

# Cuba Photo Tour with Merrill Images

A 10 day cultural adventure departing January 17, 2017\*



Cuba compels. It's fascinating, complex, beautiful and FUN. With change accelerating due to increased tourism, now is the perfect time to explore our captivating neighbor. Join us (John and Lisa Merrill) and tour leader Emily Wilson on a small group adventure for photographers, music-lovers, and others who want to experience Cuba and its warm and welcoming people.

Cuba's cities are a visual feast of faded elegance, bustling street life and vibrant culture. We'll introduce you to our favorite off-the-beaten-track spots along with must-sees in the alluring colonial cities of Havana, Cienfuegos and Trinidad. We'll also go into the countryside, savoring majestic views while walking through the lush Vinales Valley and visiting tobacco and vegetable farmers.

Cuba's captivating light and color (and classic cars!) offer photo opportunities galore. We'll help you create visual stories to treasure and share, whether you're an experienced photographer or casual camera-phone shooter. Photography instruction on the tour is personal, informal and optional. We'll answer questions and provide tips for high-impact compositions, effective lighting with and without flash, and soulful portraits, and facilitate image-sharing among the group.

Non-photographers will also enjoy this people-to-people tour. Our itinerary offers diverse cultural experiences including great live music and visits with painters, potters, photographers, dancers, boxers, farmers, and entrepreneurs. Locals share their perspectives on life in Cuba, including changes due to increased tourism and connectivity. Our bilingual Cuban guide will accompany us throughout the tour, provide historical and cultural highlights, and help us get the most out of every experience. Each day will include group outings along with opportunities to explore on your own.

We believe that *how* you travel matters, and strive to positively impact the people we meet and the sites we visit. Toward that end, we'll stay in "Casa Particulares," charming B&B guesthouses in the welcoming homes of Cubans. We'll dine in many top-notch "Paladares," privately-owned restaurants selected for ambience, views and delicious traditional or modern cuisine.

Experience Cuba with us and start 2017 off with this trip-of-a-lifetime...

## Highlights of Cuba Photo Tour with Merrill Images - January 17 - 26, 2017\*

\* Departure will be between January 14-18; itinerary will be finalized in early September. Our partner Cuba Cultural Travel is awaiting announcements of non-stop commercial flights to/from Cuba from a variety of US Cities including Los Angeles. We will contact participants directly as soon as flight schedules and fares become available.

**Havana (3 nights)** pulses with energy, resilience, and pride. We'll stay in the Old City, its atmospheric heart and soul, making it easy to explore the treasure trove of architectural styles spanning six centuries. Vintage cars cruise by elegant colonial mansions, and we'll marvel at the mix of restoration and decay. We'll wander cobblestone streets with surprises around every corner, and visit historical sites, artists' workshops, a boxing gym, and a ballet school. Classic convertibles will take us in style to highlights of Central Havana including the Colon Cemetery and Plaza de la Revolucion. In the evenings we'll photograph along the world-famous Malecon at sunset, experience Havana's contemporary art scene at Fabrica de Arte, or enjoy traditional Cuban music.

**Vinales (2 nights)** is a charming town in one of the most picturesque parts of the country and our base to explore agricultural life in Cuba. We'll walk through the verdant Vinales Valley (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), amid limestone "magotes" hills, stopping to visit with and photograph tobacco farmers in the field. Lunch will be at a delightful hilltop organic farm with majestic views of the valley. There will be free time to explore Vinales and peruse its outdoor crafts market.

**Trinidad (2 nights)** is a stunning colonial city of cobblestone streets, pastel-colored homes, and grand mansions restored to their elegant glory and converted into restaurants and museums. We'll visit the Palacio Cantero and a 100-year-old family-run pottery workshop. As time permits, you might sample rums or take a salsa dance lesson. En route to Cienfuegos we'll stop for lunch at an elegant hacienda in the Valle de los Ingenios (Valley of Sugar Mills), and enjoy panoramic views from a 144 ft. tower built to watch over slaves.

**Cienfuegos (2 nights)**, known as the "Pearl of the South," has a laid-back vibe and fewer tourists than Havana or Trinidad. We'll explore its historic core before boarding a ferry to the village of Castillo Nuestra Senora de los Angeles de Jagua, where we'll watch and photograph fishermen mending nets, and enjoy a delicious waterfront lobster lunch. We'll head back to Cienfuegos for a siesta before sunset mojitos at its elegant Yacht Club and/or a walk along the stunning Punta Gorda peninsula.



