


CUBA'S NATURAL WONDERS

A WWF Legacy Circle Expedition

April 20–30, 2017



legacy
circle



Experience Cuba's fascinating culture and stunning tropical natural history on a custom expedition exclusively for WWF Legacy Circle members. This People-to-People program offers a rare chance to exchange ideas and insights with Cuban scientists, naturalists, academics, farmers, environmental activists and more.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Travel with Daylin Muñoz-Nuñez, WWF Latin America and Marine Expert through her homeland.
- Interact with Cuban experts engaged in the stewardship of nature as we visit marine protected areas, national parks, farms and community conservation projects.
- Learn about how WWF is responding to the challenges and opportunities facing Cuba due to recent social and economic reforms.
- Enjoy Cuban culture as we experience traditional foods, music and dance performances.

Dear Friends,

Please join me on an exclusive WWF Legacy Circle journey to Cuba, my beautiful homeland—and one of the most fascinating and well-preserved islands in the Caribbean region. This is a rare opportunity for Americans to legally visit Cuba through People-to-People, an educational and citizen exchange program that provides a human perspective on Cuba's less-visited natural side. Experience national parks, lush tropical ecosystems, pristine coastline, botanical gardens, and remarkable birdlife as we talk with WWF representatives, naturalists, park managers, organic farmers and community conservation leaders. At World Heritage Sites and UN Biosphere Reserves we will learn about nature and rural life through exclusive interactions with our partners.

Since 2004, WWF has been working with our partners in Cuba to combat threats to the region in our effort to preserve its culture and rich biodiversity. In coastal regions WWF works to promote sustainable tourism as an increasing volume of tourists are attracted to the beautiful beaches and pristine waters of the Caribbean Sea. Our sustainability fisheries projects ensure that Cubans have the knowledge, skills and tools to sustainably manage their fishery. And the Caribbean hawksbill turtle is being protected as part of a wide recovery effort.

This is your chance to get up close to Cuba's exceptional natural and cultural treasures. I hope you can join me for this special Legacy Circle journey.

Sincerely,



Daylin Muñoz-Nuñez
WWF Oceans Program Officer

WWF EXPERT TRIP LEADER



Daylin Muñoz-Nuñez is a marine scientist currently working with WWF's Oceans Program to improve fisheries management and promote sustainable fisheries in Latin America. She has spent nearly 15 years working in marine conservation, with expertise

ranging from coral reef fish ecology and sea turtle conservation to marine resources management. In her work she ensures that people with different backgrounds can understand complex concepts and get involved in finding a solution.

Daylin was born and raised in Cuba, where she discovered her passion for protecting the vibrant world under the sea. After studying biology at the University of Havana she held various marine science positions in Cuba and the United States. Later she received her master's degree from Duke University in Coastal Environmental Management. She remains concerned about the future of Cuba's flora and fauna given the rapid pace of change and development facing the island. Daylin is thrilled to return to her homeland with this special group to explore how WWF is working to protect Cuba's natural bounty.



ITINERARY

Day 1, April 20: Arrive Miami

Our program begins in Miami with a welcome dinner, orientation and overnight near the Miami Airport in preparation for our flight to Cuba tomorrow morning.

Overnight Marriot Hotel – Miami Airport (D)

Day 2, April 21: Camaguey/Cayo Coco

Early this morning we depart Miami aboard our charter flight to Camaguey, where we are met by our guide and driver. After lunch we travel north to the Atlantic Coast where we cross a 17 mile long causeway to the offshore islands of Cayo Coco and Cayo Guillermo. Until recently these islands were largely uninhabited and, together with its neighbor island, Cayo Paredon Grande, they support a wide variety of plant and animal life. The calcareous coastal deposits are blanketed with semi-deciduous forests, coastal scrub and mangroves. The briny lagoons protected by the islands are home to tremendous flocks of flamingos and other waders.

