Bicycle Tours in Cuba: Cycling Western Cuba

OVERVIEW

Bicycle off the tourist track and experience the rich culture of western Cuba. We'll explore some of Cuba's vibrant towns adorned with neoclassical architecture, see Cuban cigars rolled, savor some of the finest food this country has to offer, and spend time with locals to learn about the rich history of this charming country. The stunning route shows-off the best of Cuba's crystal blue waters and lush forests.

Although this is a Classic tour, there are a few elements that make this unique to the tour style and deserve your attention prior to booking. PLEASE READ these details to make sure you aware what joining this tour entails.

If this sounds great but you'd like to explore more of Cuba, join us on the Grand Cycling Tour of Cuba.

HIGHLIGHTS

Cycle To The "Rainbow of Cuba", Tobacco Plantation/Cuban Cigars , San Carlos Valley, Limestone caves of Viñales, Organic farm visit, La Sierra del Rosario Biosphere Reserve

TOUR FACTS

Tour Style	Classic: Learn more about our Classic tours at https://www.experienceplus.com/choosing-the-best-tour/styles/classic
Includes	7 nights accommodation, meals as noted on itinerary, full van support, bilingual tour leaders, all activities as described in itinerary - compliant with Support for the Cuban People General License for group travel.
Countries	Cuba
Begin/End	Havana
Arrive/Depart	Havana
Total Distance	295 km (157 miles)
Avg. Daily Distance	59 km (31 miles) per riding day
Tour Level	
Keep in Mind	We work hard to maintain consistency across all of our tours, but some trips have unique differences. Here are some things to keep in mind about this tour. There will be sections of the route where the roads have potholes and are in rough condition. Some days there are optional longer rides available. Shuttles in and out of towns are included more than usual on this tour due to lodging logistics. We will likely not be able to mark the route with arrows on Cuba tours. As a result, you will find increased Tour Leader and driver support on Cuba tours. You will still be able to ride independently and at your own speed without the worry to check cue sheets, tracks, or the fear of getting lost. Support will be there, and our Tour Leaders will discuss the upcoming routes during daily briefings, as always. We recommend your bringing attitude of flexibility and an understanding that you may not find the amenities that exist in other destinations. But, a trip to Cuba could be one of the most fulfilling travel experiences you can have.

Please Note: We may have small itinerary changes to this trip after you download this PDF document. If you have booked this trip and there are major changes, including changes to towns or activities, we'll email you directly. However, you should always be sure to refer to the online itinerary for the most up-to-date trip information including arrival and departure tips before you depart for your trip:
https://www.experienceplus.com/bike-tours/cuba/bicycling-western-cuba

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DATES & PRICES

DAILY RIDE SUMMARY

Day	Distance/Gain	Terrain	Day Level	Notes
1	Test ride			
2	71km / 369m (44mi / 1210ft)	Rolling hills		
3	61km / 351m (38mi / 1151ft)	Gentle		
4	60km / 351m (37mi / 1151ft)	Gentle		
5	Hike option			Hike option
6	61km / 786m (38mi / 2578ft)	Hilly		
7	42km / 300m (26mi / 984ft)	Gentle		
8	Last Day			

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ARRIVAL INFO

Meeting time 2 p.m. - on Day 1 meet your fellow cyclists and Tour Leaders at the Day 1 Hotel specified on the itinerary.

Note: As you are planning, remember that the hotels listed in our itineraries are our primary hotels subject to change. For extra hotel nights please contact, to check with us if your tour departure is guaranteed. If your tour departure is out further than 6 months, please also check with us as there might be slight changes to the itinerary.

The fare and timing information listed below is approximate.

We recommend flying in to the Jose Marti International Airport in Havana (HAV):

- Taxi from the airport to the Day 1 hotel (20 min / USD 35-40). Taxis are available outside the airport.

DEPARTURE INFO

Your trip ends this morning after breakfast.

