

8 days/7 nights: \$1550



At the heart of the tours I lead to Cuba is this simple conviction: that life is so much sweeter when we reach out in friendship, when we assume and practice the joy to be had in connecting with others. Cubans, more than any people I've known, seem to know this truth intuitively. 'Mi casa es tu casa.' 'Quieres café?' 'Y la familia, como están?' Cubans speak like this to close friends and to total strangers, to fellow Cubans and to foreigners. An open-heart engagement: this is what I hope each of my clients gets to experience in abundance when they travel with me.

Un abrazo!
Robert

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Cochinito's Winter 2019 Cuba Bike Trips

December 21, 2019
through Jan 5, 2020

Choose either or both
1-week trips!



What to Expect

- High-quality Giant or Trek touring bikes
- Support vehicle, mechanic, expert guide
- 30 - 50 miles of riding on riding days
- Air-conditioned B&B lodgings
- Mostly home- and farm-cooked delicious meals
- Immersion in Cuban culture and daily life

\$1550 covers:

- One week of bike rental, support vehicle, mechanic, and guides
- Seven nights of air-conditioned B&B lodging (double occupancy)
- Wholesome breakfasts: eggs to order, fruit, fruit juice, coffee or tea, bread



Why bike Cuba?

Cuba is a beautiful country, relatively unspoiled by commerce and industry, and its people are welcoming and happy to share their rich culture with visitors. When we travel through Cuba on bikes, we aren't just seeing the country and its people; we are living it and experiencing all that this unique culture and society have to offer.



TWO WEEKS OF BIKE ADVENTURE IN CUBA

Week One 12/21-12/29: Havana to Viñales

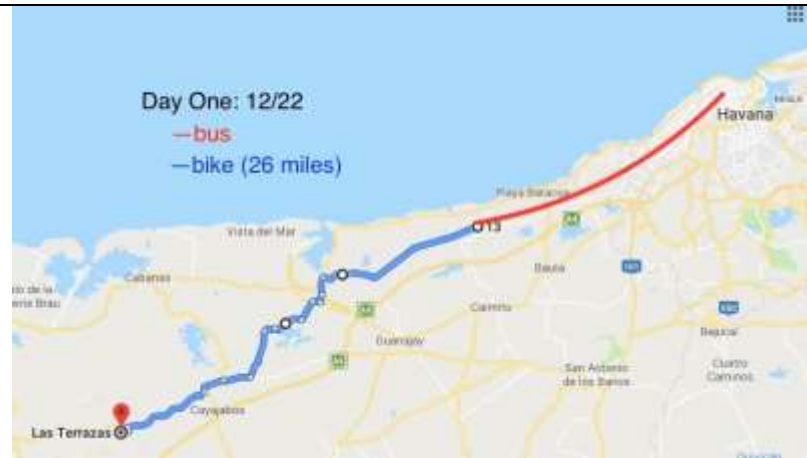
After a quick dip into Havana's exciting night life with Cochinito's Cuban friends, we bike into the western countryside, spending two nights in Las Terrazas, a UNESCO-designated biosphere reserve in the Sierra Del Rosario mountains. We'll visit the sleepy fishing village of Puerto Esperanza, the unspoiled beach at Cayo Jutias, and the Viñales Valley, a region of stunning natural beauty, the nerve center of Cuba's tobacco economy, and site of Cuba Cochinito's own little farm!

Week Two 12/29-1/5: Santa Clara to Havana

After a bus ride from Havana to Santa Clara, this week begins with some serious cycling over the Escambray mountains to Trinidad, a partially restored colonial sugar plantation owners' town and UNESCO World Heritage Site. We will visit Cienfuegos, Play Giron and the Bay of Pigs (snorkeling), and the beautiful beaches of Varadero, before returning to Havana for an off-the-charts Cuban farewell party.

Week One Tour Havana – Viñales – Havana

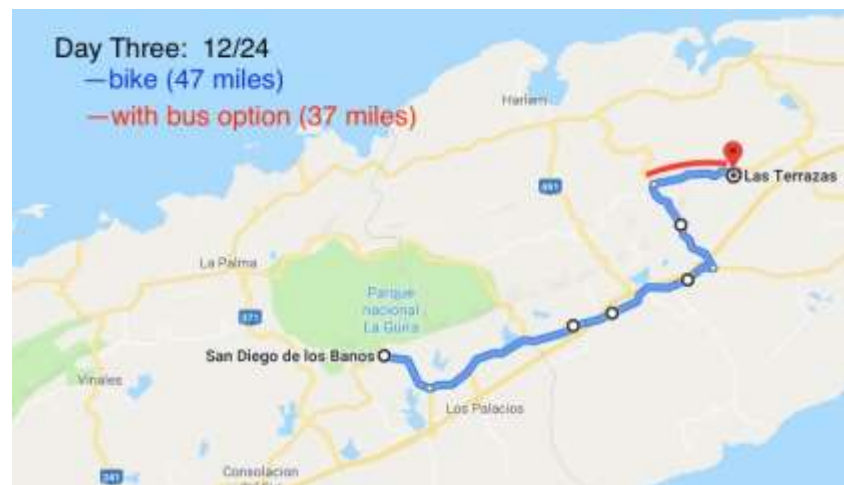
Arrive Havana 12/21/29, B&B in Vedado neighborhood



