



Santa Barbara Museum of Art

Inside Cuba

Havana & Trinidad through the Eyes of Cuban Artists

February 15 to 22, 2026

The most meaningful and fascinating way to learn about Cuba is through its art. This exclusive program offers rare access into the homes, studios, and imaginations of Cuba's artists, who have long expressed themselves with depth, beauty, and truth in ways few others on the island can. Through this intimate art and culture tour, you are invited to go beyond the walls to discover the stories, spirit, and a whole new dimension of this island nation.

Cuba stands apart among the tropical paradises of its Caribbean neighbors. Its complex history and layered culture has been shaped by centuries of Spanish influence, revolution, and creative resilience. Havana remains one of the few world capitals to retain the charm and ambience of its past. Architectural treasures are everywhere you walk, from ornate villas and palaces to buildings that range from Moorish and Spanish Colonial, art deco, art nouveau and '50s Modern, to Palm Beach "Grand." On its streets, vintage Pontiacs and Chevys serve as taxis, and the rhythms of Afro-Caribbean music echo from not only cafes and restaurants, but street corners, parks, and the cathedral. Cuba is a place of vivid contrasts—fragile and robust, nostalgic

and boldly contemporary—all well documented by writers and movie-makers. Through private visits with artists in their homes and studios, this journey offers insight into how their work captures the uniquely Cuban experience. With every conversation, every painting, every staircase, and every note of music, you will gain a deeper understanding of the culture—and the people—who make this island unforgettable.

Highlights:

- ❖ **Expert insight from accompanying Cuban guide, Nelson Ramos**, the best Cuban guide (in SBMA's opinion).
- ❖ **Walking tour of old Havana and orientation tour** of the city by bus, led by Carolina Ramos, Nelson's daughter.
- ❖ **Discussion on the Cuban economy by Professor Jorge Mario Sanchez**, professor at University of Havana and former visiting professor at Harvard, and a presentation on **Havana's architecture and preservation by Dr. Miguel Coyula**.
- ❖ **Visits and private events with artists** or their representatives and families, including Sandra Ramos, Kadir López, José Fuster, Roger Toledo, photographer Figueroa and his wife Cristina Vives, a well-known art critic, and other emerging artists at the prestigious **Ludwig Foundation**.
- ❖ Private tour of the Cuban Collection at Museo de Bellas Artes (**the Museum of Fine Arts**) with **Curator of Contemporary Art, Omar Torres**, and the art school Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA).
- ❖ Lunch at **curator Milagros Borges Gomez's home and a talk on her collection that showcases local artists**.
- ❖ **A special private concert by the Camerata Romeu, an acclaimed all-women orchestra**, a meeting with choral singers in Cienfuegos, and a viewing of a dance rehearsal by MalPaso Dance Company.
- ❖ **A day trip to Matanzas**, the "Athens of Cuba", including visits to a book press, pharmacy museum, and seminary.
- ❖ **Two nights in Trinidad**, Cuba's best-preserved colonial city and UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- ❖ **Historical sites** such as the **Bay of Pigs Museum, Che Guevara Monument**, and **Hotel Nacional, steeped in glamour and mob history**.

Itinerary

February 15: Sunday ~ U.S. to Havana

A suggested flight schedule from LAX for early this morning, with a stop in Miami, will be shared with confirmed participants after the minimum group size has been reached. Fly to Havana from Miami and meet guide Nelson Ramos at the airport. On the way into the city, stop at **Plaza de la Revolución**, a vast city square with an important political history where many rallies and revolutions have altered the course of Cuban history. Presiding over the square is a 60-foot statue of José Martí, who was a central figure in the Cuban Independence Movement. Check in at the *Hotel Márquez de La Torre* then head to the rooftop for a **cocktail and Welcome Dinner on the rooftop with a brief introduction about the days to come.**

Hotel Márquez de La Torre (R,D)



February 16: Monday ~ Havana

Begin with a **presentation on Havana's architecture and urban planning** by expert Dr. Miguel Coyula. Then take a **guided walking tour of Old Havana led by Carolina Ramos** (our guide Nelson's daughter.) Havana, considered the finest example of a Spanish colonial city in the Caribbean and perhaps the Americas, has undergone a remarkable revival since its 1982 UNESCO designation, with restoration projects funded by tourism.

