

**ALVARO'S ADVENTURES**  
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# CUBA – Dec 2024

*Dec 1 – 12, 2024*

**Guided by Arturo Kirkconnell and Mollee Brown**



**Blue-headed Quail-Dove**

**C**uba, there really is no place like it. It is a unique country with a distinctive and gorgeous avifauna, as well as its cultural and political history which is as fascinating as its natural history. Our bird survey program joins North American based biologist and Cuban expert Arturo Kirkconnell in a delightful visit to sample and survey the birds of Cuba, meet the Cuban people, and support ongoing conservation and research in Cuba. We will be supporting the work of Cuban ornithologist Arturo Kirkconnell, including a published annotated summary of the birds of Cuba, as well as a new photographic field guide which was produced recently. Our tours have collected data for these and other works. You will be escorted through a full itinerary of events during your time in Cuba,

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adhering to the rules set forth by the Department of Treasury's General License to visit Cuba.

Cuba is an absolutely amazing place! This is the most diverse of all Caribbean countries and a rather large island nation. During this trip, we have the chance to find most of the Cuba's endemic birds, during our visit to the West, the Zapata Swamp, and the northern Archipelago. While surveying for birds, we will have the chance to see and talk about the country's human history as well as its evolutionary history. As scientists study the Caribbean in detail, they are finding that some of its birds are older lineages than what are found on the mainland, and this applies to mammals and other fauna as well. These islands are natural laboratories, but also natural museums, which have been carrying members of otherwise long extinct avifaunas that at one point flourished on the mainland. The todies are a perfect example of this, but so is the Cuban Green Woodpecker, Cuban Trogon and many others. Todies were at one point found in Mexico, and in Germany, but now only in the Caribbean. Visiting Cuba is like having a window to the past. This is a survey trip that aims to gather information on Cuban birds, to sample its diversity, to interact with Cuban birders, biologists, locals, and to learn about the importance of Cuba in understanding New World birds. It is a truly interesting, diverse, and exceptional nation to visit!

To give you an idea where we go, this summarizes our trip in a nutshell. In the West, we find two diverse and dramatic ranges: The Sierra de la Rosario, and the Sierra de los Organos. Here one of the specialties is a fine singer, Cuban Solitaire, which happens to resemble the thrushes of Hawaii more than other New World solitaires. This is a scenically gorgeous region, a real highlight. We will see the odd limestone formations called mogotes, flat topped limestone hills, interspersed with dry forest. In this part of the trip is where we have a chance to see the Cuban Solitaire, Cuban Grassquit, and pine specialist Olive-capped Warbler. Lots of birds with "Cuban" in their name, pygmy-owl, vireo, trogon, blackbird.... Many birds here are endemics or regional specialties.

Cuba's best known and vital birding destination, the Zapata Peninsula, is located near the historic Bay of Pigs. Zapata is a Ramsar Wetland Convention designated site and is among the most important wetlands in the Caribbean. Here, we shall visit the protected areas in Cienaga de Zapata National Park and other natural sites with various habitats. The Zapata Peninsula covers more than 2800 square miles and features easily accessible, wetlands, forests and everglades-like ecology and habitat. The limestone along the coast forms sinkholes (cenotes), some water filled with colorful tropical fish. It is a superb area to study natural history in Cuba. We may find the smallest bird in the world here! The Bee Hummingbird. We will search for the "Zapata birds", the wren and the sparrow, noting that the rail is essentially unknown and perhaps nearly extinct. As well, Bare-legged Owls, and Fernandina's Flickers are found here, along with the very restricted range Red-shouldered Blackbird, the nearest relative of our Red-winged Blackbird.

Cayo Coco and surrounding keys (cayos) provide excellent birding opportunities on Cuba's northern coast. At one time these cayos were very little known, uninhabited,

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and pristine. They hold populations of some birds absent from the rest of Cuba, due to ancient links with the Bahamas archipelago, such as Thick-billed Vireo and Bahama Mockingbird in addition to endemic subspecies of birds found only on the cayos. Now, Cayo Coco is connected to the mainland by a nearly 20-mile-long causeway, as of 1989. Other birds we may find here include the agile and adorable looking Cuban Gnatcatcher, the Oriente Warbler which is a member of a newly family recognized endemic to Cuba! The Cayos are great for shorebird, waders, gulls, terns and here we may find the uncommon West Indian Whistling Duck.

