

Railway Adventures and PTG Tours present

CUBA 2018



5th - 16th March 2018



THE REAL CUBA - STEAM AND CULTURE



Scott McGregor's

RAILWAY ADVENTURES

Slow Train To Guantanamo

OVERVIEW

Many visitors to Cuba see just Havana and then simply lie on a tropical beach, but we aim to deliver the real Cuba to you, visiting authentic provincial towns, travelling through countryside where the passage of time seems to have been suspended. Much of our journey will be in our own private train, and the tour will appeal to both the dedicated railway enthusiast and to those who are intrigued by the idea of the many unusual outlying places we plan to visit.

On rail we will travel with diesel haulage, and steam haulage, and by antique electric traction, but we will be accompanied throughout by a comfortable air-conditioned road coach which takes our luggage from hotel to hotel and ferries us to and from the nearest station. On many days, a 'cultural option' is offered, often in parallel with a rail activity, ensuring there is something for every passenger.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Visits to the UNESCO World Heritage sites of Old Havana and Trinidad
- Most meals included
- Private train charters throughout
- Cigar factory and Rum Museum tour in Havana
- Stunning scenery



DAY 1: Monday 5 March - ARRIVE HAVANA

Arrive in Havana and transfer to your central hotel, where there will be a welcome dinner.

Overnight: *Hotel Sevilla, Havana, (or similar), (D)*

DAY 2: Tuesday 6 March - HAVANA

A leisurely start to our tour: first the cigar factory followed by a guided tour around Old Havana, ending at the Rum Museum. Lunch will be at a local restaurant, and the afternoon is at your leisure.

Overnight: *Hotel Sevilla Havana, (or similar), (B, L, D)*

DAY 3: Wednesday 7 March - HAVANA

Sightseeing this morning follows the great American author Ernest Hemingway, who lived in Cuba in his later years. We begin at Hemingway's villa on a hill in the suburbs, complete with his furniture, books and other possessions. We'll then visit two of his favourite bars and the hotel where he stayed—including the room he used to stay in. After lunch, pay a visit to the Railway Museum, with its collection of mostly USA-built steam engines and diesel locomotives from Europe and the USSR. Then we will go to a waterfront warehouse converted into an enormous bazaar full of stalls selling souvenirs. The warehouses used to be serviced by the Waterside Tramroad and several ex sugar industry steam locos are parked outside, one of which will be in steam for us, and running up and down a section of the old Tramroad. We'll return to the hotel later on and have a free evening.

Overnight: *Hotel Sevilla Havana, (or similar), (B, L)*

DAY 4: Thursday 8 March - HAVANA - SANTIAGO DE CUBA

Board the morning flight from Havana to Santiago de Cuba, check into our central hotel and have lunch. In the afternoon enjoy a sightseeing tour of vibrant Santiago, and pay a visit to Fidel Castro's tomb.

Overnight: *Hotel E Imperial, Santiago De Cuba, (or similar), (B, L)*

DAY 5: Friday 9 March - SANTIAGO DE CUBA - GUANTANAMO

Today we board our special train, a single unit, diesel railcar built by the Budd Corporation in the United States in the 1950s, and delivered to Cuba before the Revolution. Take our coach to San Luis and join the railcar at the top of the hill, travelling across country to Guantánamo, the city at the head of the bay around which the American base is situated. There will be refreshments on board our railcar, and packed lunch will be provided. At Guantánamo, change into a Brill diesel railcar for a ride along the bay, past the salt pans and alongside the USA's fence, to Caimanera. Here, enjoy a meal in a hotel that boasts incredible views across the waters of the bay to the buildings of the American base. Our coach will then take us to our hotel in Guantánamo.