## Photo Educators - John and Lisa Merrill of [Merrill Images](#)

John and Lisa create compelling images for travel and outdoor adventure companies, tourism organizations, non-profits and other clients around the world. Inspiring photo educators, they enjoy helping others gain the skills and confidence to create captivating visual stories. This will be Lisa's 3<sup>rd</sup> and John's 2<sup>nd</sup> trip to Cuba. They're looking forward to revisiting favorite places, connecting with friends old and new, and sharing their passion for Cuba and photography with fellow image-makers and music lovers. Learn more and view online galleries at [Merrill Images](#).

## Tour Leader - Emily Wilson of [Traveler Worldwide Explorations](#)

Emily is an experienced world traveler with a special love for the Middle East, North Africa and Cuba. She absorbs and reflects the places she visits, turning her camera to people and details in each cultural situation. Emily combines her passions for photography and travel by leading small group cultural journeys to all parts of the world. This will be her 3<sup>rd</sup> Cuba trip. She has 30+ years of experience working with individuals, travel agencies, corporate wholesalers, airlines, cruise lines, and adventure travel companies.

## Cuba Travel Partner – [Cuba Cultural Travel](#)

Cuba Cultural Travel began bringing groups of Americans to Cuba in 1999, with a focus on helping travelers see Cuba up close and personal while providing Cubans with an opportunity to have a shared experience with Americans. Over the years CCT has formed many friendships and relationships with people in the world of art, dance, education, medicine and music, providing our group with privileged access few can hope to achieve on their own. Visit CCT's websites for extensive info about travelling to Cuba.



## Cuba Photo Tour with Merrill Images - Pricing

**\$4775\* per person** (for 12 travelers plus guides and photo educators, single supplement is \$325)

### This includes:

- 9 Nights accommodation in Casa Particulares or small hotels (double occupancy w/private bath)
- 10 Breakfasts
- 6 Lunches
- 8 Dinners
- Transfers to/from Havana airport
- Transportation via air-conditioned bus throughout the trip
- Classic Convertible Car Ride in Havana
- Payment/tips to dance school, boxing club, and other pre-arranged cultural visits
- Admissions to museums and public buildings as listed in itinerary
- Bilingual Cuban Guide
- Photo Educators John and Lisa Merrill
- Tour Leader Emily Wilson
- Compliance with all US Treasury Department travel requirements
- Individual health insurance as required for entry into Cuba
- Pre-trip departure booklet with Cuba travel tips, packing list, and a list of great books, movies and websites about Cuba

### *Not included:*

- Airfare (RT Los Angeles-Havana airfare will likely be about \$1000)
- Cuban tourist card/visa
- Baggage fees
- Meals not listed above
- Tips for driver and Cuban guide
- Trip cancellation insurance (highly recommended)
- Any items not listed above, and any extra costs due to unanticipated changes in your itinerary for reasons beyond our control



# Cuba Photo Tour with Merrill Images - Payment

To guarantee space on the tour, send a deposit of \$1,000 per person, payable to Worldwide Traveller Explorations (mail to 4417 54th Ave NE Seattle, WA 98105). This deposit will be applied toward final payment, and is refundable until **September 16, 2016**. Full payment will be due to Cuba Cultural Travel by **October 14, 2016**. Payment can be made by check, cashier's check, or money order. *Credit cards are not accepted.*

## Cancellation Policy:

Information on trip cancellation insurance will be provided upon receipt of deposit from each individual. Forms and final invoice will follow approximately 3 weeks prior to final payment due date.

- Cancellations prior to **September 16, 2016** will receive a full refund
- Cancellations made between **September 16, 2016** and **October 14, 2016** will forfeit \$1,000
- Cancellations made after **October 14, 2016** will forfeit entire cost of trip
- All cancellations must be made in writing via email to [Laura@CubaCulturalTravel.com](mailto:Laura@CubaCulturalTravel.com)

## Passport and Tourist Card/Visa:

All travelers are required to carry a valid passport and a Cuban tourist card/visa. The tourist card/visa will be completed by a Cuba Cultural Travel representative and provided to participants with travel documentation. Those without a valid passport will not be allowed to enter. Passport must be valid for a minimum of 6 months after departure date. Passports must be U.S. only. Foreign passports allowed only in conjunction with a valid U.S. Resident Alien card (Green Card) or proof of eligibility to enter/exit the United States.

For more information, please contact

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