Two nights in Las Terrazas (12/22-23)



One night in San Diego de los Baños



We will enjoy Havana, the night of our arrival. A nice dinner, a classic American convertible car ride around town, a stroll along the city's famed sea wall, the Malecon.

The next morning, we will avoid Havana traffic and cut our riding time by busing to our bike start point on Day One, 12/22. The ride will be flat-ish for the most part, then involve an ascent into the hills to reach Las Terrazas.

Las Terrazas is a lush jungle-like landscape that was actually a reforestation project dating back to the 1960s and the early years of the Revolution. The area was first developed in the 1700s and 1800s by Spanish and French coffee planters. Available activities include a guided forest hike, and bathing in the beautiful pools formed in the rocks along the path of the San Juan River. If you want to pedal, you bike around the area.

Day Three's ride is the longest of this tour. It begins with some serious hills, heading west out of Las Terrazas, then a nice descent, generally south, down to the flats. The rest of the day is a flat-ish ride through rural Cuba. We'll pass through a few small towns along the way.

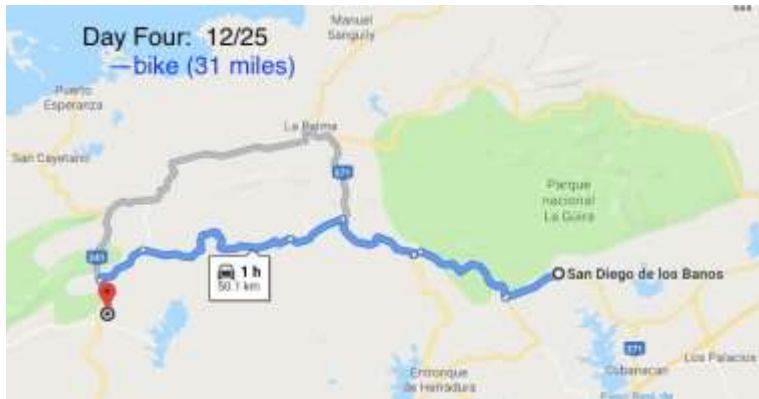
San Diego de los Baños, where we'll stay at the town's only hotel (there just aren't enough B&Bs in this town to accommodate our group), has been famous for its mineral baths for several hundred years. It's also the home of Pedro Digas, one of Cuba's great cigar makers, and a personality worth meeting.

Day Four offers stunningly beautiful landscapes, and mostly hilly terrain, especially early in the day. We will pass through La Guira, the former estate of one of Cuba's richest families in the early 20th century. Today it's a national park, and much of what was built by the Cortines family has been restored—fountains, walking bridges, castle-like houses, lakes, exotic animals—an object lesson in bourgeois decadence.

We'll also visit La Cueva de los Portales, a cave structure that served as Che Guevara's headquarters during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

The last part of the ride involves a choice: shorter ride (in blue) to Viñales, or a 15 miles longer ride that includes "el Americano," one of the steepest roads in Cuba. Definitely worth it for strong riders.

We will spend two full days in Viñales, an area of stunning natural beauty. Activities include horseback riding to one of my friend's tobacco farms, farm-cooked meals, and some quality time at my own little farm, where we'll make guarapo (sugar cane juice), play dominos, and sample Cochinito's own rum/passion fruit cocktail.



Three nights in Viñales (12/25-26-27)



