibits, concert rooms, live music, dance areas, mixed clientele, and surreal ambiance. Your guide and driver are available until 12 am. Drinks and other expenses are at your discretion.



**Friday, February 7, 2020**

**Havana**

**La Reserva Vedado**

**Breakfast and Dinner**

This morning your senses will be flooded with aromas while touring one of Cuba's largest cigar factories. Here you learn how the famous Cuban Habanos are hand rolled, one by one, in a process that hasn't changed for centuries. It is one of Cuba's most coveted and sought-after exports because of its "forbidden" status for the past 50 years.

Next, you will visit the shop of a local craftsman who specializes in creating humidors for cigars that are true works of art. Many of his pieces have sold at auction for over \$100,000 US dollars. Lunch is reserved at a nearby paladar following your encounter and will be payable directly.

After lunch, you will be taken to the Marianao neighborhood, to witness a rehearsal/ presentation by an innovative dance company: Habana Compas Dance. Their revolutionary techniques, percussion styles, and exciting choreographies are mind-blowing. You will meet the dancers and they will walk you through different dance styles and rhythms as you enjoy a show filled with powerful drumming, energetic moves, and lots of passion.

Late this afternoon, you will be welcomed into a traditional home by an inviting host. Here, you will have a private encounter with one of Cuba's leading young troubadours who will walk you through the different genres of Cuban music and the challenges of Cuban artists in today's society. Music became a career for Mauricio soon after graduating from the International School of Film and TV of Havana. Ask him about his music, his journey, and hear a few samples of his work. You may even sing along with the rhythm of his guitar!

Your last night in Havana begins with a meal full of Cuban tradition at one of the city's finest paladares. Dishes like slow cooked lamb and roasted pork are served with plantains, yucca, avocado and other farm-fresh vegetables bringing the vibrancy of the country's food to life.

After dinner you are off to the Buena Vista Social Club for an evening you will likely never forget. The singers and musicians bring the Havana night to life. It is simply one of the most enjoyable evenings this city has to offer. Following the show, your driver and guide will see you back to your accommodations.

**Saturday, February 8, 2020**

**Departure**

**Breakfast**

Sadly, all good things must come to an end. Today you will be transferred to the airport for your flight back to the U.S. Make certain you have your tourist card ready for Cuban Customs to collect at the airport.

## **END OF KER & DOWNEY SERVICES**



**Prepared especially for Rowland Hall x 2 – Cuba  
Dates to be determined**

**Land Only Includes:**

- Feb 02 2020** - Transfer - Havana airport (HAV) to Havana
- Feb 02 2020** - Excursion - Hotel Nacional Visit
- Feb 02 2020** - Excursion - Dinner in Havana
- Feb 02 2020** - 6 nights in **Havana** at **La Reserva Vedado - Suite - BB** - 1 x Room  
- *Includes breakfast*
- Feb 03 2020** - Excursion - Old Havana Tour
- Feb 03 2020** - Excursion - Havana Panoramic Tour by Vintage Car
- Feb 03 2020** - Excursion - Dinner in Havana
- Feb 04 2020** - Excursion - Cojimar Visit
- Feb 04 2020** - Excursion - Cooking Lesson
- Feb 04 2020** - Excursion - Lunch on Excursion
- Feb 04 2020** - Excursion - Finca Vigia Visit
- Feb 04 2020** - Excursion - Hemingway Tavern Tour
- Feb 04 2020** - Excursion - Dinner in Havana
- Feb 05 2020** - Excursion - Full Day Vinales Valley Excursion
- Feb 05 2020** - Excursion - Lunch on Excursion
- Feb 06 2020** - Excursion - Half Day Havana Art Tour
- Feb 06 2020** - Excursion - Jose Fuster Picasso of the Caribbean Tour
- Feb 06 2020** - Excursion - Dinner in Havana
- Feb 06 2020** - Excursion - Fabrica de Arte Cubano Visit
- Feb 07 2020** - Excursion - Cigar Factory Visit
- Feb 07 2020** - Excursion - Havana Humidor Maker Visit
- Feb 07 2020** - Excursion - Dance Company Visit
- Feb 07 2020** - Excursion - Musician Visit
- Feb 07 2020** - Excursion - Dinner in Havana
- Feb 07 2020** - Excursion - Buena Vista Social Club Visit
- Feb 08 2020** - Transfer - Havana to Havana airport (HAV)

**Excludes:**

- Porterage
- Insurance not mentioned above
- All accommodation not mentioned above
- All meals not mentioned above
- All international and domestic flights and airport taxes not mentioned above
- All transport not mentioned above
- All expenses of a personal nature i.e. telephone calls, laundry, etc.
- Tips and gratuities
- Beverages not mentioned above
- Entrance Fees not mentioned above
- All other services not mentioned above

**This is a proposal only – no space is being held.** All prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates prevailing as of the date of this proposal and are subject to change without notice. Itinerary sequence is subject to change without notice based on accommodation availability. Similar accommodations may be substituted based on availability. Air schedules, quoted rates, and space are always subject to change by the airline without notice, and airline seats cannot be reserved until we receive passport copies for each traveler. To avoid airfare changes, upon

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*your advance payment, please purchase your airline tickets in full. If schedule changes result in an itinerary modification, any additional costs incurred will be passed on to the passenger.*

6703 Highway Blvd / Katy, TX 77494

Toll Free: (800) 423-4236 / Direct: (281) 371-2500 / Fax: (281) 371-2514 / [www.kerdowney.com](http://www.kerdowney.com)