

# Buen Viaje

## to Cuba

Tourist and Cultural Magazine  
Year 2019, WTM, London



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50 Coolest Neighborhoods



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## Hi Friends,

We're still here with you, sharing the good reasons to travel to Cuba.

2019 is ending, our magazine is joining the celebrations for Havana's 500 years, and from our cover we give full prominence to the capital and its main attractions.

This will be a special edition, as we will include a selection of the main feature articles we have dedicated to the city since the campaign for its 500th anniversary was presented until now. We will see proposals by the San Cristóbal, Cubatur and Gaviota Tours agencies, as well as hotel companies such as Cubanacán, Gran Caribe and Islazul.

But there are events in the capital to which we will also devote our attention, such as the opening of the SO/ Paseo del Prado La Habana Hotel, the Destinos Gaviota event, Palmares' proposals and Campismo Popular's holidays options.

Discover Cuba through our printed edition, website and Facebook page.

**BuenViaje**  
to Cuba

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# Havana 500

## much more

A few days remain for the big celebration, which not by anticipation will be less exciting. On November 16, Havana, capital of all Cubans and Wonder City of the World, will reach its five centuries of existence, with the particular brightness given to it by the unique blend of modernity and traditions that can be enjoyed in its streets.



campaign emphasized, in the words of Leal himself, that the 500th anniversary of the Township of San Cristóbal was not a goal, but an opportunity and a point of departure.

The first period lasted from June to November 2018

phrase, turned into the slogan of this stage of the campaign, can be seen in lighted publicity, in buildings and in places of tourist interest. From November 16, 2019 onwards the last phase will take place, during which it will be emphasized that the work to transform Havana was not limited to the celebrations for the founding date, but will continue to eagerly maintain the splendor of an increasingly captivating city.

As part of the celebrations for Havana's 500th anniversary, travel agencies and other non-hotel institutions designed a wide variety of options for visitors' enjoyment, with special emphasis on the history of the city, its cultural activities and the open and hospitable spirit of those who inhabit it. Several hotel openings, such as the Iberostar Grand Packard and the SO/ Paseo del Prado

It could be said, strictly speaking, that the city has been preparing for this date for a long time. Each day that has gone by has provided charms and history, but the countdown officially began on June 1, 2018. At that time, City of Havana Historian Eusebio Leal presented at the Palace of the Captains-General the communication campaign that has accompanied the celebrations since then. Structured in three periods, the

under the slogan "Real and Marvelous" and from its beginning authorities, institutions and the inhabitants of the city identified with it. The second moment, which culminates on November 16 of this year, the official date of the 500th Anniversary, has been an intensive period, full of renovation and beautification actions, which have been developed with the idea of giving "For Havana, the greatest." That



# than a celebration



La Habana, were especially dedicated to the great anniversary, while other emblematic facilities such as La Torre and 1830 restaurants, and the Tropicana Cabaret renewed their spaces and services, to offer experiences at the height of the celebration.

Deserving of a special mention is the restoration of a building that identifies Havana and has been the scene of numerous photos since its inauguration: the National Capitol. This imposing building, which opened its doors in 1929, once again showed its renewed attractions to the world, including the colossal Statue of the Republic, the third highest indoor sculpture worldwide, the Great Hall of the Lost Steps and especially its dome, now plated with gold sheets that shine under the sun always present in the largest of the Caribbean islands.

"The time has come for Havana," affirmed its Historian when presenting the campaign for the 500th Anniversary. Indeed, the time has come and the city shines, illuminated by the admiration of those who visit it and the faithful commitment of all its inhabitants to maintain it more beautiful every day.



# Old Havana, Among the 50 Coolest Neighborhoods in the World

The British travel magazine *Time Out* included the neighborhood of Old Havana on the list of the 50 coolest and most interesting locations in the world. According to the publication, the selection can help travelers and tourists understand the dynamics and life in the recommended cities, and the Cuban capital is one of them.



restaurant, enjoying cocktails as emblematic as the Mojito and Daiquirí, or a visit to San Isidro, district where the view is recreated with street murals, art galleries and music and dance performances.

Other neighborhoods recommended by *Time Out* are Strasbourg-Saint-Denis in Paris, Astoria in New York, Peckham in London and the list is headed by Arroios in the Portuguese city of Lisbon.

Havana, which is celebrating the 500th anniversary of its foundation, is a city consolidated as one of the main tourist destinations in Cuba and has multiple historical, cultural and heritage attractions that in 2016 turned it into Wonder City of the modern world.

The selection, according to *Time Out*, was made by its team of editors and experts after more than 27,000 votes from city residents in Old Havana, whose Historic Center was declared a World Heritage Site in 1982. It ranks 39th in the selection.

*Time Out* describes the area in the following words: With its crowded squares, irregular buildings, baroque churches, open-air cafes, bars, shops, galleries and creative neighborhoods,

Old Havana is a place that traps you and it will be difficult for you to leave it. Among the activities recommended for tourists, it is worth noting savoring a roast suckling pig in a colonial

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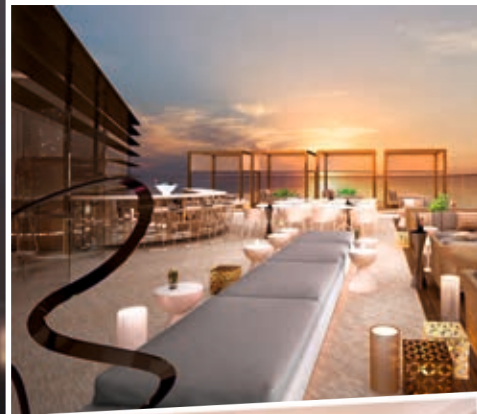
### HAVANA 500 X 500

In its 500 years, we offer you a package of 3 days for 2 pax for only 500 USD comissionable to 15%, with accommodation in our Habaguanex hotels at the Historical Center, which allows you to enter the depths of Colonial and Modern Havana revealing its mysteries, its history, its culture and its people. For Havana ... the greatest ... feel it and live it.

#GoForCulture

# SO/ Paseo del Prado La Habana

## *Accor's Jewel Hotel in the Wonder City*



With its privileged location at the beginning of one of the most famous avenues in Havana, and majestic views of the sea, the new SO/ Paseo del Prado La Habana Hotel is already announced as an option that travelers seeking the highest comfort in the Cuban capital will thoroughly enjoy.

Managed by the prestigious French hotel chain Accor, the SO/ Paseo del Prado La Habana combines modernism and luxury decoration in all its spaces. Its opening in the year in which Havana turns 500 adds to the special events that will be remembered by all who visit the city.

