

★YOUROWNCUBA

HAVANA PHOTO TOUR

A 5 DAY PHOTOGRAPHERS DREAM TOUR OF HAVANA

THE ULTIMATE PHOTO WEEK IN THE WORLDS MOST CRAZY, COLORFUL, MYSTERIOUS, LIVELY, PHOTOGENIC CITY

If you ever dreamt of shooting the capital of colonial cool until your finger starts bleeding, here's an offer you can't refuse

60% STREET PHOTOGRAPHY

20% INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHY

20% PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY

100% MEMORIES FOR A LIFETIME

5 DAYS IN ANOTHER WORLD

The Havana Photo Tour is a dream come true for the serious photographer. From Monday to Friday we spend the week exploring Havana, from the colonial core to the surrounding neighborhoods and to places few tourists ever go.

The main focus is on street photography, but there will be many opportunities for interior- and portrait photography as well. You'll see one thousand colorful houses, one thousand characteristic faces - along with water, cement, sunsets, dogs, markets, crowds and vintage cars - all in the living museum that is Havana. We see the rich and poor side of Havana, we discover the city that truly never sleeps from above and below, from coast and sunset to gritty potholed streets.

After this tour, you will not only have shot photos where few to no tourists have ever shot anything, you will also have covered more ground and gotten to know Havana in a way that few regular tourists ever will.

THE PRO, THE AMATEUR AND THE VERY CURIOUS

Since the Havana Photo Tour is not a workshop, all levels of photographers can join. And it doesn't matter to us or any other participants if you're working with a 15,000 dollar pro DSLR camera with a lense that costs the same or shooting with your compact 200 dollar point-and-click camera. But, of course, if you ever thought about investing in new gear or upgrading your current equipment, there was probably never a better reason than before taking this tour.

THE HEART AND SOUL OF HAVANA

It's about getting around, covering ground, but still spending enough time in each place to get a feel for it. It's about getting the best out of Havana and getting Havana under your skin, as much as it's about the photos. Cuba is about feeling and experiencing, not just seeing. As such, don't expect Havana to open up to you and give you those 'real Cuban moments' unless you meet the city on its terms. But once you do, you may get to know the heart and soul of this amazing city.

The quality of the photos is a direct result of the feel you get for the city, and that can be done with any camera. They say guns don't kill people - people kill people. If that's a fact, then cameras don't take great photos - people take great photos. We're serving you the opportunity to absolutely kill Havana.

We have even had spouses, boy-and girlfriends join this tour with their more photo-enthusiastic partner, just tagging along enjoying the scenery and meeting people while shooting a bit with their point-and-shoot or even with their cellphone. They all felt it was worth every cent for the tour and the experience alone.

CUBA STAYS WITH YOU

Videographers are equally welcome. We have had many video shooters on our tours and the tour is as suitable for shooting moving action as it is for shooting stills.

The tour is about getting to know Havana and going places you would not be going otherwise. The photos you will come home with will be a direct result of having stepped into Havana and given it a piece of your heart and soul. Most people end up leaving a chunk of their heart and soul in Cuba, that's the danger of that place, it stays with you forever and a part of you stays in Cuba forever. But the photos and the memories, they leave with you, they are yours to keep forever.

SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

There are a variety of photo tours out there. Be aware that there are a lot of amateur and badly planned photo tours to Cuba and Havana promoted and offered online. We think it's a great idea that people who have never visited Havana are putting together photo tours for strangers, but they should probably be free to participate in them if everyone including the 'guide' has never before set foot in Havana.

Consider booking with a photo tour organizer that has the experience and background to offer photo tours of Havana. And who - surprisingly - has the lowest tour price we have yet to see. It's not often that the best quality product on the shelf is also the least expensive.

TOUR OVERVIEW

ACCOMMODATION We stay in casas particulares in Old Havana and Centro Habana (other areas by request). This is a form of lodging extremely popular in Cuba, somewhat similar to a bed & breakfast. It's cheaper than a hotel, but more importantly it's a much better way to submerge one self in the authentic Cuba by staying in the house of Cubans. These are quality houses approved by the state to have the standards to rent to tourists. Rooms are private, clean and safe. They have double beds, air-con and private bathrooms. Guests can come and go as they please and will often even be given their own key. The casa is included in the price from Sunday to Friday, extra nights can be booked through us.

Participants can upgrade to a hotel if they prefer so at an extra cost. They can also book their own accommodation and subtract the housing offered by us from the tour fee.

EATING Breakfast Monday thru Friday at the casa particular is included. It will usually consist of eggs to order, bread, butter, jam and honey, various fresh fruits and fresh juice. The casa owners will usually go out of their way to accommodate special requests or diets. While touring, we hold a lunch break every day of about an hour., sometimes sitting down, sometimes on the go.

TRANSPORTATION We drive around in a discreet mid-size vehicle or van. Not a big ugly tour bus. We'll be a maximum of 6 persons - guide included - in that van, usually less. We prefer groups of 4-5 persons. This is the most comfortable group size for the participants. All transportation is included. We usually meet somewhere central in Centro Habana or Habana Vieja in the late morning and end somewhere close to homebase as well.