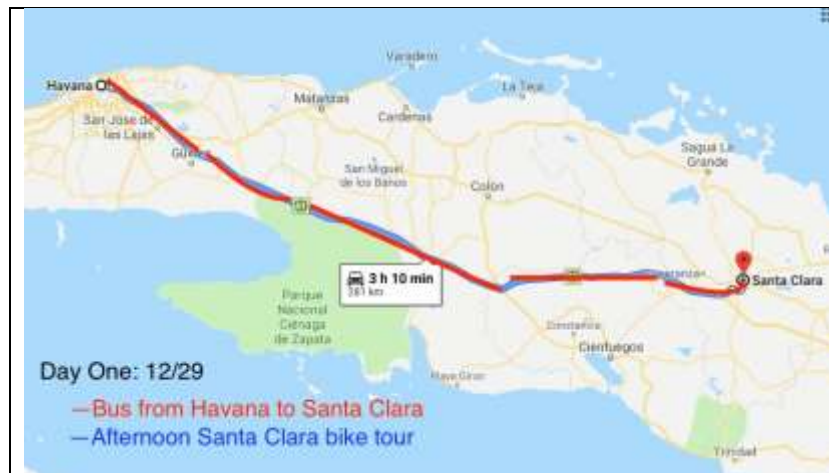
Return by bus to Havana, 12/28

Last night in Havana, including Cuban house party

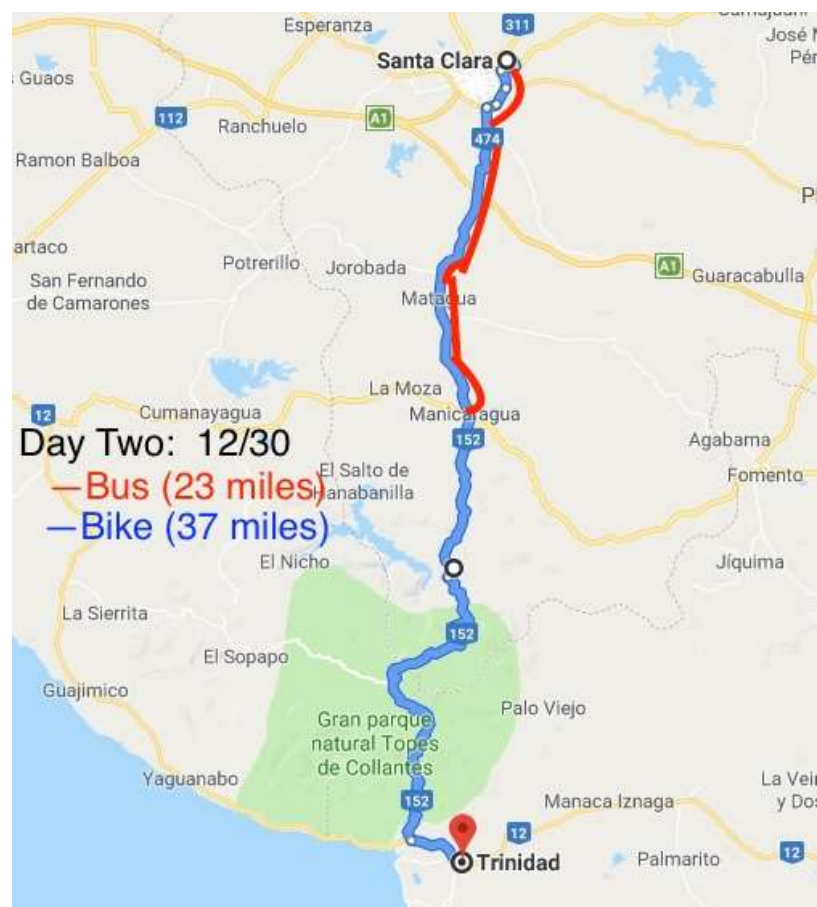
Cuba Cochinito's Week Two Tour, Dec. 28 – Jan. 5:

Santa Clara — Trinidad — Cienfuegos — Playa Giron — Varadero — Havana

Arrive Havana 12/28/19 in time for a Cuban house party, B&B in Vedado neighborhood



One night, 12/29/19, in Santa Clara



One night, 12/30/19, in Trinidad

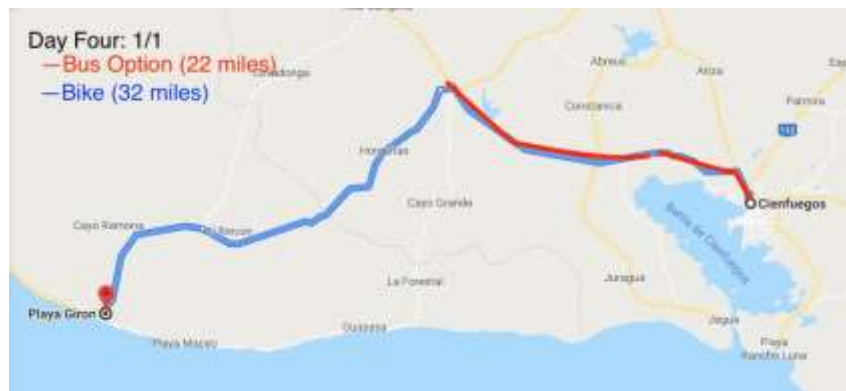
The evening of your arrival we'll take on Havana--a classic American convertible car ride around town, followed by a Cuban house party hosted by one of my friends.

The following morning, we board our support bus for the 3 to 4-hour ride to Santa Clara. After settling in to our B&Bs there, we'll do a bike tour of the city, stopping by the famous monument to Che Guevara, and also testing our bikes on some flats and some hills.