Three dance styles are recreated in its 250 rooms: classical ballet, salsa and son; and undoubtedly the elegance of these dances represented in the interior design and decoration details will captivate its guests. All rooms have floor-to-ceiling windows, and have been designed taking care of every detail for

its guests' comfort to ensure they enjoy a high-standard stay: separate bathtubs and showers, 43" TV set and a modern air-conditioning and sound system are just some of the facilities they will have. Clients staying in the SO/ Suites and SO/ VIP categories can also enjoy hydrotherapy tubs, drinks in minibars at no cost and the maximum expression of the customized service Accor offers.

The SO/ Paseo del Prado La Habana Hotel offers its guests 5 restaurants and bars: Cosecha is its interactive breakfast bar where organic menus prepared in the presence of guests will be offered; the Rooftop & Hi-So, with fusions of Cuban and French cuisine, has an exclusive palapa area to enjoy sunsets and nighttime activities; Mixo is the lobby bar that incentivizes tasting tropical cocktails, livened up with performances by DJs and fashion shows; the SO/ Pool Bar invites you to enjoy the most refreshing drinks in the pool area,

while the Origen chocolate shop is a charming place, distinguished by the sensuality of Cuban chocolate and coffee.

Among the wide range of services offered by this iconic and modern design hotel in Havana, there are also facilities for wellness and quality of life, with an SO/ Spa, beauty center, gym and infinity pool located on the 4th floor, with impressive views of Havana's Malecón, the sea and the Castillo del Morro.

Ideal for businesspeople, the hotel will become the most modern and social destination in the city, offering numerous proposals for small- and medium-format meetings and events. Its convention area includes two rooms named Prado and Malecón, which can accommodate up to 90 people in the cocktail format. The free Wi-Fi connection service throughout the hotel is a plus that places it in the preference of the most daring and avant-garde luxury travelers.

In the context of the celebrations for the 500th anniversary of the Wonder City, the SO/ Paseo del Prado La Habana Hotel is inserted as a luxury experience in this city where the colonial and the modern, the warmth of the people and attractive cultural offers coexist. The seductive nights on its terraces and the incredible sea breeze will be perfect accomplices to enjoy Havana and its magical five centuries.





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# Enjoy Havana from High Above

Havana, a wonder city, real and marvelous, is the one chosen by many of the visitors arriving in Cuba, eager to get to know its most emblematic places. Revolution Square and the José Martí Memorial are the most important monumental complex in the Cuban capital, and it is one of the places that everyone wants to see and photograph. The Memorial is dedicated to Cuban National José Martí and in its four rooms it exhibits photographic documents, holographs, facsimiles and other objects of his life and work. From its lookout point you can enjoy a spectacular view of the city.

Precisely, and as part of the many actions that are now underway to celebrate the 500 years of the Cuban capital, a new proposal has been presented, thanks to which you can ascend to the top of the Monument and observe from there the city. It is the first time that visitors can reach the José Martí Memorial Lookout Point, the highest geographical point in the city, located 142 meters above sea level.

Every Friday, and until 9:00 p.m., the public can enjoy this unique view, in addition to attending other cultural options offered in its rooms and small theater. The usual Monday to Saturday schedule of the Memorial is from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 a.m., which now runs until Friday to give the possibility to a greater number of visitors to reach the lookout point and see Havana from high above.

We invite you to live this experience, and as in the Memorial it is common for important painters to exhibit their works, you will be able to find out about the history and contemporary art of a city, which at its almost 500 years is still the favorite of those who visit Cuba.



— 2019 —  
**500**  
— YEARS —



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# San Cristóbal

## the Art of Combining Technology



As part of a clear corporate strategy of assimilating the new communication tendencies, the San Cristóbal Travel Agency S.A. of the Office of the City of Havana Historian has set about to use the tools that technology places at its fingertips and to commit to innovation in sustainable tourism.

The Agency's specialized tourist guides have incorporated the organized use of tourist guidance systems for a more effective communication and to guarantee greater comfort for its clients.

With the incorporation of the audio guides in different languages, San Cristóbal has expanded the options for travelers interested in visiting the National Capitol building, an icon of Havana's architecture, current venue of the National Assembly of People's Power of the Republic of Cuba and an emblematic work of the heritage restoration undertaken by the Office of the City of Havana Historian. This new alternative ensures visitors the possibility of organizing their own route inside the building and having access to



**SAN CRISTÓBAL**  
AGENCIA DE VIAJES

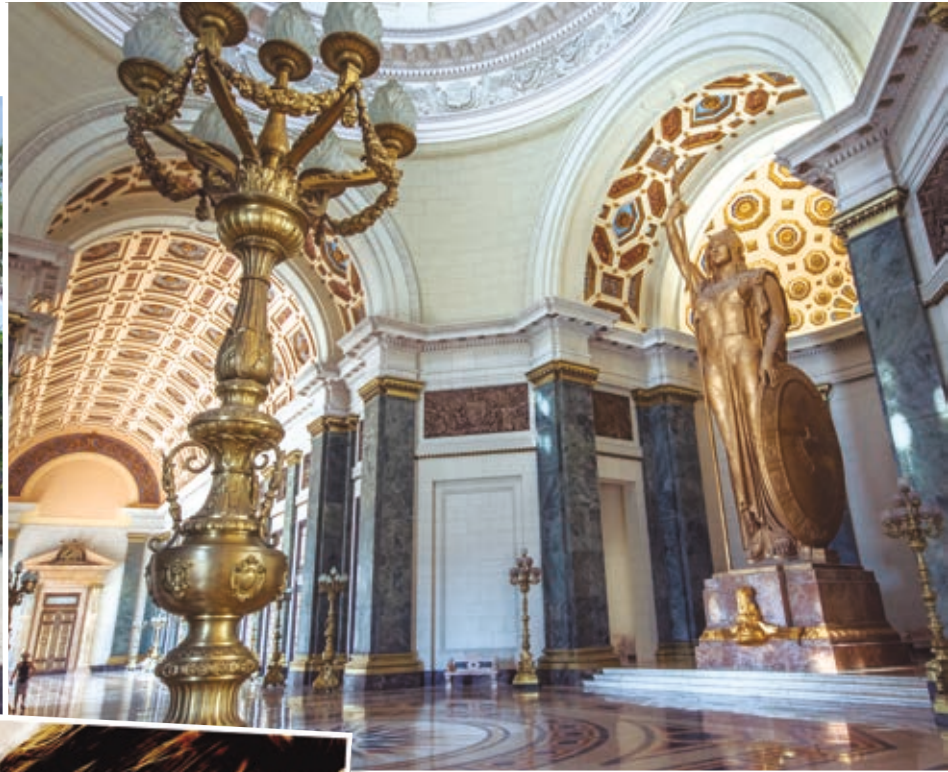
information of great interest.

For a year, during the celebration for the anniversary of the former township of San Cristóbal de la Habana, the InfoHabana Visitor Center managed by this Cuban agency has been placing at the disposal of all publics a free of charge platform of augmented reality that allows users' interaction with the main tourist destinations and Cuban heritage cities, as well as sites of interest of the capital and its Historic Center.

