

Havana Funk Expedition  
New Orleans – Havana Cultural Exchange



# Havana Funk Expedition

The historical, cultural and economic connections between Cuba and Louisiana date back hundreds of years. Despite complicated and at times difficult relations at the federal level, this shared culture and history have continued to bond our people together. Music has been one of the bridges that first connected our lands and has played an important role in keeping the Cuba-Louisiana friendship strong and growing. The “Havana Funk Expedition” aims to build on these strong traditions and past initiatives to celebrate and further strengthen these important bonds.

**Travel to Cuba with the alongside Cuba and New Orleans’s top musical talent for an immersive cultural experience.** Professional New Orleans musicians and additional Cuban musicians to be announced soon. The trip is organized by the Trombone Shorty Foundation and Cuba Educational Travel, two organizations with long histories of cross-cultural exchange, community engagement and arts development.

The program will include visits to local schools and community projects and be heavily focused on supporting the Cuban people and the dozens of young New Orleans musicians from the Trombone Shorty Foundation that will travel with the professional Cuban and New Orleans musicians and program supporters. The trip is fully compliant with current US regulations on travel to Cuba under the People-to-People travel category, making it completely legal.



# About Us



**Cuba Educational Travel (CET)** is a leader in cultural travel to Cuba. CET unlocks the best of Cuba by providing access to the country's top artists, academics, tastemakers, and cultural figures. CET's tailor-made programs enable clients to experience Cuba's vibrant culture and gain a deeper understanding of the island, while ensuring full compliance with all U.S. regulations. Our travel programs are all about enrichment and giving back and allow travelers to deeply engage with Cubans they meet, and we focus on building relationships that will be mutually beneficial and empowering for everyone involved.

CET has been on the frontlines of cultural collaboration, helping to bring Cubans to the U.S. and Americans to Cuba. From Yoga retreats to concerts to dance performances, CET has wide-ranging experience and contacts. Recent highlights include leading Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards' delegation to Cuba, organizing the Diplo Major Lazer concert in Havana, which drew a crowd of over 500,000 people, and running the first corporate retreat in Cuba for a major U.S. company (NETFLIX) in six decades.

By leveraging this expertise and curated travel capabilities, Cuba Educational Travel offers a product that is unrivaled. Our strong presence on the island and in important cultural circles gives us unparalleled access and knowledge. This combined with the beauty and intrigue of Cuba and its people make for truly unforgettable experiences.

[www.cubaeducationaltravel.com](http://www.cubaeducationaltravel.com)



**The Trombone Shorty Foundation's** mission is to inspire the next generation of talented, yet young, aspiring musicians through music education, instruction, mentorship, and performance. By honoring the New Orleans tradition of "playing it forward" from the earliest jazz legends onward, the foundation seeks to preserve and perpetuate the musical heritage of a city where music is everything.

Experienced and professional teachers, tutors, and mentors support every student in the pursuit of a well-rounded understanding of New Orleans' musical traditions, experience in music performance, reading, writing, and now, even business, and the social and academic skills they need to make noise wherever they go – in music and in life.

<https://www.tromboneshortyfoundation.org>



**The Gia Maione Prima Foundation**, founded by Gia Prima and Anthony J. Sylvester, Esq., Foundation Trustee, supports organizations and projects that foster and encourage an appreciation for American jazz, American popular music and jazz performance, as well as the fine arts.

<https://www.giamaioneprimafoundation.com/>

# Legal Cuba Travel

The U.S. Government permits legal travel to Cuba under 12 different categories that range from professional meetings and sporting competitions to religious and humanitarian travel. One of the broadest and most common categories of travel is “People-to-People,” which requires travelers maintain a fulltime schedule of activities that involve meaningful interaction with individuals in Cuba. There are many ways in which travelers can easily fulfill this requirement while having an incredible experience in Cuba and being thoughtful, respectful and kind with the many Cubans you interact with during your travels.

Cuba Educational Travel (CET) has a long history of working with entrepreneurs, cultural groups, religious organizations, community projects and families and individuals that are involved in interesting and exciting initiatives in Cuba. Our trips have always been aimed at supporting the Cuba people through connecting them with travelers visiting the island, so that all parties can benefit from the friendships and professional relationship that result. Moreover, we believe strongly in supporting innovative and impactful businesses and social and cultural initiatives and make sure there are economic benefits to our partners on the island.

Your program will vary based on your specific interests, number of days on the island and other factors, but will include activities that directly benefit the Cuban people through conversations, knowledge sharing, follow-up initiatives, donations, normal business dealings and a variety of other actions. Excessive free time and recreational activities are not permitted, and travelers are required to work with CET and our local partners to maintain a full-time program that includes incredibly fun and interesting site visits, discussions, performances, tours, happy hours and meals that help our incredible neighbors on the island.



Thursday, Jan 12

TBD Arrival to Cuba

Meet your CET travel curators and transfer to lodging.

Check-in at Boutique Hotels.

6 pm **Visit to the Liza Alfonso Academy, a women-led dance company and school for local youth**, specializing in various types of dance. Private performance by the adolescent dance group and exchange with the dancers and teachers.

7:30 pm **Welcome Dinner at La Guarida paladar**, famous not only for its delectable dining, but also as the location for the film *Strawberry and Chocolate*. It is housed on the third floor of a large, old town house carrying the charming ambience of the early 1900s.

9:30 pm **Performance** by the internationally renowned Cuban music collective, **Interactivo**. Visiting New Orleans musicians (to be announced soon) will sit in on part of their set.

(D)

Friday, Jan 13

9 am Break into small groups to enjoy a morning of visits exploring Cuban culture and Cuba's African roots.

