

Photography in CUBA with Stephen Patterson and Robert Calnen



Don't miss this exciting opportunity to join Stephen Patterson and Robert Calnen, both renowned photographers on a journey through Cuba. You will visit the historic cities of Havana, Santiago, and Trinidad and also spend a few days at one of the most beautiful Caribbean beaches. Guided by professionals learn to capture with your cameras the stunning beauty of Cuba's natural and cultural wonders. Group Size 10-14

Feb 27 - March 13, 2014
14 nights land only
\$ 2980 dbl occupancy
flights from Halifax \$ 800



EXPLORE!

Tailormade

ITINERARY

Thursday 27 February 2014

(Airport Transfers)

Built around a deep natural harbour, Havana is one of the most impressive surviving colonial cities in the Americas, and the modern city presents an overwhelming feast for the senses, where crumbling tenement buildings and 50s style American Cadillacs rub shoulders with colonial grandeur and revolutionary zeal, and all to the hypnotic beat of the salsa. Founded in 1519 the city's fame and prestige only came about with the Spanish conquests of Mexico and Peru, when its strategic location at the mouth of the Gulf of Mexico saw it eclipse Santiago as the country's capital. For two centuries this remote outpost of the Spanish Empire played a pivotal role in the expansion of Spain's colonial interests in the Americas and at one time it was the most fortified city in the New World. The rise of American influence, in direct opposition to the fall of Spain's power in the region, saw the city hurl headlong into the 20th century, becoming a positive haven for the worst excesses of western decadence. This all came to an end in 1959, when Fidel Castro expelled the Americans and set the country on its socialist course into the history books.

Hotel Nacional

Spectacularly located in the Vedado district of central Havana, the Nacional is something of a landmark in Havana. Evoking the elegance and sophistication of the 1930s this historical institution has seen the likes of Churchill, Sinatra and Ernest Hemingway grace its neoclassical hallways. Even today the rich combination of Art Deco features it assures guests of a level of service that harks back to the golden days of Havana's glory years, and its expansive gardens and Moorish arcades present a truly unique vantage point overlooking the Florida Straits.

Meals Provided: None

Friday 28 February 2014 - In Havana

A tour of this most fascinating of cities this morning takes in some of the highlights of Havana's Vieja (Old) district and the art deco architecture along the coastal Malecon and through the Vedado and Miramar suburbs, where kids play baseball below rusting street lights. After taking in the opulent marbled grandeur of the Capitolio and the symbolic expanse of the Plaza de la Revolucion we take a stroll through old Havana, investigating the Vieja district, with its beautiful neoclassical buildings at the Plaza de Armas and its sumptuous baroque cathedral finishing with a lunch at the famous La Bodeguita del Medio, home to Hemingway's favourite Mojito. Havana truly is a city in which to immerse yourself fully and after our brief introduction to the city this morning the afternoon has been left free to continue exploring at your leisure. You may wish to visit the City Museum, or the captivating Museum of the Revolution, where you can find the revered hull of the Granma, the boat that brought Castro back from exile and onto the world stage in 1956. Alternatively you may wish to return to old Havana and enjoy a stroll through its cobbled streets, stopping to enjoy a mojito at a local bar, or perhaps wander through the stalls of the street markets in search of a bargain or two. Cooling breezes blowing in from the Caribbean freshen a lively sunset stroll along the Malecon, where fishermen and locals take in the magical setting before the imposing ramparts of its old Spanish forts.

Hotel Nacional

Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

Saturday 01 March 2014 - Visit Vinales

This morning we head towards Vinales located in the spectacular lush majesty of the Valle de Vinales, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Vinales nestles within the breathtaking landscapes of the Sierra de los Organos Mountains, a region that is home to some of the most spectacular scenery and colours in Cuba. Millions of years ago underground rivers cut tunnels

through the soft limestone hills and, as the roofs of these tunnels collapsed, they left behind strange hills or 'mogotes', that today present us with a staggering landscape of karst limestone valleys. We will take a walk amongst this spectacular landscape to El Palmito with the Mogotes towering above us passing through the tobacco and coffee plantations. This remarkably diverse area contains endemic flora and a rich selection of birdlife, including hummingbirds, Cuban trogons and mockingbirds. We will stop to have lunch before visiting the Cueva del Indio; the largest cave system in the country, filled with surreal rock formations and subterranean pools before returning to Havana this afternoon.

Hotel Nacional

Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

Sunday 02 March 2014 - Full day visit to Las Terrazas

Today we will spend the day at Las Terrazas, as an eco-tourism centre and where they do valuable research into biodiversity in the reserve. There are plenty of interesting walks in the rolling hills to choose from, all at around 500m above sea level. We will take an easy stroll around old coffee plantations and around the Terrazas community before lunch. Bird watching opportunities abound and we hope to sight the rare Cuban Trogon, Cuba's national bird, as well as small songbirds, including nightingales. Many migratory birds also visit this enchanted area. Other wildlife includes reptiles such as water lizards, and one of the smallest species of frogs in the world. You may also want to take an optional Zip wire trip in the Canopy or a swim in the San Juan River before returning to Havana.