During our time in Cuba we will visit as far east as the city of Camaguey, a labyrinth of a layout, with many historical sites, churches and a very neat spot to see. This will not be the only place where we get to add to our bird survey by seeing the cultural history of Cuba, and meeting and talking to Cubans. Trinidad is another amazing city, a UNESCO world heritage city, colorful, bright and unlike any other in Cuba. Perhaps the most attractive city in the country. Then there is Havana, which needs no introduction. One of the oldest cities in the Americas, retaining a remarkable number of historical buildings and yes, many, many cars from the 1950s. We will have ample time to see these parts of Cuba, interact with Cuban people, while being led by a guide to the importance and history of the city.





**Western Spindalis – green backed Cuban population**

## **The Birding Sites We Visit**

### **Camaguey Area (Najasa)**

This is as far east as we will get on this tour. Visiting some great woodland, open country and savanna areas within an hour of the city of Camaguey. We hope to also have some time to explore Camaguey, a confusing maze of a city created that way to fend off pirate attacks hundreds of years ago. The colonial architecture and layout of the city is an interesting addition to our birding of this part of Cuba. The birding is exciting, and the specialties here are many. Widespread Cuban endemics will be found, but also some which can be rarer to the west such as Cuban Parakeet and Cuban Parrot. Furthermore, the real specialties here are crows. There are good populations of Cuban Crows, as well as the rarer “Cuban” Palm Crow. It is only a matter of time until this Cuban form of the Palm Crow (also on Hispaniola) will be separated as an endemic species, this is a great place to see it and study it side by side with its similar relative. Najasa is also wonderful for seeing the Giant Kingbird, which is a pretty stunningly big billed flycatcher! Even a

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single morning here will gain us a lot to see which is different from what we find elsewhere in the country.

### **Cayo Coco**

Cayo Coco is well known internationally in the tourism circles, particularly in Canada where many of the visitors to Cayo Coco come from. It is a series of different keys (Cayos) that are connected by bridges and causeways, with wonderful white sand beaches and a warm sea breeze that is irresistible. It is no wonder so many resorts have been built here over the years for the many tourists that visit. But still there are spots where one can get away into the wilderness and enjoy a mix of endemic specialties, migrant land birds and migrant shorebirds and waders. Cayo Coco area is where we can find the Bahama Mockingbird, as well as the Thick-billed Vireo; these are not found elsewhere in the country. Here we also can find an endemic subspecies of the Zapata Sparrow, in addition to possibilities of Gundlach's Hawk, and the wonderful little Cuban Gnatcatcher and the odd Oriente Warbler. This is not a warbler but part of a two-species family endemic to Cuba. Certain limestone areas may hold the uncommon Key West Quail Dove. Lots of shorebirds stop here to winter and on migration, and lately even some notable gulls have been seen. We could find wintering Piping Plovers, and perhaps both the Eastern and Western Willets (which may be split one day by the American Ornithological Society). It is a gorgeous part of Cuba, with interesting dry forest communities, some thicker with retaining habitat for many wintering warblers from North America and always the chance of something unusual.

### **Zapata Swamp – Bay of Pigs**

Zapata is the gem of Cuba from a natural history perspective, and interesting from a human history perspective as this is where the Bay of Pigs invasion happened. Often referred to as the Zapata Swamp, only a certain portion of it is wetland, much of it is dry forest. There are also good salt flats and mudflats. But overall, the mix of habitats is unparalleled in the country, and it is where we may find the bulk of the Cuban specialties, with three nights in the area, we have a good amount of time to find the birds, as well as enjoy a Mojito or two, and get in touch with Cubans and their culture. In the forest, the trickiest birds to find will be the quail doves. The prize is the gorgeous and distinct Blue-headed Quail Dove, and then the endemic Grey-fronted Quail Dove, perhaps the Ruddy Quail Dove as well. While we scour the forest for these birds, we may come up on the Bare-legged, Cuban Pygmy or even Stygian owls. The area is great for finding the unusual Fernandina's Flicker, and two "flagship species." Which ones are these? Well, the national bird of Cuba, a bird that is gorgeous, unusual and is thought to carry the colors of the Cuban flag, this is the Cuban Trogon. Unusual for a trogon in that it has an odd spiked tail shape! But the bird that many want to see which is a tiny little speck of a bird and is found here is the Bee Hummingbird. Why a little bird would attract so much attention is clear when you realize that this bug-sized bird is in fact the smallest bird on

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earth! Not only that, the male packs a punch of color with its raspberry gorget and blue back, it is simply a wonderful little bird.