After lunch at Los Grados, explore more of Havana by bus, including a visit to the **iconic Nacional Hotel**, steeped in history intertwined with Meyer Lansky, Batista, gambling, and the mob. Conclude the afternoon with a **private visit to**

art critic Cristina Vives' home and gallery. Cristina will speak about contemporary Cuban art including photographs by her husband, the noted **Cuban photographer Figueroa.**



This evening, we are invited for a **reception and dinner with emerging artists at the Ludwig Foundation**, with magnificent views over Havana.

Hotel Márquez de La Torre (B,L,D)

February 17: Tuesday ~ Havana

Begin the day with a **round-table discussion on the Cuban economy led by Professor Jorge Mario Sanchez**, a leading macro-economist at the University of Havana (formerly a visiting professor at Harvard.)

Watch a **rehearsal by the acclaimed MalPaso Dance Company**, known for blending classical ballet, Afro-Cuban, and modern dance. Executive Director Fernando Sáez will meet us to discuss the dancers' artistic process.



A short drive takes us to the **vibrant, mosaic-filled home of artist José Fuster for a privately catered lunch**. Continue to the Instituto Superior de Arte, or **ISA—Cuba's premier art school**.



In the evening, we are invited for **drinks with artist Kadir López in his home**. Kadir's layered work reflects upon Cuba's history, time, and the effects of progress, or lack thereof, and its spiritual, economic, and political consequences on society. Enjoy a casual dinner with the family of **painter Sandra Ramos in her nearby home**, surrounded by her thought-provoking art that challenges Cuba's political history and explores themes of identity and memory.

Hotel Márquez de La Torre (B,L,D)



February 18: Wednesday ~ Havana to Matanzas and Return

Take a **day trip to Matanzas**, formerly a sugar and coffee center, and once called the “Athens of Cuba” because of the large number of artists, authors, and intellectuals who lived there. Explore the **historic quarter**, **meet artisans and the director at Ediciones Vigia**, known for handmade limited-edition books, and **hear from the director at the 19th-century Pharmacy Museum**, with its extraordinary collection of original equipment and furnishings.



Over lunch at **Matanzas Seminary**, learn about its interesting history, before returning to Havana for a **private performance by the all-women Camerata Romeu orchestra** in the atmospheric chapel of the Félix Varela Center, which has served as a gathering place for exchanging ideas and continuing education. Founded by director Zenaida Romeu, the orchestra's repertoire includes music from Cuba and around the world, with composers that range from Bach and Mozart to Leo Brouwer and Esteban Salas. The evening is free for independent dining.



Hotel Márquez de La Torre (B,L)

February 19: Thursday ~ Havana

Begin the day with a **tour of the Cuban Collection at the Museo de Bellas Artes with curator Omar Torres**. The museum's origins date back to 1842 when the San Alejandro Art Academy started its collection, which forms the nucleus of the

museum founded in 1913. It expanded greatly after Castro took over in 1959, notably with works from the private collections of Julio Lobo and Oscar Cintas.

Enjoy **lunch in curator Milagros Borges Gomez's art-filled home**, including famous Cuban artists Kunta, Ruben Rodriguez, Salvador Corratge, and Orestes Hernandez. Continue to the **studio of artist Roger Toledo**, whose paintings explore structure, color, and space.

Bid farewell to Havana with dinner at *La Guarida*, the city's most celebrated restaurant.

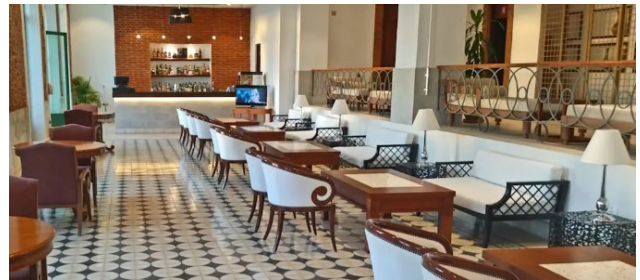
Hotel Márquez de La Torre (B,L,D)

February 20: Friday ~ Havana to the Bay of Pigs Museum to Cienfuegos to Trinidad

Travel to the **Bay of Pigs Museum** to learn about the 1961 invasion, which aimed to overthrow Fidel Castro. After lunch, continue to **Cienfuegos for a tour of the historic center**, an UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site, and a meeting with the **Cantores de Cienfuegos choir**, whose repertoire ranges from Renaissance to Japanese fisherman's folk music.