Overnight: *Hotel Guantánamo, Guantánamo, (or similar), (B, L, D)*

DAY 6: Saturday 10 March - GUANTANAMO- GUARDALAVACA/HOLGUIN

Board our Budd railcar once again this morning for the journey from Guantánamo to Holguín. Again, refreshments and packed lunch will be provided on board. On arrival at Holguín, our coach will transfer us to Rafael Freyre, where the former sugar-mill narrow gauge railway has been kept open to offer a passenger service. There will be an engine in steam, shunting the cane cars still lying about in the mill yard, for photographs. We'll then ride one of the antediluvian railcars up the valley to the end of the line. You'll have the option of staying behind for further photography of the remains of the sugar industry and of its railway and stock. Later on, transfer to our hotel in Guardalavaca, nearby.

Overnight: *Hotel Playa Pesquero, (or similar), (B, packed L, D)*

DAY 7: Sunday 11 March - HOLGUIN - MORON

Today, our Budd railcar will take us from Holguín to Morón, via Brasil, where we'll visit the sugar factory. Food and drink will be on the train once again. There are rumours the fireless locos that used to shunt the cane cars into the factory have been restored and, if Brasil is milling (as it was in 2017), they will be able to charge them up with steam for us. Check into our hotel in Morón later in the day.

Overnight: *Hotel Moron, Moron, (or similar), (B, PL, D)*

DAY 8: Monday 12 March - MORON - SANCTI SPIRITUS

Morón was once the headquarters of the Cuban Northern Railroad, and the town still has a large locomotive works and motive power depot complex, which is the home base of the 50901 Class of Bo-Bo DE, built in 1955. We begin our day with a visit to the engine shed and Works, after which we board an antiquated railcar for a transfer by rail to the former Patria sugar mill, now a railway museum. One of the engines will be in steam to take us through the cane fields on what remains of the mill's field system. At the end of the line, enjoy a Cuban style lunch in a Cuban barn. Finally, our Budd railcar will take us to Sancti Spiritus, to a hotel in one of Cuba's oldest towns.

Overnight: *Los Laureles, Sancti Spiritus, (or similar), (B, L, D)*

DAY 9: Tuesday 13 March - SANCTI SPIRITUS - TRINIDAD- SANCTI SPIRITUS

This morning our coach will take us to nearby Manaca Iznaga where we'll visit a slave-owner's estate and have Lunch in his colonial-style mansion. Railfans will have the option to forego lunch and visit instead an embryonic railway museum being established in the now-closed FNTA mill, though it has to be stressed we don't know what we will find there—we will be some of its first-ever visitors. After lunch, board the Trinidad Tourist Train for a picturesque ride into this Spanish colonial town, where we'll enjoy a walking tour of the city centre. Rail enthusiasts may prefer to stay at the station and take a ride on the service diesel railcar to Trinidads port, Casilda. Later in the afternoon, our coach will take us all back to Sancti Spiritus.

Overnight: *Los Laureles, Sancti Spiritus, (or similar), (B, L, D)*

This tour has been designed and will be led by John Bennett, one of the News Editors of the prestigious UK railfan magazine "Locomotives International". John is something of a Cuba expert, having first visited the island in 1989 and having been back there almost every year since

DAY 10: Wednesday 14 March - SANCTI SPIRITUS - SANTA CLARA

This morning our Budd railcar will be waiting at Sancti Spiritus station to take us up the main line to Santa Clara, where we branch off towards Remedios and the former Marcelo Salado sugar mill, near Caibarien. Those who are not railfans will be offered the option of detraining in Santa Clara for a city tour to include Ché Guevara's Mausoleum and the Armoured Train Memorial Park. Meanwhile, remaining passengers will be taken to the amazing Marcelo Salado museum collection of sugar industry steam locos, one of which will be in steam to give us a ride to Remedios. *Overnight: Los Caneyes, Santa Clara, (or similar) (B, L, D)*

DAY 11: Thursday 15 March - SANTA CLARA - VARADERO

Our Budd railcar will continue westwards along the main line towards Jovellanos, where we branch off northwards along the little-used Cardenas branch to reach the José Smith Comas factory, another closed sugar mill converted into a rail museum. JSC also has an interesting collection of steam locos and one of them will be shunting cane cars around the mill yard for the photographers. Then the engine will take a train of their home-made tourist cars, with us aboard, to Cardenas to get more photographs on the roadside Docks branch. Finally, our coach will take us to the nearby beach resort of Varadero, where we'll check in to an all-inclusive hotel for our last two nights. *Overnight: Barcelo Solymar Hotel, Varadero, (or similar), (B, L, D)*