DAILY SCHEDULE Most photographers would agree that there are two times of day especially suitable for taking photos; when the light from the sun is dim and cool after sunrise and before sunset. Since we can't stretch the daily program to 10-12 hours and don't want to break it up by 3-4 hours mid afternoon, we have chosen to concentrate on hitting the late afternoon blue hour every day. Nobody stops you from getting up at 6 in the morning to catch the early light on your own before having breakfast and joining that days tour.

SAFETY While we will not just be covering the tourist parts of Havana, but also areas where few to no tourists ever go, safety should not be a major concern. Violent crime against tourists in Cuba is almost unheard of and while pickpocketing and snatch and grabs are not completely unheard of, anybody taking standard precautions should be fine. It goes without saying that you shouldn't leave your expensive camera lying around on tables at restaurants and bars or in an open car.

GUIDE AND STYLE Your guide is not your typical guide in a screaming yellow polo with a blue palm tree on the back and an equally yellow umbrella that everybody in the group must hypnotically follow at all times. Your guide is wearing normal clothes. Nor is your guide your typical bossy kindergarten teacher who hurdles everyone around like sheep and says things like 'you have five minutes here!'. We don't believe in this form of travel. We don't even believe in five minutes. We believe all participants are adults who know the time and how to move around.

Your guide is a driver, a door-opener, a story-teller, a resolver and someone who knows the streets of Havana - and the people living there.

PROGRAM

MONDAY

11:00 | Meet up and introduction, Hotel Inglaterra terrace

Early program - "Colonial beauty"

11:45 | Habana Vieja and back streets, on foot, barrios Belén and Jesús María

14:00 | Lunch break

Late program - "Colonial beast"

15:00 | Move to Centro Habana. Street walk.

16:00 | We meet up with a local photographer for a tour around his favorite streets, blocks and buildings in what many would call the pumping heart of Havana.

18:30 | End of today's program.

TUESDAY

11:00 | Meet up at Hotel Inglaterra terrace

Early program - "Havana in the sun"

11:00 | A tour around town and up on top of some of the buildings in Havana that offer the most extraordinary views of the city from above. From the terraces of famous hotels to the roofs of run down residential buildings. We see Havana from above, from just about every imaginable angle.

14:45 | Lunch break

Late program - "Havana in the shade"

15:45 | Interior photography. We visit and enter some interesting buildings and casas, from famed ones to completely unknown ones and get some shots at Havana in the twilight between sun and shade.

18:30 | End of today's program.

WEDNESDAY

11:00 | Meet up at Hotel Inglaterra terrace

Early program - "Close but no cigar"

11:00 | A tour on wheels into some of the neighborhoods that surround the central parts of Havana, but that are way off the beaten tourist track. A warm, bumpy and noisy day among bikes, people, vintage cars and diesel fumes.

14:30 | Lunch on the go

Late program - "Coasting"

15:00 | We do a huge stretch of Havana coast. From the colonial core and to way out west. People and barrios and how the ocean beats up Havana on a daily basis. Hopefully by the end of the day, Havana treats us with a beautiful sunset

19:00 | End of today's program.

THURSDAY

11:00 | Meet up at Hotel Inglaterra terrace

Early program - "Mansions, palaces and the color of money"

11:00 | We see the finest architecture and most well kept mansions in all of Cuba. Miramar, Siboney, out west.

14:30 | Lunch on the go

Late program - "Dirt, wood and the color of survival"

From palaces of presidents we turn the corner into some of Havanas working class neighborhoods where many roads are dirt and houses erected with wood and plastic.

19:00 | End of today's program.

FRIDAY

11:00 | Meet up at Hotel Inglaterra terrace

Early program - "Hemingway drive"

11:00 | A drive and walk in Hemingways footsteps. San Francisco de Paula onto the fishing village of Cojimar for a visit to Hemingways main residence followed by a walk by the coast. It's not just about the writer and his tracks, it's also about seeing and passing interesting areas of Havana with some great photo ops.

14:00 | Lunch break by the sea

Late program - "Havana from across"

15:00 | Driving back to Havana along the coast with a few stops we end the tour at El Morro across the bay from Havana, the old guarding the harbor entrance with a great view over the city. Bring your widest lense if you have one. We end the day, and the tour, with a drink overlooking Havana.

18:00 | End of daytime program

DETAILS

TOUR FEE

\$999 USD or EUR per participant

DEPOSIT

\$399

Due upon booking.

Deposit by PayPal.

The remainder in cash in Havana.

DISCOUNTS

5% for 3 or more participants on same tour booking together at least five months in advance

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

5 nights accommodation (Son-Fri), breakfast every day, all transportation, all local fees and salaries.