- **Visit the home of La Reyna y Real**, a female hip hop/jazz duo. The group's music focuses on breaking down stereotypes in Cuban society, including machismo, healthy relationships, gender relations and race.
- **Visit the Habana Compás Dance** studio for a performance and discussion with instructors and students. The dance company has quickly developed into an institution in Cuba, running a free school for youth in the afternoons.
- **Demonstration in AfroCuban drumming with** Brenda Navarrete, star percussionist and vocalist.

12 pm **Enjoy lunch in Old Havana.** Break into small groups to check out some of the Old City's coolest lunch spots and find time to wander the beautiful plazas and backstreets of Old Havana.

2:30 pm **Visit the Amadeo Roldan Music Conservatory** with the Horns to Havana music project. Performance by Cuban students and jam session with Trombone Shorty Foundation students.

\*\*\**Amadeo Roldan* is a prestigious music high school that has been led by great Cuban musicians and educators including Roldán, Guillermo Tomás and Diego Bonilla. The Conservatory has educated and shaped some of the most significant international Cuban composers and performers like Bebo Valdés, Leo Brower and Harold Lopez-Nussa.

\*\*\* *Horns to Havana* is a US-based organization dedicated to instrument donation, repair and training and education and cultural exchanges, is a longtime support of the conservatory and its students

The Gia Maione Prima Foundation and The Horns Project/Horns to Havana will give away instruments to underserved students who attend Conservatorio Amadeo Roldán, a leading music school in Cuba that is based in Havana.

7 pm **Dinner and music at Galeria Taller Gorría.** Dinner under the stars and **live music by female hip-hop duo Reyna y Real**, who will be joined by visiting New Orleans musicians (to be announced soon) for part of their set. Galeria Taller Gorría is an art gallery and socio-cultural project created by entrepreneur and artist Adam Perugorría that has become a confluence space for the best of the national and international artistic avant-garde.

9:30 pm **Late Night Groove.** Join Cubans to dance the night away with a **performance by singer and percussionist Brenda Navarrete.**

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Saturday, Jan 14

9:30 am **21<sup>st</sup> Century Cuba – Part One.** Collin Laverty, expert on Cuba and U.S.-Cuba relations, will moderate a panel discussion with leading Cuban thought leaders about the Cuban economy, politics and bilateral relations with the U.S. At the Hotel Nacional.

11 am **21<sup>ST</sup> Century Cuba – Part Two.** Presentation and roundtable discussion with Cuban expert(s). Choose one.

- *Race & Gender in Cuba*, a discussion with Cuban hip hop pioneers, Obsesion.
- *Independent Media.* Discussion with Cuban media expert(s) about the opening to internet, new independent media sources, censorship and tension and competition between state and independent media.

- *Socio-economic discussion with urban planner*, whose presentation will touch on housing, infrastructure, investment and restoration programs. It's bound to leave you with a better understanding of why Havana looks the way it does today and possibilities moving forward.

1 pm      **Enjoy a traditional Cuban meal overlooking the Straits of Florida at the Hotel Nacional.** Tasty Cuban food served family style with a great view of the Havana sea wall and the old Spanish fortress. The setting brings many back to the 1950s, when the mafia held its annual meetings at this historic hotel.

3 pm      **Musical Exchange: Exploring the roots.** Explore the deep, historical musical roots between New Orleans and Cuba, much of which leads back to Africa. Our hosts from Cuba and the visiting New Orleans musicians will explore these through instruments, chants and songs in a unique Havana setting.

**Dinner on your own.** Work with your CET Travel Curator to make dinner reservations at one of Havana's great paladars. Transportation to dinner and from dinner to the evening concert will be coordinated for you.

8 pm      **Intimate dinner and performance by Carlos Varela at Paladar El Cocinero.** Varela, considered the Bob Dylan of Cuba, will share songs, music and stories for a special group of invited guests. Checkout the HBO special Poet of Havana about Varela's music and impact on Cuban society.

#### Sunday, Jan 15

10 am      **Private performance by the Youth Symphony Orchestra.** This 14-member group will leave you breathless.

11 am      **Walking tour of Old Havana's Historic Center**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1982. Wander through the **Plaza de Armas**, a scenic tree-lined plaza formerly at the center of influence in Cuba. It is surrounded by many of the most historic structures in Havana as well as important monuments. See the **Plaza de San Francisco**, a cobbled plaza surrounded by buildings dating from the 18th century, dominated by the baroque Iglesia and Convento de San Francisco dating from 1719. Visit the **Plaza Vieja**, surrounded by sumptuous houses of the Havana aristocracy from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Visit **Plaza de la Catedral de San Cristóbal de La Habana**.

**Lunch on your own.** Work with your CET Travel Curator to make dinner reservations at one of Havana's great paladars.

4 pm      **Choose a cultural activity**

- Boxing with champions. Visit a world-renowned gym for a training session with former Olympic boxers.
- **Behind-the-Scenes Art Tour.** Visit the homes and studios of independent Cuban Artists.

7 pm      **Cigar tasting with a local expert at Café Madrigal.** He will explain the qualities and traits of fine Cuban cigars and how to properly light and smoke what is considered the finest tobacco in the world. **Café Madrigal**, owned and run by film director Rafael Rosales, is housed in a beautiful colonial mansion with the walls lined with captivating artwork.

7 pm      **Farewell dinner and New Orleans-Havana concert.** Enjoy a delicious Cuban meal under the stars, followed by a blowout concert featuring top New Orleans musicians (*to be announced soon*) and Cuba's leading contemporary funk artists.

Monday, Jan 16

TBD      Check-out and Departure

