



Cuba Solidarity Campaign
C/o Unite, 33-37 Moreland Street, London EC1V 8BB
Tel 020 7490 5715 E: office@cuba-solidarity.org.uk
W: www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk

July 2023

Dear friend

Cuba Solidarity Campaign
CYCLE CUBA EXPERIENCE: Revolutionary Rebel Route
24 February – 5 March 2024

Thanks for your enquiry about the Cycle Cuba Experience 2024.

The Cycle Cuba Experience follows our own specially designed **Revolutionary Rebel Route** which runs 355 exhilarating kilometres through western Cuba. From Soroa to San Diego de los Baños, climbing to the remote and rugged La Güira National Park to visit Che Guevara's secret underground HQ during the 1962 October Missile Crisis. The route passes through the lush forests of Sierra del Rosario, the tobacco fields of Pinar del Río following the Viñales Valley, with its soaring limestone *mogotes*. We cycle to the salsa beat through dramatic scenery and along quiet rural roads away from the usual tourist trails, with opportunities to experience vibrant Cuban culture at first hand. From the finishing line we return to Havana, where you will have plenty of time to visit this wonderful city. We will also celebrate our group achievement with our famous celebratory meal at an authentic Cuban restaurant.

The Cycle Cuba Experience is a fully supported tour which is open to everyone from beginners to experienced cyclists. Bike hire in Cuba is included in the trip. You can take your own bike if you prefer subject to extra costs. As well as a full time bilingual tour guide and mechanic, there is vehicle back up at all times. This means that while most participants complete each stage, it is also easy to opt in or out of the various stages of the ride.

We have run sponsored cycle rides in Cuba since 1999. Hundreds of people have taken part in these events and successfully raised funds for vital educational and medical aid projects in Cuba, including over 20,000 asthma inhalers, 50,000 contact lenses to a children's hospital, specialist Braille printers, musical and recording equipment and speaking watches to schools for visually impaired children as well as contributing to the complete repair and renovation of the Miramar Community Theatre in Havana.



For Cuban coffee, books, music and much more shop at <https://shop.cuba-solidarity.org.uk/>



Cuba Solidarity Campaign
C/o Unite, 33-37 Moreland Street, London EC1V 8BB
Tel 020 7490 5715 E: office@cuba-solidarity.org.uk
W: www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk

Funds raised will go towards purchasing essential educational equipment for young Cuban school children with disabilities and supporting the vital campaign work of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign. The cycle group will deliver aid directly to the Abel Santamaria School for visually impaired students, where many essential items are in critical short supply.

The Cycle Cuba Experience is promoted by Cuba Solidarity Campaign in association with an ATOL licensed UK tour operator.

To be part of the Cycle Cuba Experience simply complete and return the enclosed registration form with your registration fee of £200. You will then need to raise the minimum sponsorship entry level of £2,499. We will send you fundraising tips and we're only a phone call away if you need any help.

The minimum sponsorship also covers the tour costs which include

- Return flights from London to Havana, hotel transfers and Cuban Tourist Card (visa).
- 10-nights accommodation based on two people sharing a twin room
- Hotel 2-4* (including most meals). Packed lunch on cycle days.
- Dedicated support team including an English speaking tour guide, a cycle tour leader, a cycle mechanic who will be with the group at all times.
- Transfers in air-conditioned coach. Luggage and spare parts carried on support vehicle.
- Detailed route descriptions and daily briefing sessions.
- Special invitation to participate in a Trade Union event in Pinar del Río, a provincial capital.
- Specialist visits to Abel Santamaria School for visually impaired students, a local health care centre, a rural school and a Committee for the Defence of the Revolution neighbourhood community project.
- Guided cultural and historical visits, including Che Guevara's secret underground HQ during the October Missile Crisis and Commandancia del Che Museum, walking tour of Old Havana, a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- Guided hike into Santo Tomás caves, Cuba's largest cave system.
- Celebratory evening meal at a top Havana restaurant.

Bikes will be provided in Cuba so you do not need to bring your own. The bikes are hybrid, 9 rear gears, front suspension, with gel saddles, water bottle holder and pannier bag. You should let us know your height to make sure we provide the right bike for you. You must bring your own cycle helmet. You should have some experience of cycling on roads and be fit and healthy. We will ask you to complete a medical form. We recommend you follow the suggested training schedule before departure.

We will give you:

- Sponsorship forms and tips on fundraising to help you reach your sponsorship goal.
- CSC Cycle Cuba T-shirt.

For Cuban coffee, books, music and much more shop at <https://shop.cuba-solidarity.org.uk/>



Cuba Solidarity Campaign
C/o Unite, 33-37 Moreland Street, London EC1V 8BB
Tel 020 7490 5715 E: office@cuba-solidarity.org.uk
W: www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk

- Cycle info pack including recommended kit list and suggested training schedule.

What is not included: travel and health insurance (You must have this to enter Cuba), single room supplement if required (£119 per person tbc), some meals, all drinks and any visits listed as optional. If you decide you prefer to bring your own bike, flight baggage fees for transporting it on the flight are not included.