Arrive in Trinidad for dinner and a two-night stay at the *Mystique Trinidad by Royalton*. This comfortable property offers views of Trinidad from its hillside location.

Mystique Trinidad by Royalton (B,L,D)



February 21: Saturday ~ Trinidad

Explore Trinidad's cobbled streets, plazas, and cathedral—Cuba's largest church, renowned for its acoustics. As a result of the wealth and prosperity brought by the sugar industry, Trinidad has a rich cultural history, earning it recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage site and the crown jewel of Cuba's colonial cities.



Meet local artist Yami Martinez whose work highlights the unseen labor of Cuban women. After lunch at one of Trinidad's best paladars, drive east of Trinidad to the UNESCO site **Valle de los Ingenios, once the heart of the sugar industry**. Conclude the day and the tour with a festive **Farewell Dinner** at Mansion Alameda.

Mystique Trinidad by Royalton (B,L,D)

February 22: Sunday ~ Trinidad to Santa Clara to Santa Clara Airport for departure flights

Travel to Santa Clara and visit the **Che Guevara Monument and museum**, which explores the revolutionary's life and role in the Cuban Revolution. The final battle of the revolution that forced out Batista took place here. After lunch, fly on American Airlines from Santa Clara to Miami for connections home.

(B,L)

Tour Costs:

- ❖ **Per person in shared room** at hotels: \$5,995
- ❖ **Room to yourself:** add \$1,160
- ❖ **Plus SBMA donation:** \$850 per person

Included:

- ❖ Hotel accommodations as described
- ❖ Breakfasts daily, most lunches and dinners
- ❖ All land transportation by private deluxe motor-coach with air-conditioning for included activities including airport transfers in Cuba for those on the suggested flights between Miami and Cuba
- ❖ Private visits and special access through SBMA connections
- ❖ Admissions to museums and monuments, sightseeing, and tours as described, plus curators and guides at certain local venues
- ❖ Expertise of Cuban guide, Nelson Ramos
- ❖ Tour Manager and SBMA Host (at 15 participants)
- ❖ Most gratuities
- ❖ Cuba visa which will be arranged by our tour operator
- ❖ A pre-tour gathering in Santa Barbara a few weeks before departure

To reserve space:

Phone: (805) 884-6431

Fax: (805) 966-6840

Mail: SBMA Travel,
1130 State St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Questions?

Email: travel@sbma.net

Web: www.sbma.net/travel

Not included: Flights from home gateway to Havana, Cuba and returning from Santa Clara, Cuba; airport transfers within the U.S.; airport transfers in Cuba for those not on the suggested flights; personal travel insurance for health, baggage and trip cancellation; passport fees; customary tips to guide and hotel housekeeping; items of a personal nature such as room service, not-included meals and beverages; telephone or internet charges; deviations from the scheduled tour; and any items not specifically mentioned as included.

Payment Schedule and Cancellation Policy: Your reservation deposit (\$1,500 per person) is refundable until September 1, 2025, minus a \$400 cancellation penalty. Final payment is due by check November 15, 2025 and becomes fully non-refundable December 15, 2025. (Between those dates, cancellation penalty amount increases as departure nears.) The \$850 tour-associated donation to SBMA may be paid anytime before November 15, 2025 and is not refundable and not insurable. **By placing a deposit on the tour, you are acknowledging acceptance of terms and cancellation penalty, and that you have read the section on Requirements. Please consider travel insurance.**

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance information will be sent to you upon receipt of your tour deposit. While optional, travel insurance is highly recommended. Adding the "CFAR" option is recommended if you are a more cautious traveler and might cancel because of personal reasons due to world events while the trip is still operating, as having this option will be your only means for getting a partial return of your funds. If you do not purchase insurance and have to cancel, there will be *no flexibility with the cancellation terms for any reason* including but not limited to any illness or fear of travel due to a health outbreak or political unrest. While the need for insurance is always unexpected, the benefits can be significant. Travel insurance can be time-sensitive depending on the benefits desired.