San Cristóbal will also started its new corporate website, totally renovated, and which incorporates new facilities like the online payment service, access to links of particular cultural tourism interest and the possibility of downloading an application for intelligent cell phones; like a guide for travelers.



# Travel Agency and Heritage



San Cristóbal Travel Agency is incorporating modern technologies to the interpretation of Cuba's cultural heritage.



Visitors to Havana's Capitol building will be able to have a map in which they will find the building's sites of interest, as well as the principal themes contained in the audio guides, which range from the building's history and the curiosities about its project and construction, to the legends woven around it.



# Havanatour UK



Havanatour UK Ltd., belonging to the Havanatur International Group of Tour Operators and Travel Agencies S.A., a leader on trips to Cuba, is offering in the United Kingdom a customized and excellence service to those interested in getting to know the most incredible destination in the Caribbean, Cuba.

Havanatour UK Ltd. has excellent knowledge about the Cuban tourist destination and its specialized team of travel advisors has the necessary experience to design an itinerary that adapts to the needs of any client, creating tailor-made trips. In addition, it gives you advice and makes reservations in a wide range of hotels throughout the country.

To please the most demanding travelers, Havanatur UK Ltd. organizes a great variety of excursions in Cuba, which can be booked before leaving home. It also designs specialized trips associated to Diving, Trekking, Fishing, Sports, Golf and Golf



Tournaments, Spanish or salsa dance lessons. Bird Watching is undoubtedly one of the most attractive activities since Cuba has a great amount of endemic species and is visited every year by a great number of migratory birds. It also offers car rental services, which range from economic models up to luxury cars, with mechanical or automatic transmission system.

Havanatur UK can make your reservations in any of the airlines that fly to Cuba, including departures from other cities in the UK, in addition to London. It can also make reservations for flights within Cuban territory.

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# Gran Caribe Hotel

## 25 Years Cultivating the



In Havana, the Gran Caribe Group has facilities full of history and heritage values, which have been visited by personalities from all over the world.

**T**ourism, one of the strategic sectors of the Cuban economy, began 2019 with encouraging results.

After a period of exceptional challenges successfully overcome the leisure industry in the largest of the Caribbean islands is heading towards the goal of maintaining this year high numbers of international visitors.

In this context, the Gran Caribe S.A. Hotel Group is celebrating its 25th

anniversary. This company, with an important role in Cuba's tourist accommodations, operates more than 13,800 rooms in 53 hotels, distributed in emblematic destinations: Varadero, Havana, Jardines del Rey, Cayo Largo del Sur, Cienfuegos, Mayabeque and Isla de la Juventud. Of these facilities, 28 are operated by important international chains under different management modalities.

The company is celebrating 25 years promoting innovative projects. Last February the Meliá Internacional, a classic of the hotel industry in Varadero, started operations. After adapting to the most recent service and environmental trends, it is already receiving guests under the five-star All Inclusive modality, with the collaboration of Meliá Hotels Cuba. Also with this Spanish hotel chain, Gran Caribe offers in Cienfuegos the services of the new Meliá San Carlos, a hotel







Group



# Art of Hospitality

founded in 1925 and considered the perfect lookout point to admire the city that everyone calls the Pearl of the South.

This year Gran Caribe also plans to inaugurate Villa Isla, in the Special Municipality of Isla de la Juventud, and it reopened the Bella Isla Resort Hotel in Cayo Largo del Sur. With these facilities, the hotel group reaffirms its privilege to have the only hotels located in that point of the Cuban geography. The Cayo Largo destination is specifically exclusive to this group, and one of its great strengths thanks to the beauty of its beaches, considered among the best in the region.

If we talk about city tourism, we must mention Gran Caribe's 11 hotels in Havana, a city immersed this year in the

celebration of the half millennium of its foundation. These include heritage jewels such as the Hotel Nacional de Cuba, the Tryp Habana Libre, the Iberostar Habana Riviera and the Inglaterra; the latter hotel, the oldest in Cuba still active, foresees joint management prospects with the prestigious Marriott International Inc., under the Starwood Hotels brand.

The Gran Caribe Group includes among its development strategies the creation of programs to encourage long-stay tourism, and the reception of seniors guests. The proposals also include prestigious nightspots such as the Parisien Cabaret of the Hotel Nacional and the El Turquino party room of the Tryp Habana Libre, as well as restaurants with attractive gastronomic offers and

Cuban art is present in many of Gran Caribe's hotels. Travelers who love culture and good taste can enjoy works of great beauty that are now part of the nation's heritage.

facilities for meetings, congresses, weddings and other social events. Cuban tourism is winning over leading markets, along with countries such as Argentina, Spain, Mexico and Chile, which have experienced significant growth in the number of tourists staying in their hotels. On this 25th anniversary, Gran Caribe facilities' main markets are Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, Russia, France and Italy.

The Gran Caribe Hotel Group was created on August 1, 1996 with 6,000 rooms. Today, a quarter of a century after its creation, the company ratifies its Cuban identity, dedication to service and the focus on the continuous improvement of its products, basic elements of its distinctive slogan: "The Authentic Art of Hospitality."



[www.gran-caribe.cu](http://www.gran-caribe.cu)



# Palacio Cueto Hotel, a Work of Art in Old Havana



 **HOTELES  
HABAGUANEX**  
LA HABANA VIEJA • GAVIOTA

In the surrounding area of the Plaza Vieja in the historic center of Havana, the Palacio Cueto Hotel opened its doors as a result of a restoration project for the Habaguanex Hotels, executed by the Gaviota Group.

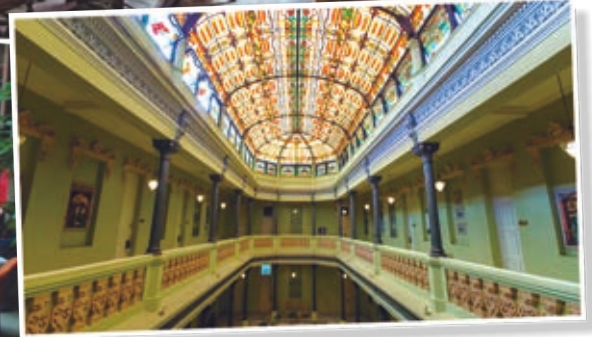
The property, which has recovered all its splendor, is now a luxury hotel with 57 rooms. Its services include a spa and have been designed combining modernity with respect for the

architectural values of the most famous art nouveau building in the Cuban capital.

