



# Cuba - Medicine and Society

28 February - 10 March 2008

A Study Tour in association with *The Practitioner*

The Practitioner



Jon Baines  
tours



Sweeping scenery of Vinales

There is only one Cuba. This defiantly communist, beautiful, vivacious tropical island is unique. However, its time is passing. Cuba will change irrevocably with the death of its controversial leader, so this could be a last chance to see Castro's Cuba before it slides into history.

Leave the chill of London and arrive in balmy vibrant Havana. Start your tour in fine Cuban style with a cocktail at your hotel and a fascinating talk on 'A Background to Cuba'.

Step out into the colonial grandeur of Havana the next day, in the company of Orestes Del Castillo, a city historian, award winning architect and board member of Habaguanex – an NGO responsible for the restoration of Havana. Look at the restoration work in the city, visit a craft school devoted to teaching traditional building skills, some beautifully renovated hotels and hear stories about the city and its people. Stop off for coffee at an old people's community centre, and visit Taquelchel Pharmacy and the Sarra Pharmacy Museum.

After lunch, visit the Findlay Museum of Medical Science and hear a talk on Cuba's extraordinarily successful health care system, which has flourished in the face of US embargoes. The talk will be given

by Dr Alieda Guevara, a paediatrician and the daughter of Che Guevara. Take in some more of Havana's wonderful sights later in the afternoon, including the old cathedral and the grand Plaza del Armas.

The next day is devoted to Cuban culture with a visit to the Partagas Cigar Factory, the Miramar Theatre Project (see back page of brochure), and the vast, ornate necropolis of Colon Cemetery. Following lunch at El Aljibe, a famous chicken restaurant in Miramar, see the stunning Art Deco Bacardi Building and sample a digestif at the rum factory.



Colonial façade, Havana



A game of street chequers (top), Cuban cigar factory (above)

That night drive in fabulous fifties American cars to Hemingway's haunt at La Floridita for cocktails followed by dinner at an exclusive private restaurant in Miramar. After dinner, there is the option of going to the spectacular cabaret at the famous Tropicana nightclub.

Drive to sleepy Cienfuegos, crossing Treasure Lake by speedboat through mangrove swamps, stopping on the way for lunch on a farm. Arrive in the elegant city in the afternoon and explore the many beautiful colonial buildings which remain intact in the old heart of the city.

Visit the Cienfuegos Medical School, meeting with medical students, before having lunch at the Nautical Club. Take a boat trip out into the bay and visit a family house on an island. Return for some leisure time before dinner at the gracious Palacio del Valle down on the seafront. Take a scenic train journey to historic Santa Clara, the final resting place of Che Guevara. Visit a polyclinic and explore Che's

mausoleum and museum - before continuing your journey to Trinidad by train, where you will check into an exquisite 5 - star boutique hotel in the very heart of town.

Trinidad is one of Cuba's treasures. Founded in 1514, the town became the centre of the sugar cane boom in the late eighteenth century and huge amounts of money were lavished on fabulous colonial buildings, which remain wonderfully preserved today. Red-tiled roofs, pastel buildings and Baroque churches, winding cobblestone streets, cool green courtyards behind huge ancient timber doors and museums fill this tiny city which still moves along at the pace of a mule-cart. Spend a day under Trinidad's spell, exploring its colonial centre and its many excellent museums, as well as visiting Sugar Mill Valley to see where Trinidad's wealth was made, before an evening of live music at the Casa de la Trova. There will be time in the afternoon to explore the city at your leisure.

The lush jungles of the majestic Sierra del Escambray Mountains are a cool, green-filtered world away from the tropical heat of the coast. The high slopes of the mountains are choked with bromeliad-laden trees, giant furling ferns and delicate misty waterfalls. Further down, jungles give way to coffee plantations and royal palms. Visit the Cienfuegos Botanical Gardens before driving on to Pinar del Rio, which claims, with justification, to be the most beautiful area of Cuba. Lush green valleys dotted with the distinctive 'mogotes' (huge grassy hillocks) provide ideal tobacco growing conditions as well as spectacular scenery. Slow down to the gentle and



Santa Clara



relaxed pace of Vinales, staying at the wonderful Moka Ecolodge which allows you to get close to nature in the most stylish surroundings, with a tree growing up through the lobby roof.

Visit the Las Terrazas settlement, an ecological complex covering more than 5,000 hectares which develops the area in a sustainable way while monitoring and studying the mountainous ecosystems. You will visit a family doctor, a local artist and have an excellent lunch in Casa del Campesino. Spend the afternoon at leisure, when you can swim in the clear waters of natural waterfall-fed pools, take a canopy tour or a boat trip. Enjoy a superb dinner at the acclaimed vegetarian restaurant El Romero.