We start riding in earnest the morning of Dec. 30th. The full distance from Santa Clara to Trinidad is 60 miles, and involves traversing the Escambray mountains. There are some steep, and some prolonged climbs along this route. And there are also magnificent views, waterfalls, and friendly people to meet. We will bus to the town of Manicaragua and start riding there, shortening the total ride by 23 miles. This will be a day of great challenge and great beauty; which we finish by rolling into Trinidad, a beautifully restored 18th-century sugar plantation owners' town known for its arts and crafts, its hot music scene, and its beach.



One night, 12/31/19, in Cienfuegos



One night, 1/1/20, in Playa Giron



One night, 1/2/20, in Varadero

We have the morning of Dec. 31st to explore Trinidad. Midday, we'll bike out of town on the coast road in the direction of Cienfuegos, stopping for lunch less than an hour into the ride at the hilltop home of my good friends Lazaro Niebla and Lianis Hernandez. Both husband and wife are great artists, Lianis in artisanal weaving and needle arts, Lazaro in wood-sculpted portraiture that has won him international acclaim.

We can take our bus from Rio Hondo to Cienfuegos in the late afternoon, or we can combine bus riding and biking as suits our fancy. The terrain varies from flat to rolling hills (not terribly steep).

In Cienfuegos we'll stay at B&Bs located in the picturesque Punta Gorda neighborhood, right along the bay. We'll celebrate New Year's Eve with my good friends Hector and Marylin, and their friends and family.

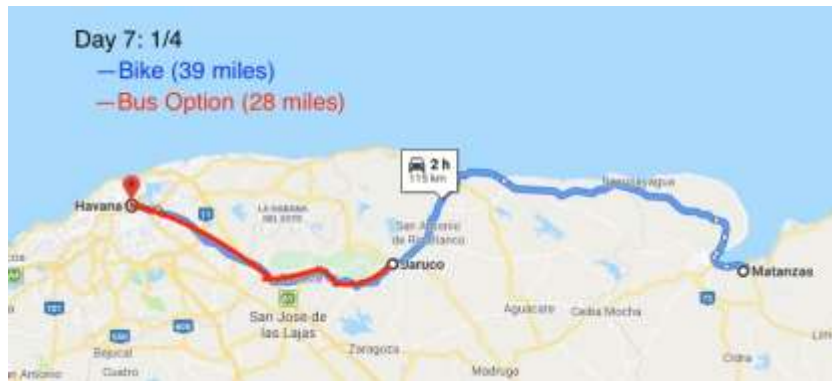
New Year's Day takes us from Cienfuegos to Playa Giron and the Bay of Pigs. We have the option to shave 22 miles off the total distance by using the bus at the beginning. Today's ride is mostly flat.

We'll stay at B&Bs in Playa Giron, and use the following morning and early afternoon of Jan. 2 to do some snorkeling in the bay.

In the late afternoon we'll load into the bus for the 3-hour trek to Varadero, the narrow peninsula jutting into the sea that is known for its incredibly beautiful beaches. Varadero was the first place Fidel Castro opened to international tourism, beginning in the 1990s, when Cuba was in desperate need of foreign exchange. It remains a tourist magnet to this day. In fact, many tourists from Canada, Great Britain, and Europe fly directly to Varadero, bypassing Havana and other parts of the country altogether.



One night, 1/3/20, in Matanzas



Last night, 1/4/20, in Havana.

On Jan. 3rd, after a leisurely morning on the beach, we'll bike from Varadero to Matanzas, a port town that, hundreds of years ago, was a major point of entry for slaves imported from West Africa. To this day Matanzas is strongly associated with Afro-Cuban dance (rumba), drumming, and spirituality. We will stay at B&Bs and sample the night life.

On the morning of Jan. 4th, we begin the final day's ride, the road to Havana. Again, the bus will give us flexibility as to how much of this segment we want to pedal.

Our last night in Cuba will be full of music and dancing and general merriment.

This tour involves about 160 miles of bike riding over the course of seven days, and individual riders can extend that mileage by opting to use the group's support bus less than is being suggested above. Nightly accommodations will be Bed and Breakfasts, with air conditioning in the rooms. Hearty daily breakfasts (eggs cooked to order, fresh fruit, coffee and tea) are part of the B&B experience in Cuba. Lunches and dinners will be paid for by riders, but your tour guides will take responsibility for setting up good food options each day. Where possible, we'll be eating in people's homes (economical and delicious). Otherwise, we will dine at private restaurants. This tour includes a good mix of the country's urban, rural, and natural environments. You'll meet artists and farmers and entrepreneurs and other interesting and welcoming people. Our principle guide, Boris Dias Rodriguez, knows all the backroads through the Escambray Mountains and between Cienfuegos and the Bay of Pigs. I have great friends just outside Trinidad and in Cienfuegos. This promises to be a fun and soulful trip!



www.cubacochinito.com