Located at the corner of Muralla and Inquisidor streets, the Cueto mansion was designed in 1908 by architect Arturo Marqués, with a striking work in sculpted stone, colorful balconies in the shape of waves and elaborate ornamentation on its facade. The building is reminiscent of the buildings designed by Antoni Gaudí, Lluís Domènech i Montaner or Josep Puig i Cadafalch in Barcelona, Spain: a

magnificent work in stone, elegant grandstands that connect the first two floors, and their balconies in the shape of waves pay homage to the work of the Catalan artists. The building housed a clothing factory and a pharmacy, until in the 1920s José Cueto turned it into the then Palacio Viena Hotel.

As part of the tourist projects that renew the image of Havana, the Palacio Cueto will provide new spaces for accommodation in the colonial area, and will be integrated with other hotel proposals that progressively rise on the setting of a city that since 1982 holds the status of a World Heritage Site.



**HOTELES  
HABAGUANEX**  
LA HABANA VIEJA • GAVIOTA

# Habaguanex Hotels in Historic Havana

2019 is a year of celebration for Havana. In this half millennium the city has witnessed numerous historical and cultural events, which have shaped the identity of its streets, its constructions, and especially its inhabitants. If you plan to visit the Cuban capital soon, Habaguanex Hotels can offer you unique experiences.

The Habaguanex Hotels are located in Old Havana, in buildings that have been rescued over time and redesigned to offer the comfort that travelers expect. Each one based on its singularity invites you to discover the city, either in the quiet of its interior courtyards, in the privacy of its galleries and balconies, or in the views offered by its rooms.

Small, customized and comfortable, these hotels are an invitation to

connoisseurs and lovers of Habanos, as well as to those who like environments inspired by medieval abbeys, those who prefer the familiarity of a colonial house or those who are interested in the Hebrew and Irish cultures.

With that spirit and touched by the airs of modernity, Habaguanex Hotels occupy privileged spaces within the surroundings areas of the Historic Center of the city. Being located very close to each other, they make up a network that also benefits from the intense cultural life of the area, where museums, concert halls, art galleries, specialty stores and plazas converge, which at certain times become scenarios of great shows.

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

## HABAGUANEX HOTELS

- Ambos Mundos Hotel
- Armadores de Santander Hotel
- Beltrán de Santa Cruz Hotel
- Conde de Villanueva Hotel
- El Comendador Hotel
- El Mesón de la Flota Hotel
- Florida Hotel
- Los Frailes Hotel
- Marqués de Prado Ameno Hotel
- Marqués de San Felipe  
and Santiago de Bejucal Hotel
- Palacio O'Farrill Hotel
- Park View Hotel
- Raquel Hotel
- San Miguel Hotel
- Santa Isabel Hotel
- Saratoga Hotel
- Tejadillo Hotel
- Télegrafo Hotel
- Terral Hotel
- Valencia Hostel
- Palacio Cueto Hotel





# Havana Multi 500th Anniversary

Havana, a city celebrating this year five centuries of being founded, is one of the icons of tourism and travel to the Caribbean. Every day, visitors unexpectedly discover in it new corners and places. From *Buen Viaje a Cuba* we propose a start for the adventure, whose endings could be as infinite as the charms of the Cuban capital.

Among the Cuban capital's many places of interest, eight stand out in the preference of travelers, according to surveys, the social media and opinion websites such as TripAdvisor.

One of these iconic sites is **Revolution Square and the José Martí Memorial**, the most important monumental complex in the capital, witness to numerous landmarks of the Cuban Revolution, which hosts the main parades and celebrations of the people of Havana. The José Martí Memorial proposes an approach to the life of the Cuban hero and hosts significant art exhibitions. From its lookout point -the

highest point in the city, at 142 meters above sea level- you can enjoy a spectacular view of the city.

Another favorite place is the restaurant **La Bodeguita del Medio**, opened in 1942. Located on Empedrado Street, very close to Cathedral Square, this place treasures on its walls countless signatures of those who visit it, including celebrities such as Ernest Hemingway, Mario Benedetti, Pablo Neruda, Errol Flynn and Gabriel García Márquez. The bohemian charm of the establishment, the very Cuban seasoning of its typical dishes and the world-famous mojito, make La Bodeguita a must-see place in Havana.

Extending along eight kilometers, the **Malecón** is an avenue that limits directly with the sea and whose wall serves as scenario for numerous stories of daily life: love, encounters, fun and meditations. Imposing monuments rise all along the avenue, as well as distinctive historical buildings of the capital, such as the Castle of San Salvador de la Punta, *the Torreón de San Lázaro* and *the Torreón de la Chorrera*, as well as emblematic hotels, such as the

Hotel Nacional, the Iberostar Habana Riviera and the Meliá Cohíba, a symbol of the city's modernity.

The city's center and starting point of all Cuban highways is the Capitol building. With a neoclassical facade and a 91-meter-high dome, it was built to accommodate the two houses of Congress since 1929. After the triumph of the Revolution, it was the venue of the Academy of Sciences of Cuba and of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, and today it is the venue of the National Assembly of People's Power. After a process of restoration, the majestic building reopened its doors last March, instantly recovering the preference among lovers of Havana.

As an immovable guardian, the **Morro-Cabaña Military Historical Park** features two strongholds from the 17th and 18th centuries: the *Tres Reyes del Morro Castle* and the *San Carlos de la Cabaña Fortress*. These jewels of military architecture have been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, and from



La Habana 500

# olicies on its



them you can enjoy the full extent of Havana Bay and the Historic Center. The cannon blast ceremony is held there every day at 9:00 p.m., in memory of the old striking of the hour for the closing of the walls that protected the city.

**Paseo del Prado** (officially called Paseo de Martí) is a majestic tree-lined boulevard that extends from the Parque de la Fraternidad to the Malecón. It is identified by eight bronze lion statues and flanked by buildings of high historical and architectural value, such as the Capitol or the Alicia Alonso Grand Theater. Also hotels, such as the Inglaterra, Saratoga, Iberostar Parque

Central, Telégrafo, Sevilla, Caribbean, Iberostar Grand Packard and SO

Paseo del Prado La Habana. It is one of the capital's busiest and most famous streets, witness to cultural events and art exhibitions.

More recently incorporated into Havana's universe, the **Fábrica de Arte Cubano** is a cultural project created by musician and composer X Alfonso, located in an old vegetable oil factory. Distinguished by the quality of its proposals, the names of renowned national and foreign artists and of newcomers alternate each season on its billboard. Art exhibitions, fashion shows, photography exhibits, theater and dance shows, film screenings and concerts of different types of music are held in its spaces.

And finally, we propose the closing of a night in the Wonder City with a visit to the **Tropicana Cabaret**, inaugurated in 1939. Prominent personalities of Cuban and international art have passed through its stages, including Rita Montaner, Ignacio Villa "Bola de Nieve," Josephine Baker and Nat King Cole. Located west of Havana, the excellence of its shows and the uniqueness of its surroundings have earned it the nickname "*Paradise under the Stars*".