Your next day starts with a relaxing visit to the gorgeous orchid gardens of Soroa, followed by perhaps a cooling dip in the deep green waters at the base of the plummeting Salto waterfall. Explore a tobacco farm, where the leaves are cured in barns and seedlings transported by ox - drawn carts. Continue on to the glorious Vinales Valley for a walk, visiting a village school and passing mogotes, farms and the ruins of eighteenth century French coffee plantations en route.

The drive back to Havana in the afternoon takes you through some wonderful scenery as you pass through Cuba's heartland. Arrive back in Havana for a farewell dinner, before going out to see the famous Buena Vista Social Club on your last night out in Cuba. A leisurely final morning in Havana rounds off your visit to Cuba, before departing in the afternoon or joining the four night beach extension to Cayo Largo.



The colonial charm of Trinidad (top), Tobacco farmers in Vinales (middle), The exquisite Vinales Valley (above)

# Itinerary 28 February - 10 March 2008

**B** = Breakfast **L** = Lunch **D** = Dinner

## 28 Feb (Thurs) London / Havana **D**

**Am** Depart London on Virgin Atlantic flight  
**Pm** Arrive Havana. Transfer to the hotel Raquel. Welcome cocktail  
**Eve** Talk: "A Brief Background to Cuba"  
Dinner at El Patio

**Pm** Visit the Che Guevara Museum and Mausoleum (Option to visit the Train Museum). By train and coach to Trinidad  
**Eve** Dinner and overnight at the hotel Iberostar Trinidad

## 29 Feb (Fri) Havana **B L D**

**Am** Walking tour with Mr Orestes Del Castillo through Old Havana, looking at the restoration of Havana and hearing some tales of the city, visiting the craft school, restored hotels, a community centre, the Taquechel Pharmacy and Museum  
**Pm** Talk: "A Background to Health Care in Cuba, Dr Alieda Guevara. Visit the Findlay Museum of Medical Science, Cathedral and the Plaza del Armas  
**Eve** Dinner at El Templete

## 5 March (Wed) Trinidad **B L D**

**Am** Explore Trinidad including Plaza Mayor, Holy Trinity Church, Romantic Museum and the potter's house  
**Pm** Lunch at Don Antonio. Drive to Sugar Mill Valley. Return and at leisure or explore the city further  
**Eve** Visit the Casa de la Trova (live traditional music)

## 1 March (Sat) Havana **B L D**

**Am** Visit the Partagas Cigar Factory, Colon Cemetery and the Mirimar Theatre and Project  
**Pm** Lunch at El Aljibe. See the Bacardi Building visit the rum factory and the Yoruba Association  
**Eve** Drive by fifties US cars for cocktails at La Floridita. Dinner in an exclusive private restaurant in Miramar  
Option to visit the Tropicana Cabaret

## 6 March (Thurs) Trinidad / Pinar del Rio **B L D**

**Am** Drive into the Mountains. Visit the Topes de Collantes National Park and explore the stunning scenery. On to the Cienfuegos (Harvard) Botanical Gardens  
**Pm** Drive to the Sierra del Rosario Reserve  
**Eve** Dinner and overnight at the Moka Ecologe

## 2 March (Sun) Havana / Cienfuegos **B L D**

**Am** Drive to Cienfuegos. Cross Treasure Lake by boat  
**Pm** Lunch on a farm. Arrive in Cienfuegos and take a walking tour  
**Eve** Check into the Union Hotel and dinner

## 7 March (Fri) Pinar del Rio **B L D**

**Am** Visit the commune of Las Terrazas, meet the family doctor, visit the local artist houses  
**Pm** Lunch in Casa del Campesino (the farmer's house). At leisure options to swim in the clear waters of the San Juan River's natural pools, take a canopy tour or boat trip  
**Eve** Dinner at El Romero

## 3 March (Mon) Cienfuegos **B L D**

**Am** Visit Cienfuegos Medical School and meet with medical students  
**Pm** Lunch at the Nautical Club. Take a boat trip out into the bay and visit a family house on an island. Return and at leisure  
**Eve** Dinner at the Palacio del Valle

## 8 March (Sat) Pinar del Rio / Havana **B L D**

**Am** Visit the Soroa Orchid Garden and Waterfall. Drive into Vinales and visit the tobacco fields  
**Pm** Explore the Vinales Valley. Return to Havana  
**Eve** Farewell Dinner followed by Buena Vista Social Club Concert

## 4 March (Tues) Cienfuegos / Santa Clara / Trinidad **B L D**

**Am** Train to Santa Clara. Visit a polyclinic

## 9 March (Sun) Havana **B**

**Am** At leisure in Havana  
**Pm** Depart Havana for London (or take four nights Cayo Largo Extension)

## 10 March (Mon) London

**Pm** Arrive London early morning



Cayo Largo

## Cayo Largo del Sur Extension (9 - 14 March 2008)

Situated in the Caribbean Sea, the small island of Cayo Largo stretches along 27 km of virgin beaches with warm crystal-clear waters. The fine white coral sand contrasts magnificently with clear azure skies. The area's permanent inhabitants include iguanas as well as a variety of birdlife including pelicans, parrots and herons. The Sol Cayo Largo All Inclusive Resort is set in a spectacular natural environment with stunning natural beaches surrounded by palm trees, coconut groves and beautiful coral reefs.