DAY 12: Friday 16 March - VARADERO

Today you'll have the option to stay all day poolside at our all-inclusive hotel. The rail enthusiasts, however, will have the opportunity to ride the Hershey Railway, a genuine USA-style electric interurban and an incredible survivor. Our coach will take us to Jaruco, where we'll ride the train on the Jaruco branch. By special arrangement, we'll travel into and terminate at Hershey Station via the car sheds and workshops, thus enabling photography. Then it's back to our Varadero hotel for a celebratory final evening. *Overnight: Barcelo Solymar, Varadero, (or similar), (B, L, D)*

DAY 13: Saturday 17 March - DEPART VARADERO (B)

After breakfast, make your way to the airport for flights home or onwards for other adventures.

Gran Teatro, Havana



PRICE

Per person twin share..... **\$5,785**
Single supplement..... **\$695**

Deposit (per person) **\$1000** at time of booking
Final payment due by **5 January 2018**

INCLUSIONS

- 12 nights accommodation in comfortable, centrally located hotels
- Many meals as specified in the program
- Luxury chartered coach
- Comprehensive sightseeing with expert local guides
- All excursions and entrance fees to attractions, as listed in the itinerary

Trinidad



EXCLUSIONS

- International flights
- Airport transfers on arrival and departure
- Meals and services not mentioned in itinerary
- All other personal expenses such as drinks, phone calls, laundry services, camera fees where applicable
- Excursions listed as optional and extra in the brochure
- Gratuities

SUGGESTED FLIGHTS

We have suggested flights for this itinerary depending on your departure point from Australia, any preferred stopovers en-route and/or your planned pre- and post-tour activities. We can also investigate your preferred airline and offer you a solution based on connection times and prices. Contact 1300 733 323 to discuss your options.

HOW TO BOOK

Download a booking form from our website and follow the easy steps to getting on board.

Alternatively, contact Platinum Travel & Tours on 1300 733 323 or enquiries@platinumtravel.com if you'd prefer a form be sent to you.

Complete the form and submit it, along with your \$1000 pp deposit to secure your place on the tour.

DETAILS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

We endeavour to have all the details of our tours correct at the time of printing. However, sometimes factors beyond our control may affect the final inclusions and prices. These factors may include, but not be limited to; significant fluctuations in currency exchange rates, individual hotel/restaurant decisions that may affect bookings; weather events forcing a change of itinerary; unexpected trackwork on rail lines, unexpected closure of site attractions and so forth. Therefore, items mentioned in the brochure such as quoted prices, hotels and inclusions are subject to change. If a change is imposed on us, we will endeavour to ensure the substitute is of the same quality that you've paid for.

TOUR PACE / LEVEL OF FITNESS:

Our itineraries are designed to make the most of each destination, so a reasonable amount of activity is built into most days, which is why we call them adventures. Our philosophy is to offer you the best experience possible, while leaving you, our guest, the flexibility to pace yourself and choose how much or how little you want to do. Each Railway Adventures tour incorporates periods of free time for your own exploration and relaxation. While you don't need to be a 'gym junky', a reasonable level of fitness is required for most of our tours.

The ability to manage your own luggage, get on and off all manner of trains and coaches, walk for extended periods, stand comfortably, and climb steps and stairs will ensure you get the maximum enjoyment from your adventure.

ADDITIONAL TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

In addition to assisting with flight suggestions and bookings, we can also give you some ideas of what you could do before and after your Railway Adventure.

We can also organise your all-important Travel Insurance for you. Call our office on 1300 733 323 if you would like to discuss options.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

For more information on factors such as travel insurance requirements, fitness levels, fees and charges, tour cancellations, payment schedules and so on, please refer to our Terms and Conditions, which accompany the booking form. They can also be found on our website.

1300 733 323
railwayadventures.com



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