The wetlands are another habitat where we find some neat species, perhaps not visually striking, but interesting from the perspective of those who know the Red-winged Blackbird, is the closest relative to our species, the Red-shouldered Blackbird. Only when you sit and study their behavior and the females do you realize how different they really are from our Redwings. In the shrubbery near the marshes, we find the namesake population of the Zapata Sparrow, perhaps more closely related to brush-finches and towhees than stripy sparrows. The real prize, and a very difficult bird to see is the Zapata Wren which we will try for early in the morning, perhaps mixing this with a shot at the Greater Antillean (Cuban) Nightjar. Unfortunately, the Zapata Rail is probably near extinction, and it is not something you should expect. The rail is one of the rarest birds in the Americas! But you never know, do you?

### **Viñales**

Pinar del Rio (Pine Forest of the River) is the westernmost province of Cuba, and it is a scenic and wonderful area. The valley of Viñales is a World Heritage Site for its outstanding Karst topography. Karst formations occur when there is ample limestone, and they vary in appearance from plains with potholes to the odd rounded mountains we see at Viñales, called Mogotes. These hills host a variety of dry forest plants, and some nice forest in their midst, including pine forests which hold nice populations of the Olive-capped Warbler. The woods are well stocked with Western Spindalis, Cuban Bullfinch, the oddball and gorgeous Cuban Green Woodpecker, Tawny-shouldered Blackbirds, Cuban Blackbirds and really a great assortment of Cuban and Caribbean species. Out here in the West sometimes the lovable Cuban Tody can be quite common, and we will make sure we enjoy a nice handful of these little guys. The specialties out in the West are the lovely and musical Cuban Solitaire, and the pretty Cuban Grassquit.

### **Havana**

You absolutely cannot go to Cuba without enjoying a bit of Havana, or La Habana as it is known in Spanish. The history, the 50s cars, the music, the spirit of Havana is unstoppable and fun. We will be led during the day by a cultural guide who will explain and help us understand the history and role of Havana in the past, what it is like in the present, and hopes and dreams for the future. The day in the Old City is fun, and often a highlight to a visit in Cuba.

### **Trinidad**

Trinidad is a gorgeous city, the most colorful small city in Cuba. We will make a short stop here to visit, as we travel between the east and west. There are some mountains in this region, and it opens us up to find the very local Black and White-collared Swifts. The Black Swift may be a different species than the one found in Western North America; however this species is seldom seen.

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## About the Physical Requirements & Pace

In general roads and tourist transportation are good in Cuba, but other infrastructure sometimes is substandard. Many hotels and “casas privadas” (B & Bs) are past their prime, and although clean and often with wonderful and helpful staff, they are not to the levels expected by foreign travelers. One has to be prepared for this and note that the Cuban experience, great staff, ambience and otherwise more than makes up for what is lacking in accommodation. In order to increase comfort and the contact we have with local Cubans, where possible we will be staying at privately run B & B type accommodation (Casas Privadas). These private ventures, which we are happy to support, are more comfortable, and well run than larger hotels. They also give us the chance to support and further enhance contact with the Cuban people. Similarly, we will visit private restaurants where usually food is more varied than what you could find at a hotel. This may mean that at night the group may divide into various homes within a block

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radius, rather than be in a central hotel. We will be close by, and guides will always be available if there are any issues. This may not be what you are accustomed to in a bird survey trip, but in previous experience we have found that this not only works, but it is also a net plus to understanding Cuba and enriching the experience for you and the Cuban people. Cities in Cuba often are a mix of crumbling buildings, buildings that need a bit of care, and sometimes restored buildings. All sometimes next to each other, at night streets are dark, and there may be many people outside chatting, or going about their business. In some cities, we may stay right in the thick of this, and Arturo and our local handlers will lead you to local restaurants and so forth. This is the Cuban experience, not dangerous, but certainly walking as a group in dark streets in a city full of people may not be what you are used to, so we mention it so you will be mentally prepared. Cubans on the whole are curious, interesting and friendly people.