In fact, Cayo Coco is named for the roseate spoonbill, known locally as the coco. There are 158 bird species here that include Cuban cuckoo, ibis, herons, egrets and sea swallows.

Overnight Hotel Iberostar Cayo Guillermo or similar (L,D)



Day 3, April 22: Cayo Coco/Cayo Paredon Grande and Cayo Guillermo

Cayo Guillermo and Cayo Coco attract many visitors for some of the finest beaches and most beautiful jade colored waters in Cuba. Today we meet our local naturalist guide and new Cuban friends at the Cuban Center for Coastal Ecosystem Studies for walks in the protected areas. Our purpose is to interact with local environmentalists by learning and observing wildlife together. From there we move to the western part of the island, exploring Cayo Coco and neighboring islands. In addition to flamingos, we will search for other rare species on Cayo Guillermo including the only breeding population of thick-billed vireo on Cayo Paredon Grande.

Overnight Hotel Iberostar Cayo Guillermo or similar (B,L,D)



MICHEL ROGOLO/WWF



DARBY SAWCHUK

Day 4, April 23: Cayo Coco/Trinidad/Topes de Collantes

This morning we leave Cayo Coco, heading southwest toward the Caribbean coast of Cuba. Once we arrive in the architectural jewel of Trinidad, we have lunch in a local restaurant and then explore the colonial heart of the town on foot. We visit the cathedral and one of Cuba's best museums, Museo Romantico, located in a 19th century mansion styled as an opulent home of wealthy Cuban city dwellers. If time permits we drive a short distance outside Trinidad to the World Heritage Site of the Valley of the Sugar Mills for a short visit at Manacas Iznaga, the restored home of a wealthy sugar planter. Before dark we are in the Escambray Mountains and Topes de Collantes National Park, where we spend two nights near the park headquarters.

Overnight Hotel Los Helechos (B,L,D)

Ninety miles south of Florida lies an island nation that is arguably the most biodiverse in all the Caribbean. Its pristine wetlands, virgin forests, stunning coral reefs and coastal areas, harbor flora and fauna only found in Cuba.

Jim Sano, WWF Vice President of Travel, Tourism and Conservation

Day 5, April 24: Topes de Collantes

Enjoy early morning birding with our local naturalist from the park. After breakfast we take a short hike to the site of a former botanical garden that was established by the wife of former Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista. The largest mahogany tree in Cuba is located here and the birding is excellent for endemics such as the Cuban trogon and Cuban tody. In these mountains we will enjoy a cup of coffee at a local coffee house where coffee is still an important crop for small farmers. After lunch we visit a family farm and, later in the afternoon, we have the option to relax or take another walk with our local naturalist.

Overnight Hotel Los Helechos (B,L,D)

Day 6, April 25: Topes de Collantes/Bay of Pigs and Zapata Wetlands

Before breakfast, birding in the forest near the hotel is available. Soon after we head down from the mountains and make a brief stop in the city of Cienfuegos. We then continue toward the Bay of Pigs where we meet Orlando Ramirez, a local environmental specialist and farmer, for a short hike and a chance to observe the world's smallest bird, the bee hummingbird. We then visit the small Playa Giron Museum to gain the Cuban perspective on the Bay of Pigs invasion. After a late lunch, we continue along the coastal road to our hotel, the simple Hotel Playa Larga located in a beautiful setting on the Bay of Pigs. This evening, we meet Frank Medina, the director of the Zapata National Park, for a discussion about the importance of the Zapata Wetlands. Dinner tonight is in a local private restaurant.

Overnight Hotel Playa Larga (B,L,D)

Day 7, April 26: Zapata Wetlands/Havana

The Zapata Peninsula is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve encompassing Cuba's most important wetland area. There are around 900 species of flora, 171 species of birds (18 endemics), 31 species of reptiles and many mammal species on the Zapata peninsula. One of the rangers from the Zapata National Park will lead an early morning walk for those who wish to go birding.