The below information will help you plan your departure. For more tips or other routes, you might like Rome2Rio. The fare and timing information listed below is approximate.

We recommend flying out of the Jose Marti International Airport in Havana (HAV):

- Taxi from the ending hotel to the airport (20 min / USD 35-40). The hotel can arrange this for you.

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Welcome to Havana

DAY 1: Sun, Feb 17th

Highlights Explore Havana, walking tour, fit Bikes

Bienvenidos a Cuba! We'll gather this afternoon at our Havana hotel for a walking tour. Once you have satisfied your appetite with a welcome dinner together, you can head back to the hotel, or stay out and take in the sights and music of Old Town Havana.

Meals Dinner

Lodging Hotel Grand Aston La Habana

Transfer and bike to Soroa

DAY 2: Mon, Feb 18th

Highlights Bicycle Carretera Central, cycle to the Rainbow of Cuba

We shuttle out of Havana this morning to begin our ride through western Cuba. The bustle of the city fades away as you bicycle quiet roads into the hills toward the UNESCO Sierra del Rosario Biosphere Reserve that surrounds the town of Soroa in the Cordillera de Guaniguanico. Aptly named the "Rainbow of Cuba," the reserve brims with rivers, waterfalls, and orchid-laden trees. Our hotel is nestled in a lush and tropical garden filled with orchids. Have a cool drink by the pool before dinner.

Distance 71 km (44 mi)

Gain 369 m (1210 ft)

Terrain Rolling hills

Level

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Lodging Horizontes Villa Soroa

Soroa to San Diego de los Baños and Pinar del Rio

DAY 3: Tue, Feb 19th

Highlights Learn about Cuban Cigars

Follow Cuba's Carretera Central as you pedal deep into the heart of tobacco country. Coast down to the plains and wind your way through small towns to San Diego de Los Baños, a once-popular thermal hot springs vacation town. After our ride, we'll shuttle to Pinar del Rio. This evening we'll visit a local arts organization that provides much-needed support to adults and kids with developmental disabilities.

Distance 61 km (38 mi)

Gain 351 m (1151 ft)

Terrain Gentle

Level

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

Lodging Hotel Vueltabajo

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Pinar to Viñales

DAY 4: Wed, Feb 20th

Highlights Mogotes and limestone caves

Today we continue West from Pinar del Río. After a shuttle out of town, we start our ride crossing the Sierra de los Organos and follow the downhill in the beautiful Viñales Valley. The stocky limestone "mogotes" abruptly rise from flat plains, giving the valley a fantastical appearance.

Distance 60 km (37 mi)

Gain 351 m (1151 ft)

Terrain Gentle

Level

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Lodging Horizontes Los Jazmines
Hotel Horizontes La Ermita

Viñales - Rest day

DAY 5: Thu, Feb 21st

Highlights Explore the limestone caves of Vinales, visit an organic farm

Take the day to stretch out your legs and explore the wonderful town of Viñales and its surrounding valley, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999 for its outstanding natural beauty, unique landscape, and traditional agricultural practices. We'll organize a group hike to explore the mogotes before heading to lunch at a local organic farm where we'll learn about smallholder sustainable agriculture.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

Lodging Horizontes Los Jazmines
Hotel Horizontes La Ermita

Viñales to Las Terrazas

DAY 6: Fri, Feb 22nd

Highlights Pedal the Carretera del Norte

We pedal north and away from the tourist track today through small rural farming villages, crossing the mountains to the village of Entronque de Herradura where we'll regroup, have lunch and then shuttle back to the hills for a relaxing stay at Las Terrazas, a small community with a vibrant creative scene within an eco-community and nature reserve.