The trip itself is not highly taxing. Most birding is done on flat areas, on broad trails, or roadside. We may encounter some trails in limestone dominated sites where the footing may be uneven. We do not expect any major climbs or difficult hikes. Note that to be out in the best hours of the day, early breakfast is a must. It can get hot in Cuba, although cooler in December than it is in spring. However, be prepared for long days out in the field, starting reasonably early in the morning so we can get a good day in looking for birds. Travel days can be lengthy, with drives as long as 5 hours or so. We will stop and break up drives whenever we can to stretch legs, eat or get a snack. Whenever possible a post lunch rest time will be scheduled. If it has been wet, there may be some mosquitos in the Zapata area, but not a major issue if you have repellent.



Cuban Tody

## Itinerary for Cuba Dec 2024

**Dec. 1, 23. Day 1 – ARRIVAL IN CAMAGUEY.** American Airlines flies from Miami to Camaguey daily in the morning. If you would like to arrive a day early to have more time to recuperate from the flight, please let us know to arrange for extra accommodation. Camaguey is an incredible city, laid out in a complex pattern. Why? Well, to confuse marauding pirates, over hundreds of years. It is a city rich in history, and while we are here, we will have some chance to enjoy a bit of the history of this special city, and the farthest east we will reach in Cuba. Night in Camaguey.

**Dec. 2, 23. Day 2 – BIRDING NAJASA.** Approximately an hour away from the city of Camaguey, is the birding site of Najasa. The area is a mix of agricultural land, open forest, and palm groves. It is in these palm groves that we can find one of the local specialties, the Cuban Palm Crow alongside with the more common Cuban Crow. Cuban Parakeet, Cuban Parrot and the rare Plain Pigeon are found here, as well as the superb Giant Kingbird. Being the first day out in the field in Cuba, we will see lots of diversity today, much of it new! This will be an early morning departure. Night in Camaguey.

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**Dec 3, 23. Day 3 – TRAVEL TO CAYO COCO.** Today we will drive several hours to the north and west, to the Cayo Coco area, on the north shore of the country. There are options to bird as we get closer to Cayo Coco, and during the afternoon we can visit some sites to begin looking at some of the local specialties. Night in Morón.

**Dec 4, 23. Day 4 – CAYO COCO.** There are several cays (cayos) connected by various bridges and causeways here. The area is gorgeous, and the beaches fantastic. Unfortunately, development continues in the region, and some of the most unique habitat is under great threat. Still, there are areas here which share a clear avifaunal affinity to the Bahamas, with tiny populations of Thick-billed Vireo and Bahama Mockingbird. As well, this is a great part of Cuba to look for the Cuban Gnatcatcher, in addition to an endemic race of the Zapata Sparrow. Shorebirds can be found here, wintering gulls and terns, and migrant warblers. Night in Morón.

**Dec 5, 23. Day 5 – CAYO COCO TO TRINIDAD.** We will have one last morning to bird the Cayo Coco area, perhaps to fill in any gaps we have in our sightings. The pale headed resident form of the Osprey is a possibility, and we will look for “Great White Heron” along with the Cuban form of Northern Flicker. During the afternoon, we have a travel period, working our way to the southwest to the city of Trinidad. We will have a bit of time at the gorgeous city of Trinidad, a cultural highlight to see a bit of its colorful colonial buildings and contemplate its history and the role of sugar in the history of Cuba. Overnight in Trinidad.

**Dec 6, 23. Day 6 – TO THE ZAPATA AREA.** We may bird locally in the morning before our travel to the Zapata area. The plan would be to arrive relatively early in Zapata so we can begin our birding today. Overnight in Playa Larga.

**Dec 7 - 8, 23. Day 7 - 8– ZAPATA AREA.** We have two full days in the Zapata area, allowing us to look for a wide variety of great birds which are found here. Many of them are specialties or endemics. The treats we will be on the lookout for include the Zapata Wren, Zapata Sparrow, Bare-legged Owl, Fernandina’s Flicker, Blue-headed Quail-Dove, Gray-headed Quail-Dove, Cuban Bee Hummingbird, Cuban Parrot, Cuban Parakeet, among many others. We have a chance here to find Stygian Owl, either at a day roost or at night, given some luck. We will have some fun times in Zapata, it is a wonderful part of Cuba! Overnight in Playa Larga.

**Dec 9, 23. Day 9 – ZAPATA TO VIÑALES.** We depart Zapata and drive several hours west past Havana to the Viñales area today. This the western and mountainous part of Cuba, and it is also a visually stunning area of Karst topography, and old limestone mountains. By this time in the tour we should have seen a great proportion of Cuba’s specialties, but in the West, we will have the quest of finding the finest singer of Cuba, the Cuban Solitaire.

