

ALVARO'S ADVENTURES
birding & nature tours



CUBA – Dec 2020

Dec 7 – 18, 2020

Rescheduled from Apr 2020

Guided by Alvaro Jaramillo and Luis Diaz



Blue-headed Quail-Dove

Cuba, 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 US based biologist and birder Alvaro Jaramillo with Cuban based biologist Luis Diaz in a delightful visit to sample and survey the birds of Cuba, meet the Cuban people, and support ongoing conservation 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 that is in production. Our tour will directly collect data for these works. You will be

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escorted through a full itinerary of events during your time in Cuba, 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 unlikely to be seen. 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.

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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 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 may in fact not be a warbler but a member of a new family 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 an 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 an expert guide to the importance and history of the city.

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Western Spindalis

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 here, but also some which can be rarer to the west such as Cuban Parakeet and Cuban Parrot are found here easily. 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

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billed flycatcher! Even a 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 good numbers of the wonderful little Cuban Gnatcatcher and the awesome and odd Oriente Warbler. 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 gull numbers can be found. We could find wintering Piping Plovers, and perhaps both the Eastern and Western Willets (which may be soon split 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.

*****Hurricane Irma dealt a blow to the northern Cayos of Cuba in 2017. Infrastructure is all fixed, but some birds have not quite recovered yet. We hope that by 2020, many of the bird populations there will have recuperated to a greater extent. *****

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, although a large portion. There are also good forests here, as well as 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 unique 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

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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 earth! Not only that, the male packs a punch of color with its raspberry gorget and blue back, it is simple 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 Red-wings. 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 has only been seen on a handful of occasions in the last few decades, 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 tour of Cuba.

Trinidad

Trinidad is a gorgeous city, the most beautiful city in Cuba. We will make a short stop on our travel day to visit Trinidad. There are some mountains in this region, and it

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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; we will look for this little-known bird.



About the Physical Requirements & Pace

In general roads and tourist transportation are very good in Cuba, but other infrastructure sometimes is substandard. Many hotels 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 otherwise more than makes up for the substandard 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, often 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

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will visit some “Paladares” or private restaurants where usually food is more varied. This may mean that at night the group may divide into various homes within a block 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, it is a net plus to understanding Cuba, and enriching the experience for you and the Cuban 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 during this time of the year, the weather can be quite nice. 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 siesta will be scheduled.



Cuban Tody



Itinerary for Cuba December 2020

Dec 7, 20. Day 1 – ARRIVAL IN HAVANA (LA HABANA). A couple of airlines fly directly from the US to Havana. 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. Havana is an incredible city, on our last day of the tour we will be touring the city. But feel free to wander about today if you arrive early and have some time and energy. Night in Havana.

Dec 8, 20. Day 2 – HAVANA TO VIÑALES. We depart Havana 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. 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 9, 20. Day 3 – VIÑALES TO ZAPATA. If we have not already done so, we will visit the Cueva de los Portales, a beautiful set of caves where we can look for the Cuban Solitaire. We shall drive around the outskirts of Havana on our way southeast to the Zapata Area. We may stop at a large lake to see if any wintering ducks and other waterbirds may be found. Night in Zapata.

Dec 10-11, 20. Day 4 - 5– 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 Girón.

Dec 12, 20. Day 6 – ZAPATA TO THE TRINIDAD AREA. We may bird on our way east as we travel to Trinidad. One stop may be the Cienfuegos Botanical Gardens, often a birdy spot. The plan would be to arrive relatively early in Trinidad so that we can enjoy a short walking tour in the city. Overnight in Trinidad.

Dec 13, 20. Day 7 – TRINIDAD TO CAMAGUEY. We may look for some birds near Trinidad in the morning before continuing on to Camaguey. We shall stop for lunch en route and aim to arrive such that we can do a bit of afternoon sightseeing and perhaps a

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short tour of Camaguey. 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 14, 20. Day 8 – BIRDING NAJASA AND TRAVEL TO CAYO COCO. 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. After lunch 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 Cayo Coco.

Dec 15, 20. Day 9 – 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 populations of Thick-billed Vireo and Bahama Mockingbird. As well, this is a great part of Cuba to look for the Cuban Gnatcatcher, as well as an endemic race of the Zapata Sparrow. Shorebirds can be found here, wintering gulls and terns, and migrant warblers. Night in Cayo Coco.