DARBY SAWCHUK



ALAMY

Then we drive to the far reaches of the park to explore more of the peninsula, either traveling along the Hatiguanico River or driving to Las Salinas to see flamingos. We continually look for more endemic bird species such as the Zapata sparrow, Zapata rail and Zapata wren. In the afternoon we drive to Havana and check into our hotel with dinner in a private restaurant.

Overnight Melia Cohiba or similar (B,L,D)

Day 8, April 27: Havana

This morning we explore Havana, first on foot in the old city, and then by vintage American cars. We visit the four main squares where history and architecture intertwine to tell Havana's story. We'll visit Hotel Ambos Mundos, where Hemingway kept a room, to have a soft drink or mojito on the rooftop terrace. After lunch in a paladar—a family-run restaurant—our walk leads us outside the old city to other notable landmarks such as the Barcardi Building and the Paseo del Prado, a wide avenue separating Old Havana from the central city.



MICHEL ROGGO / WWF

In vintage American cars we explore more of Havana, passing the Grand Theater, Central Park and the old Capitol Building before heading to the Malecon, Havana's famous seawall. We continue through old and modern districts passing by the US Embassy and into Miramar where Cuba's wealthy once lived. On our return we visit the Cementerio de Colon to see some of the many monuments and works of public art located here. We return to the hotel with a little time to relax before dinner.

Overnight Melia Cohiba or similar (B,L,D)

Day 9, April 28: Havana

This morning we drive west to the orchid garden of Soroa, one of the finest gardens in the Caribbean. The University of Pinar Del Rio conducts research here and we are led on a walk by one of their botanist guides. After lunch in a former coffee plantation house, we visit a community and learn about life there from local residents. In Las Terrazas we visit a senior activities center and a school, where we interact with teachers and young students. Then we drive just over an hour to the Miramar neighborhood of Havana for a meeting with staff from WWF and the Antonio Nunez Jimenez Foundation for Nature and Humanity. We learn about the work of both WWF and the Nunez Foundation in environmental education and protection of Cuba's delicate ecosystem, particularly the coral reefs.



MICHEL ROGGO / WWF

Dinner is on our own tonight, with many delightful choices of restaurants including private restaurants (paladars). Paladar owners are Cuba's new breed of entrepreneurs. For those who enjoy cabaret and don't mind a late night, a show at the famous Tropicana nightclub can be arranged.

Overnight Melia Cohiba or similar (B,L)

Day 10, April 29: Havana

This morning we drive to the town of San Francisco de Paula, located on the outskirts of Havana. Here we pay homage to "Papa" Hemingway at his former home Finca Vigia, preserved very much as it was when he left Cuba. A specialist Cuban guide will join us for a discussion of his life and work. Nearby is one of Cuba's unique private restaurants, Il Divino, where we will be having lunch and visiting the adjacent farm that



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I recently returned from a WWF Legacy Circle trip and it was fantastic! I learned much that I didn't previously know about WWF, making me feel even more enthusiastic about my support.

Diane Pick, WWF Legacy Circle Member



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To register or if you have questions please contact Whitney Holderfield at 800-633-4734 ext. 27169, or whitney.holderfield@ietravel.com.



JON ARNOLD

practices sustainable agriculture and is the primary supplier for the restaurant.

We return to Havana with a little free time, to explore on our own or return to the hotel for a rest. Early this evening we enjoy drinks in the gardens of the historic Hotel Nacional overlooking

the sea. Next, we drive along the Malecon and across the bay for sunset views and scenes of Havana coming to life in the evening. Our farewell dinner is in another fine paladar followed by Buena Vista Social Club music at Café Taberna in Old Havana. *Melia Cohiba or similar* (B,L,D)

Day 11, April 30: Havana/Miami

This morning we check out of our hotel and drive to the airport for our flight back to Miami. (B)

WHAT TO EXPECT

A trip to Cuba is an active one that calls for good health. You should be able to walk without assistive devices or the help of others a minimum of two hours at a somewhat brisk pace in order to participate in this expedition. The activities involve a great deal of walking on uneven terrain such as cobblestone streets or slippery trails, and standing, all of which will be in hot weather. You will occasionally have to climb/descend stairs and negotiate places where the footing is uncertain, often times without handrails. If you are in any doubt that you will be able to participate then check with International Expeditions, and they will be happy to discuss it further.