Havana is multiplying in the year of its 500th anniversary. Many are the interesting and unique places in the city to surprise the visitor. And many times you will have to tour it, to treasure the experiences that the Cuban capital invites you to discover.





# El Viejo y el Mar

## Excellent Option at Marina Hemingway

The presence in Havana of El Viejo y el Mar Hotel enriches the development of tourism in a city that is in the sights of thousands of travelers around the world. This is an excellent option for those who come to the Cuban capital every year to participate in the Ernest Hemingway Marlin Fishing Tournament, which is based in the Marina of the same name, where El Viejo y el Mar is located.

The 4-star category installation belongs to the Cubanacan S.A. group and has 60 air-conditioned rooms: 58 of them standard and 2 junior suites. All have private bathroom, safety deposit box, satellite TV, telephone and mini bar, among other facilities. The rooms overlook the sea and the canals of the

Marina, which adds a special appeal for visitors.

The hotel's gastronomic variety includes the Cojimar buffet restaurant, the Gregorio bar-restaurant, Las Minas lobby bar and the pool's La Aguja snack bar. El Viejo y el Mar Hotel is part of the Marina Hemingway Residential Complex, which is joined by the Acuario Hotel, so guests of both facilities can enjoy specialized restaurants of Chinese, Italian and Cuban food, as well as hairdressing, massage, gym and nursing services. For all this, there are facilities for the free transfer of guests within the Marina.

The Marina Hemingway Residential Complex's guests also have a tourist bus that takes them to the Historic Center of

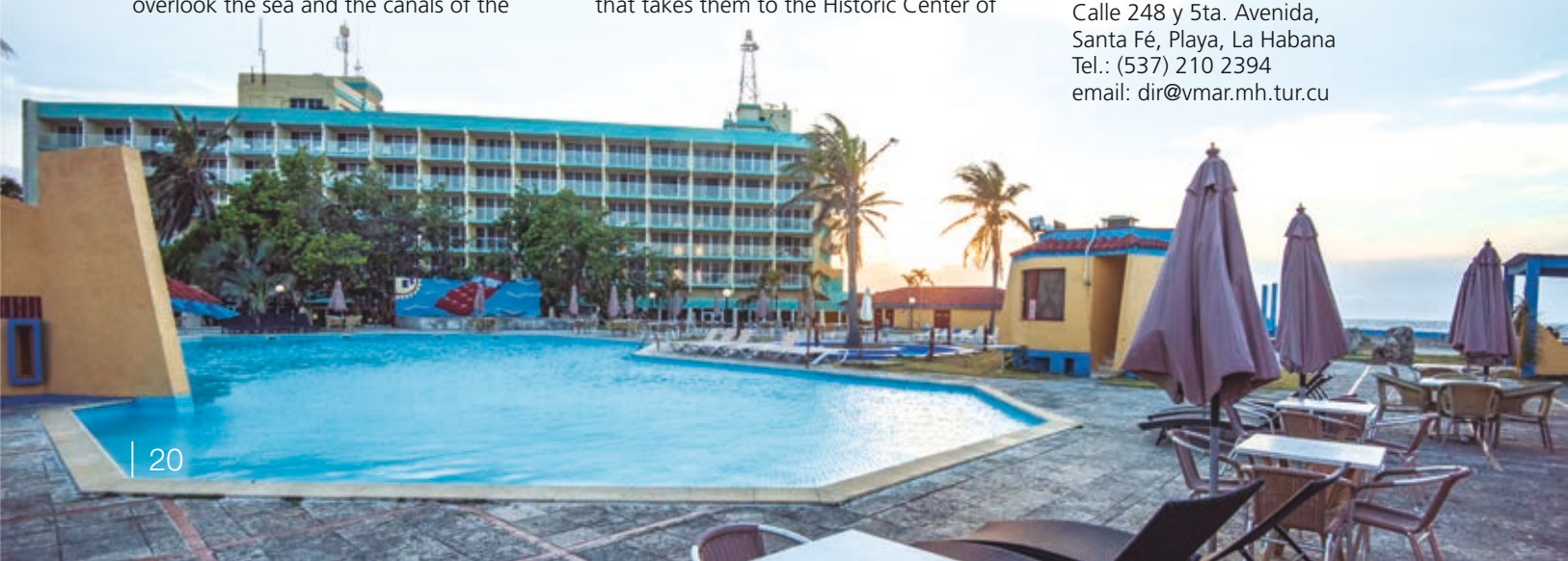
Old Havana and the Playas del Este, with three daily departures.

For business and event travelers, El Viejo y el Mar Hotel is a very good accommodation option, due to its proximity to the Convention Center and Pabexpo, but it will also be an excellent choice for lovers of nautical activities and diving and also for those traveling as a family to Havana.



### Contacts:

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# Destinos Gaviota to Rediscover Cuba

The Destinos Gaviota second tourist mart in 2019 touched port in Havana on October 2 and went ahead to celebrate the 500 years of the Wonder City. In the Divina Pastora Restaurant, on the other side of the Bay of Havana, the organizers offered the participants a very special night, starring Cuban music and enjoying the most amazing views of the capital.



With the event's nautical theme and a crew of 778 "sailors" willing to get to know firsthand the wonderful Cuban tourist destinations, the meeting far exceeded the challenges of its first edition in 2018.

Representatives from 36 countries, mostly from Mexico, Russia, Canada, Argentina and Spain, were delighted with the cultural and architectural richness of Havana, which they were able to see during the thematic tours included in the program of the event, which for four days did not stop surprising its guests.

The day dedicated to the presentations of the novelties of the Gaviota S.A. Tourism Group and of its commercial partners: Accor, Meliá, Iberostar, Blue Diamond, Marriot, Posadas, Kempinski



Minister of Tourism Manuel Marrero gave a lecture in which he updated the participants in the event on the development, options and novelties of tourism in Cuba.





and FTI, among others, was attended by Cuban Minister of Tourism Manuel Marrero Cruz, who interacted with the travel agents gathered at the Meliá Marina Varadero Hotel, official venue of the meeting at the beach resort.

The workshop, the Caribbean Fiesta in Cayo Blanco and the tour of the hotels of the best sun and beach destination in the country, were also excellent opportunities for professional exchange with that mixture of business and pleasure the event has proposed since its emergence.

Destinos Gaviota 2019 proved its worth

as an indispensable space to promote Cuba, its gastronomy, the uniqueness of its cities and its nature. It was a new opportunity to express that Gaviota is committed to an excellent service, always in the hands of companies such as Gaviota Tours, Transgaviota, Marinas Gaviota and AT Comercial, which guarantee the success of the tourist operation.