Air Arrangements: To allow maximum flexibility for travelers, the flights to Havana, Cuba and returning from Santa Clara, Cuba (usually via Miami) are not included in the cost of the tour. A suggested flight schedule will be sent once the group has been formed. **Please do not book your flights until you are notified by SBMA that the minimum group size has been reached.** Flights are subject to change. In the case of flight changes the participant is responsible for any costs for hotels, transfers, and meals required as a result. Trip Cancellation/Interruption Insurance is strongly encouraged.

Traveling to Cuba: Your trip is fully legal under an OFAC General License, which allows travel to Cuba on programs that support the Cuban people through meaningful cultural and educational exchanges—exactly the type of experience that SBMA Travel offers on all our tours. Traveling to Cuba through an art tour is, in many opinions, the most fascinating way to visit. Participants must take part in a full schedule. Your visa is handled for you; you'll just need to obtain the QR code and carry other documentation that will be provided to you. If you were born in Cuba, special visa rules apply, so please let us know right away. Hotels are comfortable and well-located, though power outages, slow Wi-Fi, and service that seems to run on "Cuba time" are part of the experience. U.S. credit and debit cards are not accepted, but U.S. dollars are widely welcomed, and many artists can accept payment for artwork via foreign bank accounts. You can bring home original Cuban art and books. You may not bring home cigars or rum. A full FAQ will be provided in future tour mailings.

Museum Membership Requirement: Travel is a benefit of Museum Membership. Non-members will be required to join at the "Friend" (\$100 per household) level (\$80 senior rate) or higher and will receive full membership benefits for a year. Those at the \$1,000 "Curator's Circle" Membership receive advanced notice about SBMA's custom travel programs and many other benefits. Visit www.sbma.net/support/membership for full Membership details.

Activity Level/Other Requirements: In order to make the most of being in the destination and due to requirements for travel to Cuba, this is an active, full itinerary with moderate levels of activity. It requires participants to be in active good health and able to keep up with the group without assistance from tour staff. Days will be busy with a moderate amount of walking and standing during tours. Sightseeing excursions may last for a few hours with distances of up to a few miles and participants must be able to keep pace with a larger group, get on and off of buses, and navigate uneven terrain, stairs, and slippery surfaces with ease. You may average around 10,000 steps per day. Good health and stamina plus a sense of adventure and a positive, flexible attitude about delays and inconveniences are also essential. Participants should enjoy being part of a group tour and be willing to comply with tour rules and/or requests made by staff. The right is reserved to decline or retain any person as member of the tour when such action is determined by SBMA to be in the best interests of the health, safety, enjoyment, or general welfare of the tour group or the individual participant. We reserve the right to ask you for health information. ***Please read every day of the itinerary and contact SBMA Travel if you have any concerns about your ability to take part in the activities.***

Other Health Considerations: When participating in this group tour, travelers should be in a healthy state. We urge everyone to be cautious before departure and to take precautions while traveling and on tour to prevent the spread of all illnesses, not just Covid-19. If you come down with a contagious illness before or during the tour, we ask that you not participate in tour activities and/or take precautions, in order to prevent the spread of illness to others. The contagious period may be determined by a doctor or current CDC guidelines at the time. We

recommend, but do not require, that each traveler is vaccinated for Covid-19 and is up to date with booster dose(s) as advised by their doctor and/or CDC guidance. Safety guidelines can change at anytime and tour participants are asked to comply. We highly recommend travel insurance and you should confirm with the insurance company what will (and will not) be covered in the event you are ill and are unable to join or continue on the tour. Travel always has inherent risks and when choosing to travel, you are accepting all risks. We greatly appreciate your help with keeping yourself and those around you as safe as possible.