Dec 16, 20. Day 10 – CAYO COCO TO HAVANA. We will have one last morning to bird the Cayo Coco area, perhaps to fill in any gaps we have in our sightings, if time allows and the tide is right we may be able to find wintering Piping Plovers, as well as Other shorebird species. 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. For much of the day we will be driving back to Havana. This will be the longest drive of the tour. Night in Havana.

Dec 17, 20. Day 11 – HAVANA. Cultural and historical day in Old Havana. We will spend the day wandering 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 18, 20. Day 12 – RETURN HOME. Today we transfer you to the airport and get you safely on your way home.

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Bee Hummingbird

Your Guides

Luis Diaz Luis M. Díaz, PhD, has been a curator at the National Museum of Natural History in Havana since 1998. He is an enthusiastic birder and lifelong naturalist. He has guided natural history tours in Cuba for over seventeen years, and he has been a bird guide since 2003. He has led over sixty birding tours in Cuba, and he is very popular with birders as a guide. His research is focused on the taxonomy and conservation of Cuban amphibians and reptiles. He has over one hundred published works, including the *Guía Taxonómica de los Anfibios de Cuba*. Luis has described twenty new species of herps for Cuba and the Dominican Republic. He has traveled as a researcher or lecturer, including to the Dominican Republic, Germany, Japan, Bolivia, Colombia, Honduras, Guadeloupe, Italy, Canada



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and the United States. Despite his specialized research profile, he loves guiding birdwatchers, as they are interested in birds and other wildlife in Cuba.

Alvaro Jaramillo was born in Chile but began birding in Toronto, where he lived as a youth. He was trained in ecology and evolution with a particular interest in bird behavior. Research forays and backpacking trips introduced Alvaro to the riches of the Neotropics, where he has traveled extensively. He is the author of the *Birds of Chile*, an authoritative yet portable field guide to Chile's birds. Alvaro writes the Identify Yourself column in *Bird Watcher's Digest*. Among various projects he recently authored the *ABA Field Guide to Birds of California*, and the sparrow chapter for the *Handbook of Birds of the World*, he is also writing a photo guide to the birds and wildlife of Patagonia. Alvaro was recently granted the Eisenmann Medal by the Linnaean Society of New York; it is awarded occasionally for excellence in ornithology and encouragement of the amateur. Alvaro lives with his family in Half Moon Bay, California.

Below a photo of Alvaro with Arturo Kirkconnell, the world's authority on Cuban birds, and a consultant for this trip.



Arturo Kirkconnell and Alvaro



Financial Information

FEE: \$4900 Starting in and ending in Havana.

DEPOSIT: \$500 per person, to secure spot

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: Dec 17, 2019 (Aug 9, 2020 for new registrants).

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$550.

LIMIT: 14.

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 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 2019, and this trip adheres to these new and stricter rules. Note that previous versions of this trip began in Camaguey, however the US government has suspended flights to that city. Now US based carriers are only allowed to land in Havana.

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 called a Visa, although the Cuban Visa is a different document). We will facilitate obtaining the Cuban Tourist Card, and now most airlines offer the service directly when you purchase the ticket, or at the Cuban gateway airport (Miami for American Airlines, Ft. Lauderdale for Jet Blue). Cost of the Cuban Tourist Card is approximately \$85 and is not included in the price of the trip, it is quite easy to obtain when you buy your ticket.

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

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available online or phone or e-mail Alvaro's Adventures and we can look this up. 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 Havana on Dec 7, 2020. No birding will occur on this date, but the group will get together for a briefing and dinner on this first evening. If you choose to arrive a day early, we can help arrange accommodation for the extra night. 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 18, 2020 at any time. Note that you may have to check out of the hotel by mid-morning or noon, so a morning or early afternoon flight is best.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The tour fee is \$4900 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. Note that in Cayo Coco we will be at an all-inclusive hotel, so drinks are free there. The above fees do not include your airfare to and from Cuba, airport taxes, visa fees, 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 17, 2019 (for original registrants). **For new registrants, 120 previous to the departure will occur on Aug 9, 2020. 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.** 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 prices for example. 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.

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

ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

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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, and it is one of the few companies that covers you during an epidemic. <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 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

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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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