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This is also an area where Great Lizard-Cuckoo, Cuban Oriole, and various other endemics can be common. We will also look for the Cuban Grassquit in the west, a species that can be difficult due to what it has suffered in the hands of the pet trade. Overnight in Viñales.

**Dec 10, 23. Day 10 – VIÑALES TO HAVANA.** This will be a mop up day if we have not found our last target species, perhaps a day we can enjoy the scenery and landscape before we drive back to Havana. On our route we can make some stops at roadside lakes where terns, ducks and other migratory birds may be present. Night in Havana.

**Dec 11, 23. Day 11 – HAVANA.** Cultural and historical day in Old Havana. We will spend the day walking in the Old City with a cultural guide who will give us the background and history of this evocative, amazing, and unique city. Night in Havana.

**Dec 12, 23. Day 12 – RETURN HOME.** Today we transfer you to the Havana airport and get you safely on your way home. There are multiple flights back to Miami from Havana currently.



Bee Hummingbird

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## Your Guides



Arturo Kirkconnell, the world's authority on Cuban birds with Alvaro Jaramillo

**Arturo Kirkconnell** is the undisputed world's expert on Cuban birds, co-author with Orlando Garrido of the Birds of Cuba, and a lifelong birder and ornithologist. No one knows Cuban birds like Arturo. Arturo has been guiding tours in Cuba since 1988, and it is safe to say he has mentored or taught essentially all of the other guides in the country, how to identify and find birds in Cuba. Certainly, Arturo was Alvaro's teacher during his early trips in the late 90s. Arturo is the bird curator at the National Museum of Natural History of Cuba and the author of several definitive papers on Cuban birds, he is currently writing the British Ornithologists Union checklist to the Birds of Cuba. His most recent book is a photographic field

guide to the birds of Cuba, published by Cornell University Press.



**Mollee Brown** is a lifelong lover of birds and nature based in West Virginia, where she grew up roaming the Appalachian hills. In college Mollee connected with the birding community and began working at Bird Watcher's Digest, where she helped with tour planning, guiding, and events such as the Midwest Birding Symposium and American Birding Expo. In 2017, Mollee started Nighthawk Agency, a marketing and strategy business for birding, conservation, and ecotourism organizations. Since then, Mollee has worked with dozens of birding organizations throughout the world. Mollee

serves on the board of directors for The Birding Co-op, the Frontiers in Ornithology Association, and volunteers with birding and conservation groups in West Virginia. In 2020, Mollee joined George Armistead and Alvaro Jaramillo to launch the List List Birding Podcast. She contributes to a variety of bird and nature-based publications and events. Mollee has loved photography since she started borrowing her grandma's camera as a child, and usually has a camera in hand while birding, hiking, camping, and exploring the world. Mollee has guided birding tours throughout the Americas since 2015. She's most at home among mountains and hilly terrains.



## Financial Information

**FEE:** \$5500 Starting in Camaguey and ending in Havana.

**DEPOSIT:** \$500 per person, to secure spot

**FINAL PAYMENT DUE:** 8/3/23

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional):** \$550.

**LIMIT:** 12.

## Additional Information

**DOCUMENTS:** Suffice to say that while Cuba is now easier to visit for US travelers, than it was 10 years ago, but there are various aspects to consider and recently some regulations have changed. First, straight tourism travel to Cuba for US Citizens is not allowed, but visits can be licensed if the travel falls under 12 distinct categories. Visits as an individual are not allowed, but group travel under the 12 categories is allowed. Our survey trip falls under one of these 12 categories. General licenses for visits to Cuba are possible under the rules set forth by OFAC (Office of Foreign Assets Control), and we will help lead you through the details of the license. One does not have to apply for the license, but the trip does have to follow the rules set forth by OFAC. There are various provisions we will adhere to, including a full and complete itinerary of activities that fill the requirements of the General License. The rules were changed in the last few years, and this trip adheres to these new and stricter rules.

For entry to Cuba a current passport valid three months beyond the date of your return is necessary for US citizens to enter Cuba. Furthermore, to enter Cuba you require a Cuban Tourist Card (often mistakenly called a Visa, although the Cuban Visa is a different document). We will facilitate obtaining the Cuban Tourist Card, it can be ordered online, and now most airlines offer the service directly when you purchase the ticket, or at the Cuban gateway airport (Miami for American Airlines). Cost of the Cuban Tourist Card is approximately \$85 and is not included in the price of the trip.

