



Jewish Federation of St. Louis

Mission to Cuba

Thursday, January 29 - Monday, February 2, 2026

Group Arrival & Departure Time Secured

Draft Itinerary as of 8/4

GRAN MANZANA KEMPINSKI HOTEL

Calle San Rafael (entre Monserrate y, Agramonte) La Habana 10100, Cuba

Reason for Travel: The itinerary adheres to the regulations under the RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES CATEGORY OF TRAVEL - OFAC general license - 31 CFR § 515.566,





Thursday Jan 29 *Welcome To Havana!*

ARRIVING IN HAVANA: VIP ARRIVAL with expedited passport services. The **Cultural Cuba Guide** will welcome the group in the airport lobby.

On the drive into Havana, stop at the historic **REVOLUTION SQUARE**, the site of the famous Che Guevara image, the Jose Marti Memorial, and the location of Fidel Castro's marathon speeches.

Check in to the Gran Manzana Kempinski Hotel. The Hotel has a rooftop pool and a gym, and all rooms have hairdryers, safes, and U.S. outlets (no adapters needed).

6:00 – 7:00 pm – **Welcome Session or Briefing** in the hotel conference room. Beverages and light bites in the conference room.

7:00 pm – Meet the guide in the lobby. Dinner is at a Paladar in Old Havana. The guide will return the group to the hotel after dinner.

Friday Jan 30

Breakfast at the HOTEL (served from 7:00 – 10:30 am each day)

9:00 am – After breakfast, meet your guide in the lobby. Wear comfortable, ok-to-get-dirty clothing and shoes.. Ride outside the city (25 mins) to the **JEWISH CEMETERY** and the **MEMORIAL TO THE HOLOCAUST** and recite the Kaddish.

Service Project: The Jewish cemetery is in great need of repair and clean-up. Participants will clean and remove weeds.. Bring/wear garden gloves and hand wipes (there is no running water at the cemetery). Depart the cemetery.

Visit the **UNESCO site of FINCA VIGIA**, the estate of **Ernest Hemingway**. Here, you can look through the windows of his home, preserved exactly as he left it. He wrote much of *The Old Man and the Sea* (1951) while living in the house. Hemingway's 38-foot fishing boat, *The Pilar*, is also on the property. (Approximately one hour).

Return to the hotel. Freshen up. Change clothes.

1:00 pm – Meet in the lobby. Lunch is at **EL DEL FRENTE** in Old Havana, a 5-minute walk from the hotel.

After lunch, as you walk back to the hotel, stop in the **PARTAGAS CIGAR SHOP** next to EL FLORIDITA for those interested.

5:00 pm – Meet your guide in the lobby. Board the bus to ride 15 minutes to the heart of Jewish Life in Cuba, the Reform Synagogue **BETH SHALOM**. "The Patronato" is home to the JDC-supported pharmacy, cultural activities and celebrations, a Sunday School, and an extensive library. Meet with Hella Eskenazi Flores, Vice President of the Jewish Community. **Kiddush will follow the short 6:30 pm Services** and Rikuddim (Israeli Dancing "Cuban-style") if scheduled.

7:30 – 8:00 pm **Service Project: Serve Dinner** to the community. Chicken—an essential source of protein for the congregants—will be served. The congregation receives the meal as part of the trip funding. Participants assist with plating, serving the congregants, and interacting with the community.

8:00 pm – Depart Patronato to a Paladar for dinner, refreshments, and live music. A Rum tasting will follow the meal.

The guide and driver will return the group to the hotel.



Saturday Jan 31

Breakfast at the HOTEL (served from 7:00 – 10:30 am each day)

9:30 am— The guide will meet the group in the lobby after breakfast. Embark on a **WALKING TOUR OF LA HABANA VIEJA**, the traditional center of Havana's commerce, industry, and entertainment. Stop in courtyards, artist workshops, and the city's many plazas to admire the Old City's faded beauty, history, and varying architecture. The guide will highlight the **historic Jewish Quarter and HOTEL RAQUEL** as part of the tour.

As part of the walking tour, visit **EL TALLER EXPERIMENTAL GRAFIKA**, a place to experience Cuban art and witness artists at work.

Stop into artisan and Cuban fashion design shops such as **ALMA CUBA Shop** and **CLANDESTINA** for local crafts, clothing, and accessories.

1:00 pm – Enjoy lunch in Old Havana at **5 SENTIDOS** Paladar.