Distance 61 km (38 mi)

Gain 786 m (2578 ft)

Terrain Hilly

Level

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Lodging Hotel Moka

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Las Terrazas to Havana

DAY 7: Sat, Feb 23rd

Highlights Pedal ridgeline roads

Our ride today takes us through a variety of routes with varying terrains and views. Enjoy some of Cuba's lushest landscapes as we head out of La Sierra del Rosario Biosphere Reserve where stretches of forests and grasslands, rounded hills and waving royal palm trees surround you. The beautiful lush hills then give way to cultivated farmland and small rural towns as we pedal our final kilometers outside Havana. We'll regroup for a picnic lunch before shuttling into Havana. We'll celebrate the end of our tour in style tonight at a local restaurant in Havana for dinner.

Distance 42 km (26 mi)

Gain 300 m (984 ft)

Terrain Gentle

Level

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Lodging Hotel Grand Aston La Habana

Adios Havana!

DAY 8: Sun, Feb 24th

Highlights Explore Havana or head home

We'll have breakfast early before sending you on your way to explore Cuba or head home! If this sounds great but you're short on time check out our Bicycling Central Cuba or Bicycling Western Cuba

Meals Breakfast

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INCLUDED

WHAT'S INCLUDED

When you book a tour with ExperiencePlus! our goal is to ensure your only focus each day is to hop on your bike and explore scenic cycling routes in new destinations. Inclusions may differ depending on which tour style you pick but all ExperiencePlus! tours include what we believe are the most important aspects of a bike tour.

- On all our guided tours, you can expect superb tour leaders who are fun and multilingual, bi-cultural experts, and cycling enthusiasts. They will support you and help you navigate confidently on and off the road.
- High quality bikes selected for the terrain you are cycling on and correct bike fitting to ensure comfortable cycling.
- Thoughtfully designed itineraries and routes that take advantage of stunning cycling destinations and the freedom of bicycle travel. Plus, all the logistics are taken care of.

PRE-TRIP SUPPORT

- Bicycle training programs designed specifically for your tour and fitness level.
- Planning tips on what to pack, hotel recommendations and other helpful details from our Travel Planning Pages: https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/
- A gift of your choice (cycling jerseys, socks, or a t-shirt) as our way of saying thanks for choosing EP!
- *Traveler services including assistance booking extra nights at the tour starting and ending hotels. (*Explorer and Self-guided tour styles excluded)
- See "What's Included" for tour-specific inclusions and be sure to check the "Keep in mind" section under "Tour Summary" online.

BICYCLES

For a full list of what's included with your bike see: https://www.experienceplus.com/what-to-expect/our-bikes/. If you would like to bring your own pedals and shoes we recommend doing so. On Explorer and Self-guided tours we include a GPS device on all bikes.

NAVIGATING, DAYSHEETS AND VAN SUPPORT:

On a guided tour, each day you'll receive a daily briefing with a highlighted route map. On a self-guided tour you'll receive a comprehensive orientation and bike fit on the first or second morning of your trip. About 14 days prior to your tour, we will provide you with access to RideWithGPS Experiences, our platform to distribute information on each tour day's activities, meals and ride, as well as GPS-routes.

Daily information on the RWGPS Experience includes important phone numbers, hotel information and interesting historical and cultural information. On Classic, Bike and Boat and Expedition tours we also navigate using our signature chalk dust arrows. Our arrows make navigating very easy—you may never need to look at the map. On Explorer tours the terrain and destinations are not always conducive to using chalk arrows so we'll ride as a group or you can navigate on your own with the GPS tracks.

On a guided tour you will have a support van providing water and snack resupply, mechanical assistance, a lift for tired cyclists, and luggage transfers. On some itineraries the van will not be able to follow sections of the route that stray from the road for example onto cycling paths. On a self-guided tour you will have luggage transfers that will transport your bags from one hotel to the other.

Need More Miles? On many days it is possible to add miles to the day, just talk to your tour leader about your options or ask when you are planning your self-guided trip.

Need Fewer Miles? On a guided tour, the support van is available to offer snacks, encouragement, a lift over the next hill, or to the next hotel. On a self-guided tour we recommend you review the tour level to make sure you can ride the full distance.