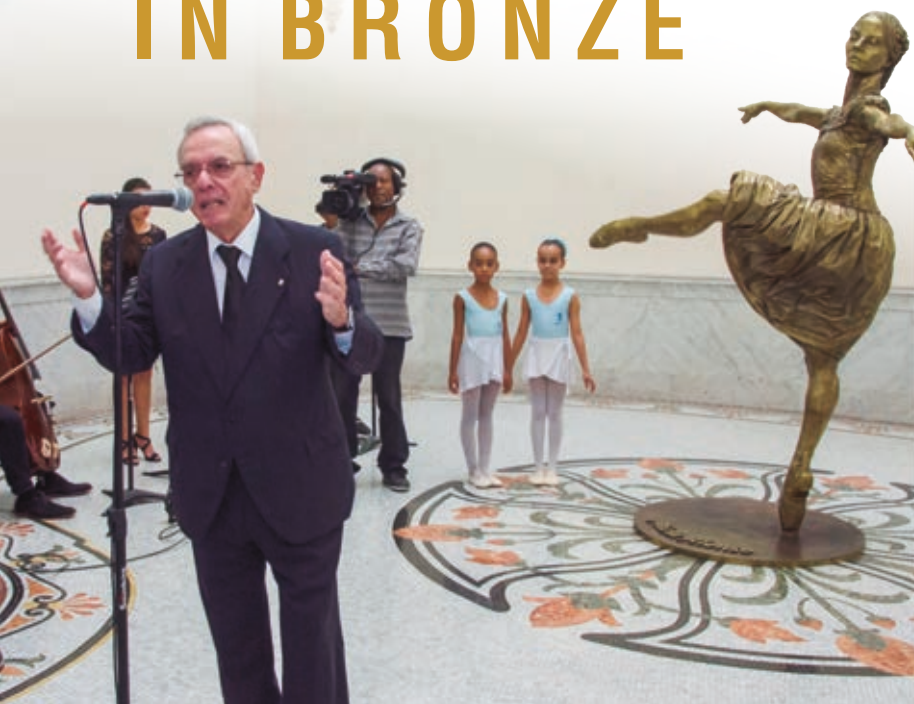
The next destination to be rediscovered will be Cayo Santa María and starting now the call is open so that from October 13 to 17, 2020, guests can return to Cuba to enjoy another unforgettable trip.

The third Destinos Gaviota tourist mart will be in Cayo Santa María from October 13 to 17, 2020. The event will be especially dedicated to the meetings, incentives, congresses and events segment.



# Alicia Alonso

## IN BRONZE



Since 2018, a sculpture of Prima Ballerina Assoluta Alicia Alonso can be seen in the lobby of the majestic Grand Theater of Havana. It is a work of plastic artist José Villa Soberón, known to travelers arriving in Havana for his sculptures of John Lennon, the Caballero de País and Mother Teresa of Calcutta, among many others.

The work, sculpted in bronze, reflects the liveliness and majesty of Alicia Alonso's twirls and spirit on the stage. It recreates a passage from the ballet Giselle of which this great Cuban artist was the star for many years and it was unveiled by the sculptor and four girls from the School of Ballet on the first day of that year, in the presence personalities of Cuban cultural and social life and Alicia herself.

If you want to find out more about the life of this world-class artist and the National Ballet of Cuba, we invite you to visit the National Dance Museum, located on the corner of Línea and G, in one of Vedado's most central areas. The Museum, conceived and sponsored by Alicia Alonso, has a wide collection of manuscripts, photographs, theatrical costumes, medals, posters, sketches of costumes and decorations, rare bibliographic editions, paintings, sculptures and other pieces. In addition to its permanent collection, it has temporary exhibitions, dedicated to varied thematic exhibitions.



  
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# Hostel Vedado Azul, a New Offer for Tourism in Havana



Coinciding with the celebration in Havana of the International Tourism Fair, FITCuba 2019, the Islazul Hotel Group opened its most recent novelty in Havana: the Hostel Vedado Azul.

Located in the central neighborhood of Vedado, this facility is the first of its kind in Cuba, and in its conception the use of space and economic prices are combined.

The Hostel Vedado Azul is ideal for students and groups of friends interested in touring the city and getting to know the cultural heritage of the Cuban capital, thanks to the proximity to places such as Revolution Square, the Malecón, the University of Havana and well-known cultural and gastronomic centers.

The Hostel Vedado Azul has 20 air-conditioned rooms, distributed on the first and second floor of the property and

equipped with comfortable bunk beds. It has a social area to watch TV, a snack bar, cafeteria, portal overlooking the city and Internet access.

Reservations for this new Hostel are available at the sales agencies owned by the Islazul Hotel Group and on its website ([www.islazul.cu](http://www.islazul.cu)).

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[www.islazul.cu](http://www.islazul.cu)



# Three Excursions to Celebrate Havana's Five Centuries

The countdown continues for the celebration of the five centuries of the Cuban capital and tourist companies are offering visitors their proposals, which highlight the unique and special character of this township. The Cubatur travel agency proposes three excursions specially dedicated to discovering iconic places of old and modern Havana.

The first offer, the *"Mi Habana 500 años después"* (My Havana 500 years later) City Tour has daily departures to the Historic Center from all hotels in the capital. The tour of the area, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, is done on foot with specialized guides, and includes visits to the Plaza de Armas, Plaza Vieja, Plaza de San Francisco and Cathedral Square; you will also visit the Temple and the Castillo de la Real Fuerza, an important part of the old defensive system against corsair and pirate attacks. A special protagonist in this City Tour is the National Capitol, an

imposing building inaugurated in 1929 which was the seat of the two chambers of the Congress of the Republic, and after the revolutionary triumph on January 1, 1959 was the venue of the Academy of Sciences and then of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment. Today, after a total renovation of all its areas, it is the seat of the National Assembly of People's Power.

After lunch at a restaurant in the area, the tour continues to the Vedado neighborhood, with a panoramic visit of the University of Havana and a stop at Revolution Square with free time for photos. The tour lasts approximately six hours, and offers a special 25% discount for children from 3 to 12 years old (it is free of charge for children under 2 years old).

For its part, *"Habana, cultura y religión"* (Havana, culture and religion) is an excursion that proposes discovering the many nuances of syncretism between

African and European beliefs. The Church of Our Lady of Regla and the Historical Museum of Guanabacoa, which holds an important collection of objects linked to Afro-Cuban religious cults, will be visited. The excursion culminates with the climb to the sculpture of the Christ of Havana, the work of Cuban artist Jilma Madera, which dominates the entrance to the capital's bay.

The third option, a mini-circuit called *"Mi Habana 500"* (My Havana 500), includes visits to the squares of the Historic Center, where you can admire buildings such as the Cathedral, the Palace of the Second Corporal, the Convent of San Francisco and other important examples of colonial architecture. The route then moves on to contemporary Havana, visiting the FOCSA building, the Hotel Nacional de Cuba, the University and the Iberostar Habana Riviera Hotel, where a Cuban lunch will be served. In the afternoon, Colón Cemetery and its main funerary monuments will be visited, then comes the crossing of the bridge over the Almendares River and a walk through the modern neighborhood of Siboney, before returning to the Historic Center and finalizing the circuit.