## Extension Itinerary

**9 March (Sun) Havana / Cayo Largo** **B L D**  
Am Fly to the Sol Cayo Largo Resort.

**10 - 12 March Cayo Largo** **B L D**  
Three full days to relax and soak up the sun in Cayo Largo.

**13 March (Thur) Cayo Largo / London** **B**  
Am Return flight to Havana and on to London arriving the following morning

## Hotels

### Cuba – Hotel Raquel

Known for its high standards of service this elegant hotel exudes Art Nouveau style with its opulent décor including works by one of Cuba's most celebrated artists.

### Cienfuegos – La Union Hotel

The charming 4-star La Union is in the heart of Cienfuegos and its terrace has splendid views of the town and bay.

### Trinidad – Iberostar Grand Trinidad

A 5-star boutique hotel in the centre of Trinidad and a World Heritage listed building with origins dating back to the sixteenth century.

### Vinales – Moka Ecolodge

The Moka Ecolodge is situated in the foothills of the Sierra del Rosario Reserve and blends harmoniously in to its surroundings of the San Juan Valley - a tree grows up through the lobby and its branches disappear through holes in the roof.



Hotel Raquel (top), the Iberostar Trinidad (above)

## Tour Leader

**Corinne Short** is Editor of *The Practitioner*, the monthly clinical journal for GPs. She has a life science degree and more than 20 years' experience in medical journalism. Corinne is a former editor of *Medical Monitor* and was the launch editor of *Guidelines in Practice*. She has travelled extensively, especially in the Far East, and has led a tour for GPs to Tibet and Nepal.

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## Project Details

### Music Fund for Cuba

The Music Fund for Cuba is the only registered UK charity working in Cuba. One of its more ambitious projects is the restoration of the Miramar community theatre in Havana: Project Teatro Miramar. When finished it is hoped the result will see the rebirth of this Havana landmark building. In addition the theatre will play a very important role in the local community - providing a much needed cultural centre for all ages, but especially for children and young people. The arts schools will be able to run projects in the local community including the use of music and dance therapy for children and adults with learning difficulties.

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## Climate Care

Every time you fly, carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are released into the atmosphere. These gases are the cause of climate change. In conjunction with Climate Care we can help you offset your carbon emissions through a range of renewable energy projects benefiting communities around the world, as well as combating climate change. To calculate your carbon emissions click on the Climate Care link on our web site where you will be given the option of paying to offset your emissions if you wish.

## The fully inclusive cost of the tour is £2,480.00 per person

### No Compulsory Single Supplement

Single travellers do not have to pay a single supplement. Jon Baines Tours allow you to opt to share a twin room with a fellow tour participant. However to guarantee a single room you must pay the supplement.

### The cost includes:

- Economy flights on the scheduled services of Virgin Atlantic between London Heathrow and Havana
- Upgrade to Premium Economy from £490.00 return (£245.00 each way) subject to availability
- Visa and UK airport tax
- Comprehensive briefing notes
- The services of a tour leader (Corinne Short)

### In Cuba the cost includes:

- 10 nights' accommodation in twin or double-bedded rooms with private facilities in first class to medium grade hotels

### The single room supplement is £280.00

- Full board throughout the tour
- A full programme of professional and cultural visits as per the itinerary
- Admission fees where applicable
- Full-time National Guide
- All transport and airport taxes in Cuba

### The cost excludes:

- All personal extras such as tips, portorage, laundry, inoculation fees and drinks
- All optional excursions, tours and visits
- Travel insurance

## The cost of the extension to Cayo Largo is £495.00 per person and includes:

- 4 nights' accommodation in twin or double-bedded rooms with private facilities in the 4 - star Sol Melia Sol Club
- Full board throughout the tour

### The single room supplement is £160.00

- All transport, airport transfers and taxes
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**NB Please note all itineraries in Cuba are subject to change according to local conditions. Due to the nature of the tour places are strictly limited.**

# About Jon Baines Tours

To travel with us is to dig below the surface, revealing the deeper destination. Of course, you will visit the great historical sites; marvel at the wonders of architecture and engineering; be moved by the riches of culture and art; and experience the most spectacular landscapes in the world. What we also do is make sure that you see the country as it is today, giving you privileged access that independent travel and other tour companies rarely get close to. We give you a variety of experiences, from the sublime to the humble, in the company of intelligent, curious, like-minded people. And while we can be worthy, we also make sure that you have a lot of fun.

Whether your journey is for study or pleasure, we make sure that you travel, understand and enjoy.



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