ON A GUIDED TOUR: TIPPING YOUR TOUR LEADERS

If you feel your tour leader team has demonstrated great expertise and service, common practice within the travel industry is to tip. Tipping is voluntary and greatly appreciated, and gratuity amounts vary widely. Should you decide to leave a tip, as a guideline, we suggest 5-8% of the tour cost per traveler — this is for the entire tour leader team, not each tour leader. You can give the tip to any member of the tour leader team, as they share it evenly. In order to avoid social tensions, we encourage you to tip as individuals and not as a group. If you feel your tour leaders did not quite meet your expectations, please let us know. *Tips are included in Expedition pricing and not expected on self-guided tours.

PHOTOS:

By reserving space on tour, you agree that ExperiencePlus! may use, re-use and reproduce any images, photos or videos sent to us, or that are taken by our guides or other travelers, in any medium, including but not limited to print, electronic media, or Internet, free of charge and without your right to inspection. If you do not want us to use any images of you, you must inform us or your tour leader in writing at the start of the tour.

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STYLES

OUR TOUR STYLES

We realize that one size does not fit all and there are as many ways to travel by bike as there are different types of cyclists and travelers.

Classic Tours: Dream of traveling through a region by bike? Our unique chalk arrows lead the way as you explore small villages and world-class cities while traveling at your own pace.

- Tour Length: 7-15 days
- Hotels: 3-4 stars.
- Road Type: Pavement, bike paths.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation and support: 2-3 tour leaders, van support and chalk arrows
- Price: $$$
- Tour Levels: 1-4.5

Explorer Tours: Travel further off the beaten path - we let the destination dictate where we ride, not the road surface.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days
- Hotels: 2-3 stars
- Road Type: 30-50% gravel or hard-packed dirt, the rest pavement.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation and support: 2 tour leaders, GPS and van support
- Price: $$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Bike and Boat Tours: Spend days cycling and your evenings relaxing on a private boat as you cruise to your next port.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days, some itineraries have land-based extensions available.
- Barge/Boat: 3-4 star, same cabin for the entire boat trip except for land extension.
- Road Type: Pavement
- Navigation and support:2 tour leaders, van Support and chalk arrows
- Price: $$$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Expedition Tours: Multi-week tours where you spend long days on the bike with the added satisfaction of pedaling across multiple countries.

- Tour Length: 15-40 days
- Hotels: 2-4 stars
- Road Type: Pavement with occasional hard-packed dirt or gravel.
- Multi-night Stays: On rest days
- Navigation and support: 2-3 tour leaders, van Support and chalk arrows
- Price: $$$
- Tour Levels: 4-5

Self-guided Tours: perfect for those who have an independent spirit, want the flexibility to choose their own dates, and don't need van support or tour leaders during their trip. Every departure is a private tour!

- Tour Length: 6-8-days
- Hotels: 3-4 stars
- Road Type: Pavement with occasional hard-packed dirt or gravel on bike paths.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation and support: GPS routes and luggage transfers
- Price: $
- Tour Levels: 1-4

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LEVELS

We know that travelers have different cycling abilities and preferences for the number of miles, elevation gain, and type of terrain they want on a bicycle tour. We have rated each day of our tours on a scale of 1-5. Our Tour Level's are an average of the day rating on tour. We recommend looking at the daily summary on the PDF and Website Itinerary to see details about each day's ride.

LEVEL 1 - 1.5

Level 1 - 1.5 days will be mostly flat and the distance will rarely exceed 50 km. Level 1 - 1.5 tours are suitable for beginner cyclists, those traveling by bicycle for the first time, or multi-generational groups with a desire for a nice and easy bike tour with plenty of opportunities to stop and enjoy the scenery.