If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Cuban consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or phone or e-mail Alvaro's Adventures and we can look this up.

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Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey, Cuba generally asks for two pages for entry and exit stamp.

## **AIR ARRANGEMENTS:**

Please plan to arrive in Camaguey on Dec 1, 2024. American Airlines currently arrives in the morning. If you choose to arrive a day early, we can help arrange accommodation. Be sure to check with Alvaro's Adventures to confirm that the flights you have chosen will work with our itinerary and to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. We are not responsible for these fees.

Plan on returning from Havana on Dec 12, 2024, at any time. Note that you may have to check out of the guest house by mid-morning or noon, so a morning or early afternoon flight is best.

**TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS:** The tour fee is \$5500 for one person in double occupancy starting in Havana, Cuba. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 11, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 12, all ground transportation, entrance fees, tips for baggage handling and meal service, and the guide services of the tour leaders. Alcoholic beverages and items of a personal nature are not included. The above fees do not include your airfare to and from Cuba, airport taxes, visa fees, travel insurance, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for the tour is \$550. If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee.

**TOUR REGISTRATION:** To register for this tour, complete the enclosed Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$500** per person. If registering by phone, a deposit and the Release and Indemnity form must be received within fourteen days, or the space will be released. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to departure, or by Dec 4, 2023. **We will bill you for the final payment at either 120 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later (note that final payment may happen at a different and later date if we need to wait due to covid issues).** Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

**SMOKING:** This is a non-smoking tour.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Refund of deposit and payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 120 days before departure. If cancellation

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occurs between 119 and 70 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable.

This policy only applies to payments made to Alvaro's Adventures for tour (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of the insurance is not refundable, so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airlines restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute another guide for the original one. Where this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members, and they will have the right to cancel their participation and receive a full refund.

Alvaro's Adventures is a Registered Seller of Travel in the State of California (CST # 2105497). Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California. This ensures your right to a prompt refund: Upon cancellation of the transportation or travel services, where the passenger is not at fault and has not canceled in violation of any terms and conditions previously clearly and conspicuously disclosed and agreed to by the passenger, all sums paid to the seller of travel for services not provided will be promptly paid to the passenger, unless the passenger advises the seller of travel in writing, after cancellation. This provision does not apply where the seller of travel has remitted the payment to another registered wholesale seller of travel or a carrier, without obtaining a refund, and where the wholesaler or provider defaults in providing the agreed-upon transportation or service. In this situation, the seller of travel must provide the passenger with a written statement accompanied by bank records establishing the disbursement of the payment, and if disbursed to a wholesale seller of travel, proof of current registration of that wholesaler.

### **TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE:**

**\*\*\* Note \*\*\*\*\*** The Cuban government requires visitors to buy medical insurance to enter Cuba. The airlines include it within their ticket price. American Airlines notes that it is available through them for a \$25 fee added to your ticket price. This is done automatically. You may want to double check:

<https://www.aa.com/i18n/travel-info/international-travel/cuba.jsp>

Similarly, Jet Blue offers the medical insurance included in the ticket price. Note that Jet Blue flies in and out of Havana, but not Camaguey. But you may be able to buy a mixed airline ticket if Jet Blue is best for most of your flight.

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<https://www.jetblue.com/flights/cuba/>

This insurance is provided by Esiscuba and as I gather it is automatic when one is in Cuba and flew in on the major airlines. So you do not get a number or other details. The information here is in Spanish, but google translate may help to read the following:

<http://www.esicuba.cu/nuestros-seguros/personas.html>

**Below are our standard details on Trip Cancellation and Medical Emergency Insurance. If you do purchase, make sure the company covers Cuba.**

While there may be others that cover Cuba, Allianz does offer coverage in Cuba.

<https://www.allianztravelinsurance.com/>

World Nomads apparently also covers Cuba. <https://www.worldnomads.com/>

See details here - <https://www.worldnomads.com/usa/help/insurance/recent-events/coronavirus-faqs>

We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, we cannot offer any refund when cancellation occurs within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 70 to 119 days prior to departure (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Alvaro's Adventures, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the reverse side of the registration form. Alvaro's Adventures acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard

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to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. Alvaro's Adventures accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Alvaro's Adventures reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Alvaro's Adventures reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, and other pertinent matter provided by Alvaro's Adventures. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

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