

Two-week Spanish Language Instruction in Havana

WEEK 1

Day 1 – Sunday. Arrival

Arrival at "Jose Marti" International Airport in Havana.

Group welcomed by the **ACT Cuban Guide**. Transfer to your hotel **Saint Johns**, located in the cultural center of the city. Private group check-in.

Breakfast is complimentary from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Day 2 – Monday. Havana

9:00 AM Meet your **Spanish language instructors** at Havana University.

Students will take a **written and oral test** specially structured to assess the students' language level: beginner, elementary, intermediate or advanced.

Lunch on your own.

Afternoon visit to the **Workshop School** in Old Havana. High school graduates enroll in this institution to learn the arts and crafts necessary to authentically restore the ancient buildings of Old Havana. The school teaches young people archeological and restoration work that helps preserving the heritage and cultural wealth of Old Havana. Tour the school and **exchange with teachers and students**. Followed by a guided walking tour of **Old Havana, UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

Visit to **Square of Arms**, ancient military parade ground for Spanish soldiers and surrounded by impressive buildings such as:

Palacio de los Capitanes Generales was the former seat of colonial government. Today the building houses the Museum of the City.

Palacio del Segundo Cabo . The seat of the second authority of the island. Today it houses important publishing concerns.

Castillo de la Real Fuerza. The second oldest fortress built by the Spaniards in the West Indies. The castle was recently renovated and reopened in June 2008 to hold the impressive maritime museum. Well laid out exhibits chart Spain and Cuba's naval history. Continue walking tour onto **San Francisco Square**, one of the oldest in the historical quarter. Visit to **Plaza Vieja**, the only civic square of colonial times. Notice it doesn't have a church or government building around. Here we will visit important institutions for visual arts.

Visit to the **Cathedral Square**, the most beautiful and private 18th century colonial plaza of Cuba, named after the masterpiece of Cuban baroque architecture: the Cathedral of Havana built by the Jesuit order.

Free time in the famous **handicraft market of Old Havana** where you can purchase all sorts of crafts and souvenirs by local artisans.
Return to your hotel.

Day 3 – Tuesday. Havana

9:00 AM – 12:30 PM Spanish language classes at Havana University.

Lunch on your own.

Afternoon visit to **Callejon de Hamel**. An alleyway street caught in Centro Habana neighborhood where an effort of cultural rescue and expansion led by fine **artist Salvador González** has been underway since 1990. Salvador's murals and sculptures have taken over entire buildings' facades, and are inspired by Afro-Cuban culture and religions. Afterwards we'll meet Salvador Gonzales at his studio.

Free evening.

Day 4 – Wednesday. Havana

9:00 AM – 12:30 PM Spanish language classes at Havana University.

Lunch on your own.

Free afternoon.

Evening: enjoy Afro jazz, Cuba jazz and Son jazz at **Club La Zorra y El Cuervo**, Havana's most famous Jazz club. The club features great performances by island bands and soloists! (Optional, not included).

Day 5 – Thursday. Havana

9:00 AM – 12:30 PM Spanish language classes at Havana University.

Lunch on your own.

Afternoon visit to the **community-based project Cintio Vitier** in Nuevo Vedado neighbourhood. This project offers painting, papier-mache, drama, music, dance, and other skill development workshops to elementary and secondary students. We'll meet with director Pedro Pulido for a presentation on his outreach work in the community of Colon. Exchange with students. Followed by visit to the **Memorial Jose Marti** at the **Square of the Revolution** to learn about the life of Cuba's National Hero.

Free evening.

Day 6 – Friday. Havana

9:00 AM – 12:30 PM Spanish language classes at Havana University.

Lunch on your own.

Departure to **Viñales Valley**, containing the most spectacular scenery in Cuba and some of the most interesting and varied geological formations on the island. The valley is particularly famous for its great freestanding rock formations called *mogotes*. Check-in at **Los Jazmines Hotel** with breakfast included.

Day 7 – Saturday. Havana – Vinales Valley

Visit the **Cueva del Indio** believed to have been used by the local Guanahatabey Amerindians as a burial site and as refuge from the Spaniards. Take a short boat ride on the subterranean river to

see the wave marks on the cave walls that attest to the flooding that took place here millions of years ago. Visit **a local farming family** and learn first-hand the process of tobacco cultivation.

Lunch at the **Mural de la Prehistoria Restaurant** serving typical Cuban cuisine.

Visit Carmen and Caridad Miranda's botanical garden, called the **Viñales Botanical Garden**. The two widows maintain a garden full of fruits, orchids and medicinal plants.

Free time in **Viñales village** to explore at leisure the open-air craft market, the Parque Marti, the local Church, and other interesting sites of this charming colonial town.

Free evening: Your guide will keep you updated on night venues (optional admission fees).

Day 8 – Sunday.

Free morning to do trekking path, bird watching trails, horse- back riding and other outdoor activities around the hotel (all activities are optional to be arranged in site with tour desk, with the assistance of your tour guide).

Lunch on your own.

Return to Havana City.

WEEK 2

Day 9 – Monday.

9:00 AM – 12:30 PM Spanish language classes at Havana University.

Lunch on your own.

Visit to the **Museum of Literacy** to review the 1961 literacy campaign in Cuba and how its practices are being employed in Latin America currently. Followed by a visit to the studio of **Jose Fuster**, one of the most important Cuban ceramists and painters today.

Day 10 – Tuesday.

9:00 AM – 12:30 PM Spanish language classes at Havana University.

Lunch on your own.

Free afternoon.

Day 11 – Wednesday.

9:00 AM – 12:30 PM Spanish language classes at Havana University.

Lunch on your own.

Guided tour of the **Museum of Revolution**, the former Presidential Palace. Today it exhibits the history of the Cuban Revolution through documents and objects among which we find the famous Yacht Granma that returned Fidel and his 82 guerilla fighters from Mexico to Cuba to launch the struggle for liberation from the Batista dictatorship. Other historic artifacts include military vehicles and weaponry from the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, a U-2 spy plane shot down during the Cuban missile crisis, and items from Cuba's nineteenth-century wars of independence.

Next we'll visit the **Museum of Fine Arts' Cuban Collection** where we see the evolution of Cuba's visual arts over the last 300 years. The collection accounts for the richness of our Spanish, French, Chinese and African roots.

Day 12 – Thursday.

9:00 AM – 12:30 PM Spanish language classes at Havana University.

Lunch on your own.

Free afternoon.

Day 13 – Friday.

9:00 AM – 12:30 PM Spanish language classes at Havana University.

Havana University will present course participants with *Certificates of Completion* for their study of the **Spanish Language**.

Lunch on your own.

Free afternoon.

Day 14 – Saturday.

Day trip to **Varadero beach**. Varadero's wondrous white sand beaches rival the best sun destinations in the world!

Return to Havana City.

Day 15 – Sunday. Departure

Early morning departure to Havana City International Airport for departure.