These excursions include transportation and assistance of Cubatur guides in the language of visitors. They can be booked at the agency's points of sale, located in most hotels in the capital, or via email [dircomercial@cmatriz.cbt.tur.cu](mailto:dircomercial@cmatriz.cbt.tur.cu)



cubatur



# Villa Laguna Grande

## Nature and Adventure with Campismo Popular

Throughout Cuba, the Campismo Popular Business Group proposes its international villas to travelers looking to experience a vacation of nature and adventure. Located in environments chosen for their beauty and uniqueness, these camping facilities are integrated into the diversification strategy promoted by the island's tourism authorities.

An example of this determination is the Villa Laguna Grande, located on the Guanahacabibes peninsula, 22 km from the town of Sandino in the western province of Pinar del Río. The villa is

located in a space of great biodiversity, where wetlands, tropical forests, beaches, reefs, and the lagoon that gives it its name coexist in an area of 15 km. This area, due to the natural richness of all its species, was declared in 1987 a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO.

Villa Laguna Grande offers 12 cabanas, each for two people. All have air

conditioning, TV, minibar, hot and cold water. It has a 24-hour reception and infirmary service, a cafeteria, a bar named La Laguna and a restaurant. For recreation, it features options such as boat rentals in the lagoon, boat rides, pool tables and visits to nearby attractions such as Punta Colorada beach.

Sport fishing buffs will especially find their ideal space in Villa Laguna Grande, as there are daily departures on boats or motorboat to catch the various species that abound in the lagoon. A specialized guide always accompanies the boats, and the tour lasts for approximately four hours.

Tilapias, biajacas, Chinese carp, eels and tench are among the fish that can be caught in this lagoon throughout the year. The trout has a defined fishing season between the months of November and March, and the shad is only caught from May to September. As to the guabinas – an endemic species in danger of extinction –, the turtles and crocodiles, they are under a permanent ban for their protection. However, it is possible to enjoy their contemplation and observing their customs during the tours of the lagoon itself or the surrounding wetlands.

The link between man and nature – a fundamental premise under which the Campismo Popular emerged in Cuba 36 years ago – today finds its best expression in the Villa Laguna Grande. Visitors from all over the world can discover in Cuba an authentic and integral destination, which beyond its sun and beaches offers them its very well-preserved natural beauties.



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# Fábrica de Arte

There is a place in Havana that you have to get to know on your next visit. It is the Fábrica de Arte Cubano (Factory of Cuban Art, known as FAC for its acronym in Spanish), a space where the most diverse avant-garde artistic manifestations converge. It is not one more cultural center, but a project that seeks to involve visitors in an environment in which music, theater, dance, performance, photography, audiovisual, fashion and plastic arts are mixed.



This initiative, which promotes the work of renowned creators and of others almost unknown, but transcendent for their work in the communities, is due to the popular and multifaceted Cuban musician X Alfonso. The concept, curatorship and artistic functioning is led by X Alfonso, who develops it together with the specialists of each artistic area, all of them also talented young artists.

The Fábrica de Arte Cubano is defined as a large laboratory of interdisciplinary creation, which exhibits the best of contemporary art in Cuba and defends a social and community approach. An old

vegetable oil factory has been transformed into a varied space, which is open to the exchange of ideas between the artistic manifestations coexisting in the same building and the spectator.

With the purpose of pleasing a heterogeneous audience, the center has multifunctional and concert halls, galleries, dressing rooms, an outdoor patio, publishing and computer rooms, and spaces for gastronomy.

What is today the Fábrica de Arte Cubano began as an itinerant project





# Cubano



FAC is an artistic project driven by the need to rescue, support and promote the work of exponents of all branches of art such as cinema, music, dance, theater, visual arts, photography, fashion, graphic design and architecture.

in 2008, initially in the warehouses of the Pabexpo fairgrounds, where thousands of young people gathered every weekend. In 2012, at the request of X Alfonso, the project was moved to some idle warehouses which used to house a vegetable oil factory, very close to the mouth of the Almendares River. In a few years "the FAC," as many call it, has become a place of reference for those who live or visit Havana.

The programming of the Fábrica de Arte Cubano is very varied and attractive, and is based on the proposals received by specialists in each area.

Artistic quality is the only requirement, and curatorial coherence is recognized beyond diversity. It is an invitation to appreciate art in an unconventional way, beyond what museums and galleries traditionally offer. Since its inauguration, celebrities such as Lady Gaga, Michelle Obama, Mick Jagger and Bon Jovi have visited this unique place, something that has contributed to increasing its fame.

The Fábrica de Arte Cubano has been offering for some years its spaces to important international events that are held in the capital, such as the Havana

World Music Festival, the International Jazz Plaza Festival or the Latin American Film Festival, just to name a few. Much more could be said, but there will be nothing better than the experience of visiting this place, which, next to the chimney of an old oil factory, is an invitation, in a very novel way, to approach contemporary Cuban culture.

## Fábrica de Arte Cubano

Calle 26 y Calle 11,  
El Vedado, La Habana  
infofabricadearte@gmail.com



# Palmares Novelties in Havana



The Palmares Non-Hotel Company proposes to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Havana by carrying out a group of renovations to several of its facilities, at the same time as reconverting others to create new spaces and gastronomic offers.

The facilities located in the main streets of the city and those that will represent a greater impact among the locals and visitors who arrive to the capital are part of its priority. Among the main projects is the one that has turned the José Antonio Echevarría Social Workers' Club into an original space, designed for the family. An investment process has made it possible to rescue the installation, equipping it with high-standard attractions where clients can find different services such as: restaurants, cafeteria, disco, games room, shops, a multifunctional lounge, bars, swimming pools, and sports areas.

For its part, the Giraldilla Complex is taking advantage of the attributes of the house in which it is located, with an eclectic style and with large halls and outdoor areas, to form a Multispace Family Leisure Complex, which will include a restaurant bar, wine cellar, shop, swimming pool, water garden and children's playground with areas for shade and rest, featuring gastronomic services for the sale of light foods.

In the surrounding areas of Playas del

Este de La Habana, another Palmares facility is celebrating the city's 500 years: the Finca Guanabito. There are plans to operate a complex that has a farmer house, located near traditional crops of the Cuban countryside. It also has a Beach Bar-Restaurant specializing in Cuban food, as well as a swimming pool, a grill in the rest area, a rustic playground and other attractions that will facilitate recreation in a natural environment.

