

DISCOVERING CUBA'S NATURAL AND CULTURAL TREASURES

A Journey to Explore Cuba Above and Below the Water

August 15-23, 2020



Designed for Scuba Diplomacy by the Intercultural Outreach Initiative (IOI). Interested travelers can contact Eddie Gonzalez (PADI Divemaster #259986) at gonzalez.eddie@gmail.com to find out more and reserve your spot. This trip meets all State Department regulations regarding travel to Cuba. Instructions for obtaining travel visas will be provided.

ABOUT

Join Scuba Diplomacy for a unique ocean and land-based exploration of all Cuba has to offer. Travel to Guanahacabibes National Park on the island's western tip and see one of the wildest, most biologically diverse ecosystems in the Caribbean. On the way you will visit a local tobacco farm to better understand one of the most important economic drivers of the island—cigars. After a week of breathtaking diving on the coast, we overnight in Viñales Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, before returning to Havana for one last stroll of the Malecon (sea wall). Meet Cuban marine scientists and local fishers, bird watch, SCUBA dive, and feel the energy of Havana, its music and its people. You might even catch site of a baby turtle hatching on the beach or a whale shark swimming by.

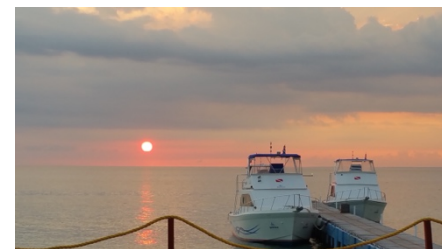
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Meet Cuban marine scientists and learn about the island's coastal ecosystems.
- SCUBA dive some amazing reefs at Maria la Gorda, located on the western tip of the island.
- Participate in a sea turtle monitoring effort where you will see green turtles nesting and their hatchlings emerge from their sandy nests.
- Meet with farmers and visit Viñales in Cuba's scenic tobacco growing region.
- Havana city cultural tours, amazing food, music, and more.



APPROXIMATE COST (still waiting on final cost confirmation)

- Total Approximate Cost = **\$3800 diver/\$3300 non-diver**, per participant in DBL accommodation (assumes 14 participants). With \$1400 non-refundable deposit. The majority of the trip is booked through privately-owned hotels/restaurants.



Included:

- All accommodations (Havana, La Bajada, Viñales) and all meals;
- 8 SCUBA dives at the International Dive Resort of Maria La Gorda, inclusive of rental dive gear and boat transfers (night dive included);
- Dedicated divemasters and English-speaking guides;
- All transfers within a personal air-conditioned bus/van;
- All entrances to museums, National Park, and all included activities;
- Airport pick-up and drop-off;
- Cuban health insurance, 24-hr assistance in Cuba; and
- Water + one drink (water/soda/local beer) at meals.



Not Included:

- Cuban visa (instructions will be provided)
- Roundtrip flight to/from Havana
- Tips, drinks at hotel dinners, and bar tabs.
- Luggage fees, souvenirs/personal items.
- Wifi (access available for purchase at all our hotels).
- Bottled water for your personal needs during the day.
- Emergency evacuation insurance.



\$1400 Deposit: May 2020
Balance Due: July 2020

August 15-23, 2020 Trip Tentative Itinerary (8-nights)

Meals included – (B) Breakfast, (L) Lunch, (D) Dinner). Hotels may change if availability changes.

Day 1 (Saturday): Arrive In Havana (D)

- Travelers arrive on their own by the mid-afternoon
- Meet local guide at the Havana airport and head to hotel in Old Havana via a panoramic bus tour.
- Check-in at the hotel, settle into rooms.
- Orientation followed by a welcome cocktail.
- Welcome dinner at restaurant in Havana.

Day 2 (Sunday): Havana Exploration (B, L, D)

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Lecture and Q&A with Cuban marine biologist to learn about Cuban coral reefs.
- Guided walk around Old Havana.
- Lunch in Old Havana.
- Afternoon visit to Museum of the Revolution, the Havana Club Rum Museum, & other historic sites in the Cuban capital.
- Dinner in Havana

Day 3 (Monday): On the way to La Bajada on the Guanahacabibes Peninsula (B, L, D)

- Early breakfast at the hotel
- Lecture and Q&A with Dr. Julia Azanza, head of the Guanahacabibes sea turtle program.
- Board air-conditioned bus for a ~6 hour drive to GUANAHACABIBES [picnic lunch on bus on the way].
- Pick up cigars, rum, water, & other supplies on way out of town.
- On the way through the breathtaking Pinal del Rio landscape, we'll visit a tobacco plantation, with hand-made cigar demonstration.
- Arrive at Guanahacabibes National Park and check in to the hotel.
- Welcome cocktail. Dinner at the hotel.
- Scuba orientation with scuba shop, gear/paperwork check-out.

Day 4 (Tuesday): Ocean Exploration and sea turtle observations (B, L, D)

- Early breakfast at the hotel.
- Dives #1 & #2. Guided SCUBA dives at the Guanahacabibes National Park coral reefs, off of Maria La Gorda
- Lunch at the hotel.
- Birdwatching hike with one of the Park's guides in the Guanahacabibes National Park.
- Dive #3.
- Dinner at the hotel.
- Guided visit to the Park beaches at dusk, look for nests and sea turtle tracks, and enjoy night watching of newborn turtles heading to sea.

Day 5 (Wednesday): Ocean Exploration and sea turtle observations (B, L, D)

- Early breakfast at the hotel.
- Dives #4 & #5.
- Lunch at the hotel.
- Dive #6.
- Guanahacabibes National Park guided tour options.
- Dinner at the hotel.

- OPTIONAL Guided visit to the Park beaches at dusk, look for nests and sea turtle tracks, and enjoy night watching of newborn turtles heading to sea.

Day 6 (Thursday): Ocean Exploration and cave exploration (B, L, D)

- Early breakfast at the hotel.
- Dives #7 & #8.
- Despues buceo and lunch on boat.
- Visit Park Headquarters and hike park trails or tour the local coral nursery.
- Optional Night dive.
- Dinner at the hotel.

Day 7 (Friday): On the way to VINALES (B, L, D)

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Morning departure: board bus for 2-hour drive to Viñales, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, famous for its towering mogotes or karst mounds.
- Check in at hotel and welcome drink.
- Lunch in the area.
- Tour caves, farms, trail hikes, artisans, hotel pool, eco sites, mountain climbing.
- Dinner at a nearby restaurant.

Day 8 (Saturday): VINALES (B, L, D)

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Tour caves, farms, trail hikes, artisans, hotel pool, eco sites, mountain climbing.
- Lunch in the area.
- Farewell dinner at a nearby restaurant.
- Head out as a group to listen to Cuban music, and/or optionally, to join locals to dance!

Day 9 (Sunday): DEPARTURE Havana (B)

- Breakfast at the hotel and check-out.
- Morning departure: board the bus to return to Havana.
- Transfer to the airport.



Viñales