Hotel Nacional

Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

Monday 03 March 2014 - Drive to Trinidad

Today we head to the colonial town of Trinidad. We drive through the citrus and sugar plantations onto the Zapata Peninsula stopping en route at one of the 'cenote' natural swimming pools. Continuing on to Playa Giron, we will visit the nearby museum dedicated to the infamous bay of pigs invasion where a US supported attack by Cuban Exiles failed to overthrow the Communist regime. Our journey then skirts the edge of the wooded Escambray mountains, hugging the coastline with the views over the sparkling turquoise waters. We will have a brief stop at Cienfuegos before continuing our journey. Upon arrival in Trinidad you will have some free time to wander through the centre of old Trinidad, a UNESCO World heritage Site, whose cobblestone streets and colonial architecture make it one of the most bewitching heritage sites in the country.

Meals Provided: Breakfast

Las Cuevas Hotel

Las Cuevas is perched on a hill overlooking Trinidad with fine views of the surrounding countryside. Within walking distance of town, the rooms are simple and set in a number of bungalows and small blocks across the grounds around the swimming pool.

Tuesday 04 March 2014 - In Trinidad; optional excursion to Playa Ancon

This morning we have a guided walk that takes us to the lovely setting of the central square and the cathedral, as well as the Museo de la Cultura and a local house, affording us a fascinating insight into what is in effect a stunning living museum. Founded in 1514, Trinidad became something of a colonial backwater over the intervening years, a haven for pirates and slave traders, until the arrival of French settlers fleeing the slave revolt in Haiti began arriving in the early years of the 19th century. These plantation owners began to build sugar mills in the nearby Valle de Los Ingenios and the town reinvented itself, going on to be responsible for a third of all Cuba's sugar production by the mid 19th century. This afternoon is left free to enjoy at your leisure, you can simply relax on the white sands of nearby Playa Ancon, or continue to wander through Trinidad's lovely colonial streets: a paradise for photographers.

Meals Provided: Breakfast

Las Cuevas Hotel

Wednesday 05 March 2014 - Drive to Bayamo

Today is a full days drive to Bayamo in South East Cuba. En route we will have a brief stop in Sancti Spiritus before we continue to Camaguey for lunch, another of Velasquez's seven villas and a city whose colonial heritage is hidden amongst a labyrinthine network of narrow streets that we will have time to wander through during our time here. We will complete today's journey in Bayamo, our stop over on route across the country.

Royalton Hotel

Located in Bayamos old quarter, close to the Cathedral of San Salvador and Parque Cespedes, Hotel Royalton dates back to the 1940s and affords some great opportunities for people watching from its street and rooftop terraces. This hotel cannot be categorised as in-style but it does provide a good base for our explorations at La Plata the unmissable highlight of eastern Cuba. On some departures we may have to stay at the Sierra Maestra a hotel of the same standard as the Royalton.

Meals Provided: Breakfast

Thursday 06 March 2014 - Visit Commandancia; Drive to Santiago

An early start sees us heading into the beautiful mountains landscapes of the Sierra Maestra this morning. Travelling via Bartolome Maso up the steep asphalt road to Alto de Naranjo we then head out into the mountains on foot, following in the famous footsteps of Che, Fidel and the rest of the revolutionary heroes, who for two years fought a protracted guerrilla war amongst these beautiful highlands. For much of 1957 the guerrillas kept on the move, playing a dangerous game of cat and mouse with Batista's troops, as they tried to gain a foothold after the unsuccessful uprising against Batista the previous year. Then in 1958 they set up a permanent base in the foothills of Pico Turquino, Cuba's highest peak. This base of operations came to be known as La Comandancia de La Plata and its location deep in the heart of this lush jungle landscape makes it one of the country's most fascinating and authentic experiences. A remarkable testament to the resolve and spirit of the revolutionaries, it captures a snapshot in time of one of the most pivotal periods in Cuba's history, one that was to have worldwide repercussions in later years. It was here that Fidel Castro began to formulate his plans for the future of the country and the site presents us with a captivating glimpse of life during those dangerous and heady days of the late '50s. There is a small museum and press office, a field kitchen and the command centre itself, complete with a fridge with bullet holes! We will complete our day with a journey to Santiago which has been at the epicentre of revolutionary ideals since the time of Cespedes. Founded by Diego Velazquez de Cuellar in 1514 the city has been at the heart of Cuban culture and history since its inception. Briefly the country's capital, it rose to prominence during the 17th and 18th centuries, with first the arrival of Spanish settlers from Jamaica, then French plantation owners from Haiti. The region saw much of the fighting of both wars for independence and it was in Santiago that success against Batista's forces was finally, and very publicly, acknowledged by Fidel Castro on January 1st 1959. Little wonder then that the city has earned itself the moniker of 'Hero City of the Republic of Cuba'. The city itself is an eclectic mix of all the best and worst of Cuban life. Its colonial architecture glimmers in attractive shades of pastel, whilst its Afro- Caribbean mix affords it the unmistakable vibrancy of a true city of the revolution.