Among the facilities that are celebrating Havana's 500 years is the former Cafetería Vea, located on Galiano and San Rafael streets, which has been turned into the *Café Boulevard* with a new distribution of spaces and a renewed image. For its part, the former Fabio Restaurant, located at the corner of 17th and J streets in Vedado, is now

the *Cafesón*, which will have a café on the ground floor and spaces for traditional Cuban music on the upper floor, where dance lessons and social events can be carried out. The *Bar 50* will be located on the corner of 17 and 10 streets in Vedado, and it features an atmosphere related to the musical movements and personalities of that time, through photos and other decorative objects.

But Palmares proposes much more in 2019, in which the 80th anniversary of the Tropicana Cabaret is being celebrated, since in addition to the reopening of La Torre Restaurant, located on the 33rd floor of the Focsa building, which is currently undergoing an ambitious investment plan, emblematic facilities such as the gardens of the 1830 Restaurant, Don Cangrejo, La Cecilia and La Ferminia restaurants are in several renovation stages.






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# San Cristóbal Invites You to Discover



To celebrate the 500th anniversary of the founding of the Township of San Cristóbal de La Habana, and as part of the activities sponsored by the Office of the City Historian, the San Cristóbal S.A. Travel Agency is inviting you to rediscover Havana, with its inexhaustible cultural and patrimonial wealth.

In this issue we are presenting the new routes you can take along with the specialized guides that the agency has, connoisseurs of the environment of historic Havana and active defenders of responsible tourism, that you visit and at the same time learn to love the city.

## **FIVE CENTURIES OF LIGHTS**

Enjoying Havana nights and appreciating the majesty of emblematic buildings, artistically illuminated to highlight the beauty of their architecture, will be an incomparable experience.

This tour begins at the end of the afternoon (5:30 p.m.) with the transfer of participants in classic cars to the Cervantes Hall, to enjoy a private concert and a glass of wine. Then they will go to the Capitol building, which will receive them fully lit up for the occasion, where a guided night visit will take place. They will then go, always in classic cars, to the Hotel Nacional de Cuba, where they will enjoy a traditional cocktail at the Bar Vista al Golfo and a gala dinner at the elegant Salón Aguiar, with the option of attending night shows to close the night. This VIP tour will be held on a monthly basis.

## **500 YEARS OF HOPE**

In this tour San Cristóbal proposes a sociocultural approach to the main manifestations of Cuban popular religiosity, to discover its history, the process of transculturation and miscegenation and the influences of

other cultures that arrived in Cuba.

Religious institutions will be visited, beginning the tour in the foundational site of the City and then reaching the House of Arabs and the Prayer Room for Muslims, the House of Africa, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Brigidine Sisters Convent, the Catholic Church of Our Lady of Mercy, the Russian Orthodox Church, the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Regla, the Jewish Community Council, Colón Cemetery and the Callejón de Hammel. For lunch, a tasting of cuisine inspired on Afro-Cuban customs and a



# Havana



visited, to exchange with professors and students of the Mejor Gaspar de Jovellanos School Workshop. Several social and cultural projects will be visited and finally there will be a specialized tour of the National Capitol building, to get to know about the enormous and patient work of a multidisciplinary team of the Office of the Historian, immersed in its restoration. Before concluding the tour, you will enjoy a lunch-tasting of typical Cuban food in an intentionally selected private restaurant. The tour will have a weekly frequency and will start at 9:00 a.m.

## HABANA 4.0

The use of new technologies as tools to promote heritage, which is a dynamic invitation and a very interesting way to discover the city, will be the proposal of San Cristóbal for visitors of all ages. The invitation is to visit, from a refreshing and innovative outlook, the museums and spaces of the Historical Center, to get to know the treasures they house. It is about enjoying the city and at the same time promoting learning and fun, through the use of attractive and easy-to-use technological means that will stimulate travelers' interaction.

The tour begins at the Visitor Center of the Historic Center of Havana, a unique space of its kind, dedicated to the interpretation of heritage. Following is a visit to the Underwater Archaeology exhibition of the Castillo de la Real Fuerza and the former Palace of the Second Corporal, model and pioneer of modern museography in the city. In the surroundings of the Plaza Vieja there is the visit to the Planetarium of Havana and the Adolescent Center. The tour will have a weekly frequency and will start at 9:00 a.m.

specialized foray into rites and legends of the religion of African origin has been reserved. This weekly frequency tour will start at 9:00 a.m.

## PRAISE TO RESTORATION AND TRUTH

This will be a revealing opportunity to delve into the process of integral revitalization of the Historic Center of Havana, hand in hand with the main protagonists of the restoration odyssey led by the Office of the City Historian. Participants will have exceptional access to completed and ongoing works, to exchange with designers, architects, engineers and historians.

The former Palace of the Second Corporal, an example of heritage rehabilitation and rescue of historical memory, will be visited. There, an institutional presentation will be made and the territorial management model will be shown. Completed and ongoing works in the Historic Center will also be



"The 500th anniversary of Havana would be useless if it were only a point of reference. It is not a goal, but a milestone to continue working passionately for the City. It has to become a looking back at its rich history because you cannot go to the future without the past. We must feel the pride of Havana not as an exclusive or excluding pride, but as a pride that belongs to everyone."

*Dr. Eusebio Leal Spengler  
City of Havana Historian*

## New tours to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the capital



# Traveling in Time Classic Cars in Havana

Each year, thousands of travelers find Havana is their ideal destination for vacationing. The Cuban capital combines colonial airs with the modern life of its streets, which gives it a unique charm that makes visitors fall in love with it. One of the most notable contrasts enjoyed in the city comes from the many classic cars that circulate through its streets.

Indeed, Cuba and especially its capital, have an astonishing variety of these cars, the vast majority manufactured in the 1940s and 1950s. It is said that there is a total of between 60,000 and 75,000 "almendrones" as they are also popularly known. U.S. cars like Chevrolet, Buick, Ford, Cadillac and Dodge especially stand out, together with English cars and of other nationalities.

Discovering Havana in one of these rolling curiosities is an unparalleled experience. With bodywork, interiors and engines skillfully restored thanks to the ingenuity of their owners, adventurers who ride in them manage to transport themselves in time and add a new experience to their memories. It's not difficult to access them, as many travel agencies and tour operators offer tours in these cars. Those who organize their own trip can find them in many areas of the city and receive from their drivers and guides interesting explanations about the capital's iconic sites.

The routes usually include emblematic places such as the Paseo del Prado, the Malecon, the fortresses that surround the bay and other sites of modern



Havana, such as Fifth Avenue, 23rd Street, Avenue of the Presidents, Revolution Square and the University of Havana.

Over the years, numerous celebrities such as Mick Jagger, Rihanna, Ozzy Osbourne, Gilberto Santa Rosa and very recently Prince Charles of the United Kingdom, have enjoyed the experience of driving one of these amazingly conserved jewels.

With these details, the invitation is made: include the spell of vintage cars on your list of experiences to live in Havana...and travel in time, but always in a wonderful reality.



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