The trip is offered on the basis of a minimum 15 people booking by 30 September 2023. After the first 15 people there may be a flight supplement to pay. In the unlikely event of the minimum number not being reached all funds received will be returned in full.

Once you have paid your deposit we can secure your flight place; the closer to the departure date then there may be flight supplements to pay. **We recommend that you book as early as possible to avoid disappointment.**

We look forward to welcoming you on the Cycle Cuba Experience 2024,

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us at any time to discuss any aspects of this tour,

Best wishes,

Rob Miller
Director

CYCLE CUBA EXPERIENCE 2024 ITINERARY

TRIP PROFILE

A fully supported point-to-point road tour in the western part of the island. The total cycling distance is approximately 355km over 5 cycling days. The average distance per cycling day is 62km and the longest day is 80km. However the lengths of each cycling day can be shortened or increased dependent on your needs. The route is classified as moderate to challenging. The terrain ranges from undulating to hilly, with several steep and demanding climbs and downhill descents. Though many roads are in fair to good condition you should expect numerous potholes and poor surface conditions on some sections. The roads are tarmac and generally free of heavy traffic. It is suitable for recreational riders and above, or fit and confident novices who are comfortable on a bike. There is an optional steep hike to the dramatic Santo Tomás Caves in Valle de Quemado.

For Cuban coffee, books, music and much more shop at <https://shop.cuba-solidarity.org.uk/>



Cuba Solidarity Campaign
C/o Unite, 33-37 Moreland Street, London EC1V 8BB
Tel 020 7490 5715 E: office@cuba-solidarity.org.uk
W: www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk

Average national daytime temperatures in Cuba are 28°C in February. You cycle at your own pace and there is vehicle support at all times, enabling you to take a lift at any point if you get tired.

DRAFT ITINERARY

Day 1. Sat 24 Feb: Soroa (Evening) Transfer direct from Havana airport to Hotel Villa Soroa in the beautiful UNESCO classified Soroa Biosphere Reserve, an area of natural beauty known as the Rainbow of Cuba in Artemisa province.

Day 2. Sun 25 Feb: Soroa Introductions to the Cycle Experience support team and initial briefing meeting. Allocation of bikes before a short test ride to ensure everything is working properly. Relax, stretch your legs and acclimatise! Enjoy Soroa including swimming in the hotel pool or the amazing natural waterfalls just a short hike from the hotel.

Day 3. Mon 26 Feb: CYCLE DAY 1: Soroa to San Diego de los Baños 59km. The first day's cycling over undulating terrain. The landscape is dotted with tall majestic royal palms and *Tiñosas*, turkey vultures, soaring overhead on the thermal currents. Check in to Hotel El Mirador San Diego. Here we have the optional opportunity to revitalise tired muscles with an invigorating immersion in hot sulphurous waters from natural mineral springs at the local spa complex.

Day 4. Tue 27 Feb: CYCLE DAY 2: San Diego de los Baños to Pinar del Río 53km. Revitalised and ready to go, today's route is undulating and continues along the old Carretera Central passing through several busy, bustling market towns of this rich agricultural region. There is ample opportunity to sample local homemade Cuban foods and drinks at roadside stalls including *guarapo* (sugar cane juice), a natural energy booster. You will not be able to get enough into your bike bottle; so drink up before moving on. We may share the road with tractors, oxen and cowboys on a cattle drive. Check in to Hotel Vueltabajo in Pinar del Río.

Day 5. Wed 28 Feb: Pinar del Río The group has a special invitation to join Cuban workers taking part in a local Trade Union event, as well as a visit to a local polyclinic (healthcare centre). In the afternoon, there will be a visit to the Abel Santamaria school for visually impaired students where we will hand over material aid donations.

Day 6. Thu 29 Feb: CYCLE DAY 3: Pinar del Río to Viñales (plus optional extension ride) A series of demanding climbs takes us up to Viñales National Park, with breathtaking views over the awesome series of *mogotes*, haystack hills, rising from the rich red earth of the tobacco fields. Today's route passes through a quintessential Cuban landscape with small *bohíos* (traditional farmhouses) and *guajiros* (farmers) tending their fields with ox drawn plough. Check in to the beautiful Hotel La Ermita.

For Cuban coffee, books, music and much more shop at <https://shop.cuba-solidarity.org.uk/>



Cuba Solidarity Campaign
C/o Unite, 33-37 Moreland Street, London EC1V 8BB
Tel 020 7490 5715 E: office@cuba-solidarity.org.uk
W: www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk

Day 7. Fri 1 Mar: HIKE to Gran Caverna de Santo Tomás Out of the saddles today, we walk up to the Santo Tomás Caves, Cuba's largest cave system. We will explore the accessible cave galleries 42m above the valley floor with headlamps. We may visit a rural secondary school in El Moncado. We will spend some free time in the local town of Viñales which is good for shopping, cafes and restaurants, before returning to our hotel.

