



## Old Havana

"My Daiquirí at the Floridita and my Mojito at the Bodeguita" used to say Hemingway. He drank lots of them. During the seven years he lived in one of the rooms of the Ambos Mundos hotel, he was at a walking distance of these two bars.

The Old Havana, declared world heritage of mankind cannot be seen in this short distance between the two bars. You can have a general idea after one hour walk if you visit its main four squares: the Cathedral Square, the Arms Square, Saint Francis of Assisi Square and Old Square. If you stay ten years, you won't be able to visit all of it. The biggest colonial city in the Caribbean, that was by far the richest, treasures history, of course, but also an artistic tradition with the numerous galleries; a craft tradition, thanks to the expansion of many manual trades and an extremely rich architecture. There are many ways to visit the Old Havana: panoramic visit but also the architecture, the restoration and its trades, the culinary art, the religion, and the history of four centuries... The Cultural Rally is appreciated because it facilitates the discovery of such richness, most of all because it is highly recreational and anecdotic.

### A panoramic visit of the Old Havana

This visit is always made on foot and begins in one of the squares next to the bay of Havana: Saint Francis of Assisi Square, the Cathedral Square or the Arms Square. You will go from one square to the other (4) through different streets. It is a close circuit. If there are subgroups, it is easy to organize different routes.

There are different explanations for that: historical (since the arrival of Christopher Columbus until the past century); political and social (the Cuban system illustrated by the schools, the workshops, the groceries... anecdotes of the daily life.

A lot of bars and restaurants let you combine lunches and dinners, as well as the typical aperitif.

To visit the Old Havana at night is an attractive possibility because of the quality of the lighting.

There is also a very interesting possibility to find accommodation in a Hostel (their capacity varies: from 5 to 50 rooms) thanks to a network of small and well restored buildings where services are very correct.

Normally, any museum is visited during this tour. There are more than 100 museums just in the colonial part of the city. The most representative with the exception of thematic museums is the General Captains Museum or City Museum. There you will have an exhaustive idea of the history of the colonial and contemporary Havana.



## Thematic visits

With specialized guides, architects, historians, artists and professors of all subjects, you will obtain a very rich information about the most varied themes in relation with the present or the past life of the Capital of the Caribbean:

**Plastic arts:** two museums of Fine Art; numerous studios and workshops of important artists and others that are less known (painting, ceramics, sculpture, bronze...)

**Architecture:** colonial, eclectic, Art deco, Art nouveau...

**Restoration:** schools and studios and workshops (mural painting, ironwork, bronze, watchmaking, cabinetmaking, carving...)

**Music and dance:** chamber music, baroque music, symphonic music, Cuban traditional music, contemporary dance...

**Crafts:** craft fair; ceramic workshop; sewing, perfumes, chocolate, paper, tobacco...

**Religion:** the mosque, the Christian churches: orthodox, catholic; the seminary of Havana, the synagogue, the museum of Africa and the Afro-Cuban religions

**Bars and cocktails:** their offers, atmospheres and dimensions are very varied. You can find a tea room, a bar in the street with its rhythmic musical group, a bar in a luxurious hotel or the Rum museum.

## Cultural Rally

The Cultural Rally is frequently combined with the complete Rally of Havana you can make in a Coco Taxi or an American car of the fifties. This rally is made always on foot. Each team composed of 2, 3 or 4 persons has to answer the questions we give them. In an envelope given at the beginning of the rally, they will find 3 to 6 documents, according to the difficulty level chosen. The documents in question are photographs of different places in Havana, with an explanation note and a question about the photograph. The text is in French. Normally, it has nothing to do with logical aptitudes, knowledge or other parameters that depend on the personal culture of participants. The question is made in order to make the team go to the place that appears on the photograph in order to discover the enigma. An anecdote, an interesting information illustrates the question will always make the members of the team a new historical detail of Havana.

The questions are distributed in such a way that the teams have to go all over two or three neighborhoods of the Old Havana. Generally, the teams have different questions, even if they will conduct them to the same places.



## Duration and end

Two hours are enough to make this rally, but there is no limit of time. Only the price changes if there are extra hours.

From 9 to 11 a.m. or from 2 to 4 p.m. : the rally begins at the most convenient place for the teams like the most and normally ends at the Havana Club Museum (it can be modified) to drink a cocktail in the patio and give the winners a bottle of rum. The winner team is the one that arrives more at the agreed hour (neither before nor after) with the good answers to questions. A bad answer disqualifies.



**Havana Connaisseur**