- **Average daily mileage:** 20 - 50 km. (12-30 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 0-400 M (0-1200 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly flat with occasional gentle climbs at a grade of less than 3%, that are sustained for a maximum of 3km. There might be a steeper but short climb.

LEVEL 2 - 2.5

Level 2 - 2.5 days are ideal for riders newer to bicycle touring looking for a bit of a challenge.

- **Average daily mileage:** 30-60 km (18 - 38 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 400 - 600 m (1200 - 2000 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly rolling terrain around 3%. Presents multiple 3% to 4% climbs. May present an occasional steeper climb.

LEVEL 3 - 3.5

Level 3 - 3.5 days are great for active individuals (who run, bike, swim etc. on a regular basis).

- **Average daily mileage:** 50-70km (30-45 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 600 - 900m (2000 - 2800 ft)
- **Terrain:** Multiple Climbs with grades of 4 - 6%.

LEVEL 4 - 4.5

Level 4 - 4.5 days are the best riding days for avid cyclists or very active individuals who are excited to challenge themselves on a bike.

- **Average daily mileage:** 70-90km (45-55 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 900-1000m (2800-3600 ft)
- **Terrain:** Presents multiple steep climbs (6% to 8% grades), 1 to 3km long. Alternatively, 4 — 6% grades for 6 kilometers or more.

LEVEL 5 (EXPEDITION)

Our Expedition tours designed for strong riders looking for the challenge of riding across countries or continents. Long daily mileages mean limited van support so we recommend these tours for riders who feel confident that they can ride every mile.

- **Average daily mileage:** 120 km (75 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 500-2000 m (1600- 6500 ft)
- **Terrain:** Expect and be prepared for any and everything.

REMEMBER

A tour level is the average of the days so we recommend you look at the day level on each day of the itinerary to help you better understand what to expect from your tour.

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CHECKLIST

TO DO ONCE YOU'VE BOOKED!

- ☐ Read through your Reservation Confirmation and After you Book Information (link sent to you by e-mail), it has important information to help you plan your trip!
- ☐ Check the date on your passport. The expiration date should extend three months past your date of return to your home country.
- ☐ Complete the Customer Information Form: https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/customer-information-form/
- ☐ We recommend you take out travel insurance. Find details at https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/travel-insurance/
- ☐ Choose a bicycle training program: https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/bicycle-tour-training/
- ☐ Peruse our country-specific Travel Planning Pages: https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/

6 TO 3 MONTHS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- ☐ Refer to your Tour Packet/Itinerary to see step-by-step arrival and departure information for your tour, meeting place and time, if a reservation on a complimentary ExperiencePlus! Shuttle (if applicable) is required, along with other important information to help you plan your arrival and departure.
- ☐ Reserve your flights after you know you have a confirmed tour departure. Please check with our office if you do not know if your trip is confirmed.
- ☐ Book your pre and post-tour hotel nights.
- ☐ Begin your chosen training program
- ☐ Final payment is due 90 days (120 days for Bike & Barge/Boat tours) prior to the tour start. Please refer to your Invoice and the Final Payment Reminder e-mail which we send 10 days prior to the due date for detailed instructions.

6 TO 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- ☐ Start reading one of the books or watching one of the movies from our Reading and Movie Lists: https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/.
- ☐ Plan what you are going to pack and start packing! Refer to the Packing Lists for suggestions, and see luggage limits at https://www.experienceplus.com/travel-planning/packing/.
- ☐ We'll email you your access code to Digital Daysheets, Hotel Itinerary, Participant Roster, names and contact information of your Tour Leaders, emergency phone numbers, and other important departure information about 2 weeks prior to your tour start date. All this will be provided to you via a feature called Experiences via the RideWithGPS App (tracks available but not necessary for navigation on Classic, Expedition and Bike & Boat tours).

DAY OF YOUR FLIGHT

Get as much sleep on the plane as you can. Pack one day of cycling gear in your carry-on just in case. See you soon!

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