Day 8. Sat 2 Mar: CYCLE DAY 4: Viñales to Cayo Jutías 63km. The terrain is hilly as we climb through the Viñales Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, punctuated by soaring limestone *mogotes* rising up from the valley floor like massive haystacks. We pass distinctive tobacco fields with characteristic deep red earth and drying barns full of tobacco leaves. Crossing the causeway over turquoise blue waters, with views of the mountains to our right, we are rewarded with a swim in the crystal clear waters of the Gulf of Mexico and sandy white beach to relax on with a well deserved Cuba Libre. We transfer back to the Hotel La Ermita by coach. In the evening we have an invitation to attend a welcome party with the Committee for the Defence of the Revolution (CDR). A wonderful opportunity to chat with local people and gain a valuable insight into present day Cuban society.

Day 9. Sun 3 Mar: CYCLE DAY 5: Viñales to San Diego de los Baños 80km. The last day's cycling from Hotel La Ermita follows a hilly terrain with sections of broken road surfaces and demanding climbs. Cycling along the single main streets of small villages. Maize and coffee beans dry on the roads in the hot sun. Passing through an area of sweet smelling coffee plantations we stop for lunch at Los Portales, the secret HQ of the legendary Che Guevara during the 1962 October missile crisis. Keep a look out for the shy Toco-ro, the national bird whose feathers reflect the colours of the Cuban flag, as we continue through thickly forested La Güira National Park. After an exhilarating 310km in the saddle we reach the finishing line back at San Diego de los Baños, a laid-back, tranquil old spa town. We check in to the Hotel El Mirado San Diego.

Day 10. Mon 4 Mar: Havana. We transfer back to Havana and check in to Hotel Sevilla in Old Havana. In the evening, we celebrate our tremendous group achievement at an iconic Cuban restaurant enjoying authentic Cuban cuisine.

Day 11. Tue 5 Mar: Havana. We take a fascinating walking tour of Old Havana, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with a wealth of impressively restored colonial buildings and intriguing historic sites and visit Comandancia del Che Museum in the San Carlos de la Cabaña Fortress where Che set up his HQ immediately after the Revolution. We then transfer to Havana airport to fly home, **arriving on Wednesday 6 Mar.**

For Cuban coffee, books, music and much more shop at <https://shop.cuba-solidarity.org.uk/>



Cuba Solidarity Campaign
C/o Unite, 33-37 Moreland Street, London EC1V 8BB
Tel 020 7490 5715 E: office@cuba-solidarity.org.uk
W: www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk

CYCLE CUBA EXPERIENCE 2024 CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

Please read in conjunction with the tour operator Booking Conditions

1. You must be at least 18 years old before date of departure.
2. You are required to pay a registration fee of £200 which is used to reserve your flight seat and accommodation and once this is held it becomes non-refundable.
3. You agree to raise a minimum sponsorship of £2,499. This includes the costs of the trip and **must be paid by 30 November 2023 (12 weeks before departure).**
4. If you are booking late, a flight supplement may be payable.
5. You must be fit enough to undertake the Cuba Cycle Experience and complete the form about your medical history. If you are over 65 years of age or have any medical condition that could be adversely affected by this event you will need to provide a doctor's certificate stating that you have a suitable level of health and fitness to participate.
6. You are responsible for ensuring that you have sufficient supplies of any medication that you are taking and all the necessary vaccinations for travel to Cuba. It is your responsibility to take the requisite medical advice.
7. Cuba Solidarity Campaign and the tour operator reserve the right to refuse entry to any individual who is deemed medically unfit to take part.
8. Participation in the event is at your own risk and you agree to indemnify Cuba Solidarity Campaign and the tour operator against claim for loss of or damage to personal property, accidents, personal injury or death howsoever arising and any claim arising from your own actions.
9. You need to bring your own cycle helmet. Cycle helmets must be worn whilst cycling.
10. If we are unable to allocate a twin room due to odd numbers of participants, then a single room supplement will be payable.
11. Any increases in UK airport departure taxes will have to be passed on as an additional cost.
12. The Cuban Ministry of Tourism require all visitors to Cuba to have a valid comprehensive travel insurance policy, including full medical cover. You must check with the insurance provider that your policy is recognised and valid in Cuba. An insurance cover note must be carried to Cuba and presented to immigration authorities if requested. The policy must provide adequate cover for the payment of the costs and expenses relating to medical treatment, repatriation costs, loss of or damage to personal items and claims made by third parties and cover cycle touring.
13. You must hold a current passport valid for the duration of your stay in Cuba. A Cuban Tourist Card (visa) will be provided.
14. If you cancel before full payment date, all sponsorship forms must be returned to Cuba Solidarity Campaign and donations already received to the relevant donors. Monies can still be donated to Cuba Solidarity Campaign if the sponsors agree.

For Cuban coffee, books, music and much more shop at <https://shop.cuba-solidarity.org.uk/>