Please Note: This itinerary is presented as a guideline and may change due to diplomatic events in Cuba, amendments to U.S./Cuba sanctions, hotel restrictions and scheduling changes. These factors may require us to deviate from our proposed itinerary, in which case we will provide the best available alternative, though our focus will always be on people-to-people educational exchange. This trip requires a sense of adventure, flexibility and patience.



WWF

People To People Travel In Cuba

International Expeditions, Inc. has prepared an itinerary that follows the guidelines set forth by the United States Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control to engage, organize and conduct people-to-people travel to Cuba. Every program operating under the People to People general license includes a full-time schedule of educational exchange activities, including interactions with Cuba's musicians, artists, naturalists and new generation of entrepreneurs. This type of travel engages participants in meaningful interactions with individuals in Cuba, which you must participate in. Additional information about the People to People general license will be provide upon booking the trip.



RESERVATION INFORMATION & TRIP DETAILS

Dates: April 20–30, 2017

Cost: \$6498 per person, based on double occupancy. \$925 single supplement. Charter flight from Miami - \$700, subject to change. Tour costs are based on the current Cuban tour operator's prices and subject to change.

Group size: Limited to 14 participants.

Included: Professional local bilingual guides; accommodations, meals, tours, transportation, transfers as indicated in the itinerary; tips to Cuban guides and drivers, porters and to waiters for included meals; Cuban mandated medical insurance.

Not included: Charter air from Miami—priced separately for guests - \$700, subject to change; passport fees; gratuity for the Expedition Leader and cleaning staff in hotels; meals and drinks not shown on itinerary—to be paid for by each guest; optional activities; Cuba airport tax: \$28 USD, payable in cash at the Miami airport; items of a personal nature (telephone calls, laundry, etc.); anything else not specified as included.

Payments: A deposit of \$600 confirms your space. Payments are accepted by credit card or by check made out to International Expeditions. A completed waiver of liability form and participant questionnaire are then due within 14 days.

Cancellations & refunds: Cancellations must be received in writing at International Expeditions by U.S. mail, email or fax. At the time International Expeditions receives your written cancellation, the following per person penalties apply: Before 90 days before the trip: Full refund minus \$300. On or before 90 days before the trip: No refund.

Travel insurance: Trip insurance is highly recommended but not required. A quote will be provided at the time of booking.

Getting there & getting home: The trip will start and end in Miami, Florida. International Expeditions will advise you on the suggested arrival and departure times based on the charter flight schedules to and from Cuba.

Booking flights: International Expeditions has a full-service air department that can book your flights between your hometown and Miami.

About International Expeditions

International Expeditions is a pioneer in responsible nature travel. International Expeditions shows some of the most remarkable places in the world in a way that's as enriching as possible. Their escorted tours, planned and continuously refined over 35 years, include many elements that would be next to impossible to do otherwise. In 1990, International Expeditions helped to form The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) by providing the major source of funding, and our founder and former president, Richard Ryel, also served as a member of the original board. TIES works to bring communities, conservation and sustainable travel together to promote ecotravel to natural areas, while conserving the environment and improving the well-being of local people.

For reservations, please contact Whitney Holderfield at International Expeditions at 800.633.4734 ext 27169, whitney.holderfield@ietravel.com, or Fax: 205-449-1714.

As Cuba begins to change, the country is particularly well-suited to choose a path of economic and environmental sustainability. WWF is uniquely positioned to help devise innovative solutions that can allow Cuba to develop in sustainable and profitable ways.

DAYLIN MUÑOZ-NUÑEZ