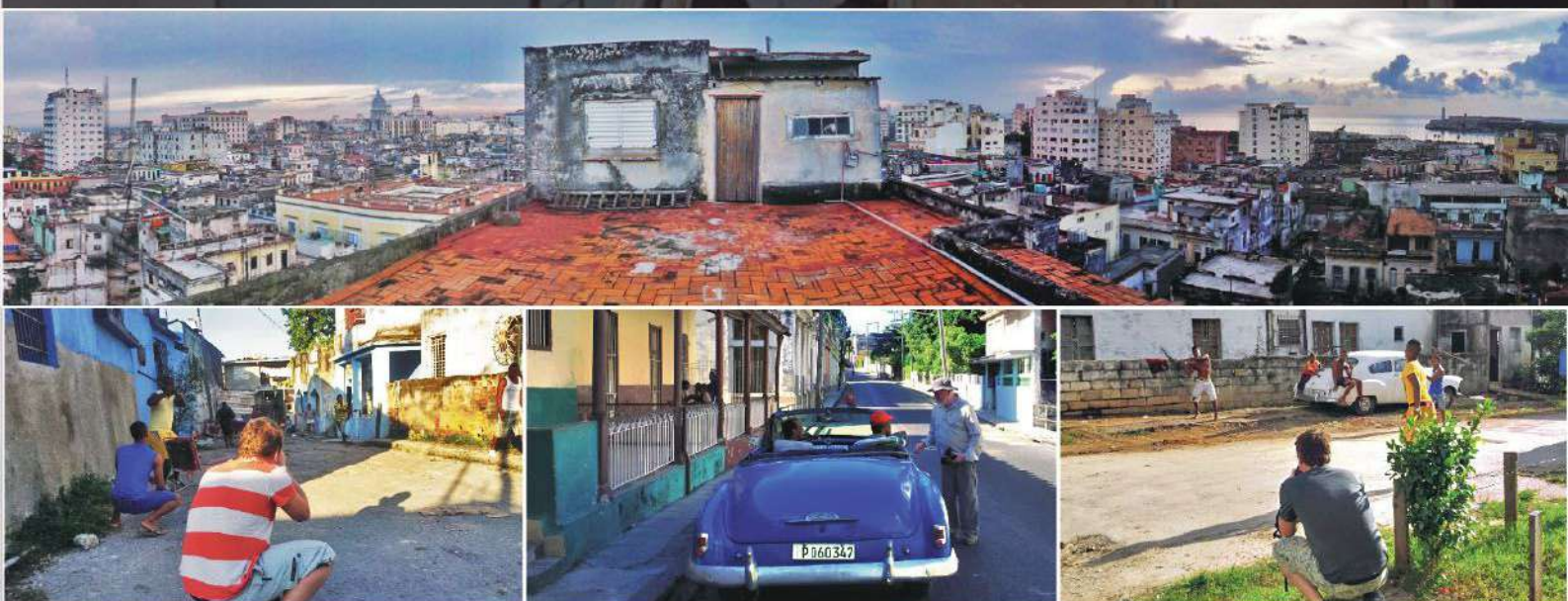
SECURING YOUR SPOT

Our tours are very popular, but we try to keep group sizes between 3 to 4 people and at an absolute maximum of 5 participants. Book soon to secure your spot on your preferred tour, especially if you are more than one person wanting to join the same photo tour.

See this year's tour dates and book online: WWW.YOUROWNCUBA.COM/CUBA-HAVANA-PHOTO-TOUR.HTML

CAN'T MAKE OUR TOUR DATES? ARRANGE A PRIVATE TOUR INSTEAD

Whether you're alone or a group of people wanting to do a private photo tour outside of our set dates, we can arrange that as well. You can customize any type of tour with us, from a single day to more than a week.



"I'm an enthusiastic amateur, so I was a bit wary of joining a photo tour, but not only did I come home with 500 great photos, I also saw Havana in a way that I think very few tourists ever get to see. I recommend this tour for pros and amateurs alike and even people with a cellphone camera! Even without a camera! I was in Cuba for three weeks and the five days on this tour were the biggest highlight of my trip."

- Michael Parker, Liverpool, United Kingdom

"Me and two friends joined the photo tour in May 2012 and it was an absolute blast. Our guide was not only a really nice guy, but also amazingly cool. He connects with Cubans as if he is Cuban, and since none of us could do anything like that, we would never have stepped through the doors that were opened for us everywhere we went if it had not been for this tour. Thanks, we really loved it."

- Brandon Kemp, Toronto, Canada

"This tour has a perfect mix of street- and architectural photography combined with interior and portrait photography. That's what I loved most about it. I wasn't bored for a second because we were always moving onto something new and exciting. And I really had no clue that Havana was so big!"

- Jane Rademacher, Los Angeles, USA

"My wife talked me into this. I am a semi-pro photographer and thought I could gain little from this. I was wrong. I spent the first four days in Havana shooting the same ten buildings all other tourists shoot and the next five days shooting some of the best photos of my life in places I would never have gone or found on my own. Thanks you guys. And thanks to my wife!"

- Ryan McFaden, Sydney, Australia

"The most exciting, uplifting, surprising and memorable five days I have ever spent on any vacation. I was close to saying in my life."

- Marta Londoño Hernandez, Barcelona, Spain