

Central America – Cuba on a shoestring (Intrepid Travel)

Rod Nesbitt

Introduction

There are a number of tours that Intrepid Travel offer in Cuba. I did the '[Cuba on a shoestring](#)' tour which was a minibus tour costing less than \$1200.

Brief outline of the tour

'Cuba on a shoestring' is an eight day tour that offered a great taste of the country staying in guesthouses. The guesthouses were mostly homes where the owners lived. They made breakfast each morning for their guests. The rooms, while basic, were very comfortable, had A/C and an ensuite. The accommodation gave us the opportunity to meet the locals and live in their homes rather than staying in western style hotels.

I added this short tour onto my trip to Mexico with extended family. Obviously it's a long way to Central America so I wanted to see more than one country while there. I've not done a tour like this before as I prefer to do my own thing, but as I went to Cuba alone and don't speak Spanish I thought it would be better to do an organised tour. I was very pleasantly surprised. I travelled with a nice group of 15 people, visited interesting places, had an exceptionally good tour guide, travelled in an almost new minibus that was very comfortable, had a good mix of organised and free time and felt very safe even walking the streets of Havana late at night.

Major highlights of the tour



Havana street showing old American cars – they're everywhere!



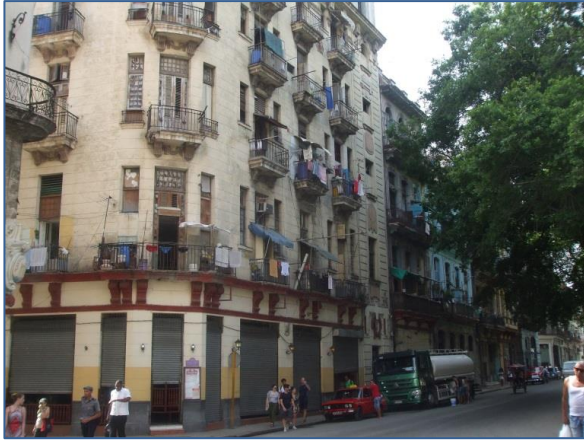
Market in Trinidad, a town on Cuba's South Coast



Havana backstreet



Old building in Havana



Old building in Havana



Bar in Havana



Restaurant in the countryside



Beach in the Bay of Pigs



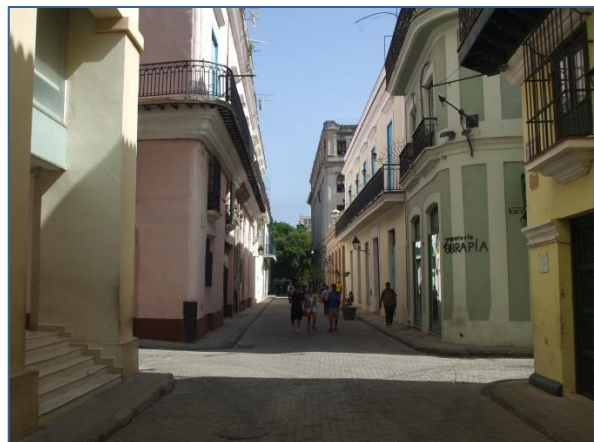
Our minibus



Beach in Trinidad



Havana street



Havana street

Other comments

- Intrepid gives a very good outline of tips for travelling to Cuba.
- You can now fly directly from Los Angeles to Havana. This is more time efficient than going through Mexico like I did. My connecting flights were not good.
- I found street food good and very cheap. To buy you need local money – CUP Cuban Peso. It's probably worth getting a small amount of local money as well as CUC (CUC Convertible Peso equal to \$US).
- Follow guidelines on cash. Don't take \$US as they're very expensive to convert.
- Pack light for the trip as accommodation in Havana can be up a number of flights of narrow stairs and rooms are very compact.
- Ask your tour guide to play DVDs on the history of Cuba while you're travelling. You get the Cuban perspective that is very interesting and enlightening.
- Feel free to email me if you would like to know more ☺



Beach in the Bay of Pigs

Contributor details

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Rod was Principal of Kingswood High from 2013-2017. He has a keen interest in overseas travel, particularly to places a little off the beaten path. Since retiring he's visited Indonesia for a month, as well as Mexico and Cuba. He recently downsized from a house to an apartment, and fixing up his new place has kept him pretty busy over the last few months.