Additional Notes: All arrangements are subject to change. Although SBMA and its suppliers will make every effort to adhere to the printed itinerary, on occasion it may be necessary to adjust arrangements because of circumstances beyond our control. Should an itinerary adjustment be necessary, substitution will be made to the best of our ability and additional costs necessitated by such changes may have to be covered by the tour member. If due to weather, flight schedules, or other uncontrollable factors, participants are required to spend any additional days or nights in the destination, they will be responsible for any additional expenses incurred, including hotel, transfers, and meal costs. Should you decide not to participate in certain parts of the program, or are for any reason prevented from joining parts of the tour, no refunds will be made for those unused parts of the program. There are no refunds if a portion of the tour is missed due to flight delays or cancellations. Depending on the situation, trip insurance may reimburse for missed portions of the tour. If a staff member is unable to participate, SBMA will make every effort to find a replacement with similar qualifications and no refunds will be made. The tour cost is based on a minimum of 15 participants and is subject to change due to tariffs or other changes. Aside from the deposit, tour payments should be made by check. *SBMA's California Seller of Travel License #: 209026*



RESERVATION FORM – Cuba

SEND TO: SBMA TRAVEL, 1130 STATE STREET, SANTA BARBARA, CA 93101

OR FAX TO: (805) 966-6840

OR RESERVE BY PHONE: (805) 884-6431

TO RESERVE YOUR SPACE ON THE TOUR, A \$1,500 PER PERSON DEPOSIT IS REQUIRED BY CHECK OR CREDIT CARD. FINAL PAYMENT AND \$850 TOUR-ASSOCIATED DONATION TO SBMA ARE DUE BY CHECK NOVEMBER 15, 2025.

BY PLACING A DEPOSIT ON THE TOUR, YOU ARE ACKNOWLEDGING ACCEPTANCE OF ALL TERMS & CONDITIONS, INCLUDING STRICT CANCELLATION PENALTY AND AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE REQUIREMENTS TO PARTICIPATE.

SBMA WILL NOT BE ABLE TO BE FLEXIBLE WITH THE CANCELLATION TERMS FOR ANY REASON AND HIGHLY RECOMMENDS TRAVEL INSURANCE AS AN IMPORTANT WAY OF PROTECTING YOUR INVESTMENT.

☐ A CHECK FOR THE DEPOSIT (\$1,500 PER PERSON), MADE PAYABLE TO “SBMA”, IS ENCLOSED.

☐ PLEASE CHARGE THE DEPOSIT TO MY CREDIT CARD: ☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ AMEX

CARD NUMBER: _____ EXPIRES: _____

NAME AS ON CARD: _____ SECURITY CODE: _____

☐ I/WE ARE NOT CURRENT MEMBERS; PLEASE CHARGE FOR “FRIEND” MEMBERSHIP: ☐ \$100 OR ☐ SENIOR RATE \$80 OR ☐ \$1,000 “CURATOR’S CIRCLE” MEMBERSHIP, WHICH GIVES YOU ADVANCED NOTICE ABOUT SBMA’S CUSTOM TRAVEL PROGRAMS AND MANY OTHER BENEFITS. VISIT WWW.SBMA.NET/SUPPORT/MEMBERSHIP FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP DETAILS.

☐ I WILL BE SHARING A ROOM WITH _____ OR ☐ SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

☐ ONE BED OR ☐ TWO BEDS (BASED ON AVAILABILITY)

☐ PLEASE SHARE ANY ROOM REQUESTS OR OTHER REQUIREMENTS AND/OR LIMITATIONS YOU HAVE:

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

HOME PHONE _____ CELL _____ E-MAIL _____

IMPORTANT: BY PLACING A DEPOSIT ON THE TOUR, YOU ARE ACKNOWLEDGING ACCEPTANCE OF TERMS AND STRICT CANCELLATION PENALTY, AND THAT YOU HAVE READ THE SECTION ON REQUIREMENTS. A CONFIRMATION LETTER AND TRAVEL INSURANCE INFORMATION WILL BE MAILED TO YOU UPON RECEIPT OF YOUR RESERVATION FORM AND DEPOSIT. WHILE OPTIONAL, TRAVEL INSURANCE IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED AND CAN BE TIME-SENSITIVE DEPENDING ON THE BENEFITS DESIRED.