3:00 pm – After lunch, enjoy professional **SALSA LESSONS** at **CASA del SON**

4:00 pm – Return to the hotel. Cool off. Freshen up for dinner.

6:30 pm – Meet in the hotel's conference room, with a microphone so everyone can hear, for a discussion with Cuba's dynamic former **CULTURAL ATTACHE** and current history professor. He will answer any of your questions about Cuba's political system, economy, trade and travel restrictions, role of women in Cuban society, approach to LGBTQ, Fidel's literacy project, and health care. No question is off limits.

7:30 pm - Depart the hotel for dinner in Miramar. Host members of the Cuban Jewish community. Up to **12** guests will join the group to celebrate Havdalah. (Bring candles and matches/a lighter). All food, beverages, and transportation for the guests are provided/ supported by the trip. After dinner, all will enjoy the VIP entrance to **FABRICA DE ART**, Havana's hottest night spot. This multifaceted venue, built into a former cooking oil factory, features art installations, live music, pop-up fashion stalls, performance art, and Indy cinema.

The guide and driver will return the group to the hotel at an agreed-upon pre-determined time.



Sunday Feb 1

Breakfast at the HOTEL (served from 7:00 – 10:30 am each day)

9:45 am – Meet your guide in the lobby after breakfast.

10:00 am – Tour the **CUBAN WING OF THE FINE ARTS MUSEUM**. The museum curator, Mr. Omar Díaz Liria, has worked for over 19 years training educators and museologists, heading up community art-based programming for adults and children, and serving as an emissary of the Museum in England and the U.S., successfully encouraging a healthy cultural and artistic exchange.

11:30 am – Visit **ADATH ISRAEL**, Cuba's only Orthodox synagogue. Meet with Yakov Berezniak, cantor, treasurer, and Shohet.

12:00 pm – Lunch is at Paladar in Old Havana.

After lunch, peruse souvenirs or folk art (on the 2nd floor) at **ALMACENAS MARKET**.

After the market, but before returning to the hotel, stop with your guide at **EL FLORIDITA**, the preferred hangout spot of Hemingway and celebrities in the '40s and '50s, to enjoy a round of daiquiris (included).

Approximately 3:00 pm – Return to the hotel (across the street). Freshen up.

4:00 pm – The guide will meet the group in the lobby. Ride in **CLASSIC CONVERTIBLES** along the Malecon. The professional Cultural Cuba photographer will capture the group and the cars in motion. All photos are included and will be shared via link with the group leader post-trip. Free time before dinner.

7:00 pm – Meet the guide in the lobby. Ride to dinner at **LA GUARIDA**, Havana's famous restaurant and setting for the award-winning film Strawberry and Chocolate. After dinner, enjoy a private performance on the restaurant's rooftop by an award-winning **CUBAN JAZZ TRIO**. The guide and driver will return the group to the hotel. shared via a secure link with the group leader post-trip.



Monday Feb 2 - Departure Day

Breakfast at the HOTEL (served from 7:00 – 10:30 am each day)

8:15 am – Breakfast. Check-out. The luggage gets placed in the vehicle.

8:45 am – Depart the hotel.

9:00 am – Tour the **PARTAGAS CIGAR FACTORY**, where visitors observe workers rolling tobacco leaves and the cigar production stages. The Partagas Cigar Factory Tour guide will share the factory's history and elaborate on the different stages of production (workers do not stop to speak with visitors).

10:00 am – Visit with artist **NEREA VERA** in the beautiful Neoclassical mansion she is restoring in the Vedado Neighborhood. The artist is relaunching a 20th-century lifestyle magazine as an art project to promote Cuban creatives.

11:00 am – Visit the **SEPHARDIC CENTER**. Founded in 1954, this is the only Sephardic synagogue in Havana. Elderly Jews in Havana gather monthly at the Sephardic Center to participate in activities, including stretching exercises, table games, and crafts, while enjoying each other's company. Meet with the Temple Vice President, **Samuel Zagovalov Montero**, President of the local B'nai B'rith.

Service Project: Bring sewing supplies for the "Patch Network," a group of seniors who hand-sew challah covers to raise funds for the congregation.

12:30 pm – Lunch at **LA RESERVA Paladar**. The meal will be served buffet style. Closing Session at the restaurant.

Your guide and driver will escort you to the airport. A 2-hour advance check-in time is required.

Thank you for supporting the people of Cuba!



CULTURAL CUBA