Melia Santiago

Melia Santiago is located in the heart of one of the most elegant areas of Santiago de Cuba also known as the Capital of the Caribbean. This modern hotel is situated only a couple of kilometres away from the town centre and hosts 4 great restaurants and 3 pools around which you will be able to relax during your free time

Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

Friday 07 March 2014 - City Tour Santiago; Free PM

This morning we take a walking tour of Santiago city, taking in the Plaza de la Revolucion with its fine monument to the heroes of the Independence wars and the remarkable cemetery where independence hero José Martí is buried. This afternoon is left free to continue enjoying this most engaging of cities at your leisure. One possibility is a visit to take in the imposing grandeur of the Castillo de San Pedro del Morro, (optional) one of the best-preserved fortresses in the Cuba. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, this superb 17th century citadel occupies a dramatic position overlooking the city and the

Caribbean, from where you can get some superb views across the harbour and onto the distant peaks of the Sierra Maestra. Santiago is also blessed with a number of interesting museums to visit that pretty much cover every subject, from the heroes of the wars for independence, to Cuban rum and carnival, so there should be something for everyone. This evening you can the opportunity to explore something of Santiago's dazzling nightlife, experiencing some of the colour, music and raw charm of this most remarkable of cities.

Melia Santiago

Meals Provided: Breakfast

Saturday 08 March 2014 - Drive to Sancti Spiritus

Today we start our full days travel north to Sancti Spiritus, one of the seven settlements founded by Diego Velasquez when he claimed Cuba for Spain. You can spend the remains of the afternoon wandering through the colonial architecture remnants from the great days of the sugar cane production in the area.

Rancho Hatvey Hotel

Meals Provided: Breakfast

Sunday 09 March 2014 - Drive to Cayo Santa Maria

Our destination today is the all-inclusive resort of the Royal Hideaway, lying close to the spectacular Caribbean jewels of the Archipelago de Sabana. On arrival there will be time to relax and enjoy the luxurious pleasure of two of Cuba's most pristine beaches.

Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

Melia Las Dunas

This large and comfortable hotel complex has well furnished rooms in a number of two storey blocks, just a short distance from the wonderful beach.

Monday 10 March 2014 - Free in Cayo Santa Maria

Today is left free to enjoy at your own leisure. The resort offers a range of water-based activities to choose from, as well as tennis courts, volleyball, windsurfing and some of the most beautifully clear waters in the island. The small keys that dot this archipelago are also home to flamingos, herons, cormorants and a host of other birds, making it a delightful spot to simply relax and enjoy a little well-earned indulgence.

Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Melia Las Dunas

Tuesday 11 March 2014 - Free in Cayo Santa Maria

Today is left free to enjoy at your own leisure. The resort offers a range of water-based activities to choose from, as well as tennis courts, volleyball, windsurfing and some of the most beautifully clear waters in the island. The small keys that dot this archipelago are also home to flamingos, herons, cormorants and a host of other birds, making it a delightful spot to simply relax and enjoy a little well-earned indulgence.

Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner, Melia Las Dunas



Wednesday 12 March 2014 - Drive to Havana; via Santa Clara

After a last free morning at the resort we return to Havana, on route we will stop and visit Che's Mausoleum in Santa Clara, the final resting place of one of the worlds most iconic and recognisable revolutionary figures. On arrival in Havana you will have an evening free to wander the streets of Havana Vieja enjoying the live music.

Hotel Nacional

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Meals Provided: Breakfast

Thursday 13 March 2014 - Tour ends Havana

Tour ends after Breakfast in Havana. Clients flying back on the group flight to London will have some more free time in Havana before the transfer to the airport later this afternoon.

Meals Provided: Breakfast

Airport Transfers

Stephen Patterson had been a professional fine art photographer for close to thirty years, and has been teaching photography and visual design for almost as long. He is renowned for his personal style and impeccably composed images of the landscape. Stephen has travelled and presented his work throughout North America, Australia, Ecuador/Galapagos and New Zealand. www.stephenpatterson.com

Robert Calnen, a Brooks Institute of California graduate, has his photography degree with both the Canadian and American Professional Photographer Association. He has travel extensively in most cultures. He noted for capturing mood in his imaging and photography is very diversified. You can review his photography by viewing his business webpage at www.calnenphotography.com.



What our priced includes:

- **Photography Workshop with Stephen Patterson**
- **Your Accommodation**
- **All entrance fees and guides unless otherwise specified**
- **A private driver for excursions, road and airport transfers as detailed**
- **Meals as detailed**

What our priced does not include

- **Travel Insurance**
- **Cuban departure Tax \$ 25 CUC**
- **Meals not specified**
- **Gratuities (not compulsory but often expected)**

REGISTRATION FORM : PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR JAN 27/2014

DEPOSIT : \$500 CAD FINAL PAYMENT : November 15th

NAME AS PER PASSPORT and Date of Birth

ADDRESS and PHONE NUMBER

E-MAIL

PLEASE SEND YOUR REGISTRATIONS by e-mail /fax or mail to :

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