

## General Trip info

## Map

**Trip Code:** IQSSC

**Trip Length:** 9

**Trip starts in:** Havana

**Trip ends in:** Cienfuegos - Havana

**Meals:** 8 Breakfasts included

6 Lunches included

6 Dinners included

**Accommodation:** Guesthouse (1 nt), Overnight boat (7 nts)

**Transport:** Boat, Public bus, dinghy

## Daily Itinerary

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### Day 1

#### Havana

Bienvenido! Welcome to Cuba. Your trip begins with a welcome meeting at 6 pm. A local representative will brief you on what to expect over the course of the trip and after the briefing there is the option to join the group for dinner and an orientation walk. For the first night of your sailing adventure you will be staying at a local family-run guesthouse. Depending on numbers, the group may be split across two guesthouses which are located close to each other. The main guesthouse will be the central meeting point. If you arrive early and have free time, be sure to check out Habana Viejo (Old Havana) and its wonderful architecture. There are plenty of good museums to check out too, like the Museo de la Revolucion and the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. Sports fans can go to a baseball game between October and May for a taste of Cuba's number-one ball game. Lining up for a famous Copellia ice cream is also well worth it. As you'll depart from Havana to Cienfuegos early tomorrow morning and only have a short amount of time in Cienfuegos before setting sail, we recommend that you bring all the toiletries and sunscreen that you'll need for the trip from home. Please refer to the packing section for a comprehensive packing list. There may be an opportunity to access the internet on Cayo Largo. You will need to have an ETESCA card to access the internet and on this trip the only time you will have to purchase one of these cards will be in Havana. For more information on the purchase of ETESCA cards please see money matters.

## Day 2

### **Cienfuegos**

Rise early and head off to Cienfuegos to begin your sailing adventure. After breakfast with your guest house family, your local representative will meet you and transfer you to the main bus station for the 8.20 am bus to Cienfuegos. They will accompany you on the bus to Cienfuegos. The bus journey will take approximately 5 hours and will include a short stop for refreshments and a restroom break. The bus will drop you off close to the yacht club where you will drop your bags and quickly meet your skipper. The skipper will collect your passports to complete the sailing permit process while you head off to a typical Cuban casa for a home cooked lunch with a local family. After lunch you will head back to the yacht club for a trip and safety briefing before setting sail at 3pm for for the Canarreos Archipelago. Please note: The beauty of sailing is that each day is unique and, while we have a destination to reach, if the weather changes or something takes the group's fancy, we are flexible on the day's itinerary. The itinerary is subject to change and may vary depending on weather and berth availability. Your skipper will make the final call to ensure your safety at all times.

## Day 3 - 7

### **Canarreos Archipelago**

Spend the next five days sailing the idyllic islands of Cuba, which are set among the beauty of the Caribbean Sea. Discover hidden beaches with untouched sands, clear blue waters and, if you're lucky, a turtle or two. By day, relax and chill out on the deck of the yacht, taking in the glorious Caribbean surrounds; by night, enjoy island-style barbeques and unwind with new friends beneath the stars. Some of the spots you might visit over the coming days are: Cayo Largo del Sur The second-largest of the islands in the Canarreos Archipelago, home to some of the best beaches in the region. One stretch of beach is 13 km of the cleanest, whitest sand. The island is also home to nesting sites of loggerhead and green turtles. For those that way inclined, nudism is tolerated on certain beaches. Cayeria los Majaes A small group of beautiful islands with surrounding sand banks and shallow pools, excellent for snorkelling. The pools are less than half a metre deep, and with a sea temperature of around 30°C they are perfect for lazing around in. Look out for a large colony of iguanas on the eastern shore of the western pool. Cayo Alcatraz Pristine beaches of white sand where you can spot stingrays and manta rays. If you are not fond of snorkelling in deeper waters, you will find these more shallow waters a dream. Cayo Rico Arguably the perfect beach, with brilliant waters, soft white sand and a bar that serves up a range of cocktails. There are many umbrellas under which to enjoy a drink. There are also friendly resident iguanas here. Cayo Estopa An uninhabited island with a deep water channel. This is the perfect place to throw out a line and catch the night's dinner. Cayo Rosario Also uninhabited by people, this island teems with sea life – moray eels, groupers, barracudas, lobsters and the odd reef shark to name a few. The nearby reef is great for snorkelling. Cayo Cantiles Known as 'Monkey Island', Cayo Cantiles is uninhabited, with the exception of a small number of workers who tend to a monkey sanctuary. This island too is home to iguanas, and a funny rodent-like animal called a jutia.

## Day 8

### **Canarreos Archipelago - Cienfuegos**

Your sailing adventure is coming to an end as we sail back towards Cienfuegos. Tonight there's the option of having dinner on board and then heading to a bar to have one last drink with your fellow travellers. You might also like to check out the live music scene later, or take to a dance floor for some salsa. Whatever the choice nothing will take away from the most remarkable week of sailing around the islands of the Canarreos Archipelago!

## Day 9

### **Cienfuegos - Havana**

It's with heavy hearts we enjoy one final breakfast together on board the yacht before it's time to say goodbye to life at sea and head back to Havana. The bus pick up point is a hotel a short walk [550 metres] from the yacht club. You will need to make sure you are there no later than 10.15am for a 10.30am departure. There will be a representative from the bus company waiting in the foyer of the hotel who will check you off the passenger manifest before you board. The return bus journey will be unaccompanied and should have you back in Havana at 3.30pm. The trip finishes on arrival in central Cuba at the NH Parque Hotel. If you are planning on flying out on the last day please do not book a flight out before 8pm to take into account any delays that may occur. If you wish to book additional nights in Havana pre or post tour, or stay on in Cienfuegos please let us know at the time of booking so we can make the appropriate arrangements. Adios y esperamos verte de nuevo.

## Additional Information

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### Notes for Cuba

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Cuba is an incredible place to visit, and is home to a unique culture and some of the best music to be found anywhere in the world. It also is famous for its fantastic beaches, fascinating history, wonderful atmosphere and of course its iconic rum and cigars! We have numerous great adventures for you to explore the incredible island of Cuba.

Citizens of the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and all EU countries will need a visa (known as a tourist card) to enter Cuba as a tourist for up to 30 days. On some of our trips the tourist card is included in the price - please check with your Imaginative Traveller travel consultant if this is the case. If not, then this will need to be obtained in advance via a Cuban diplomatic mission or a travel agent that specifically offers this service. Citizens of other countries should check whether a visa is required, and whether this will need to be obtained in advance.

## **Important Notes**

The routes, activities and places visited as described in these trip notes are intentions and are meant as a rough guide only.

These trip notes have been compiled to help you prepare for your journey once you have booked. They include the full itinerary and dates, and information about kit lists, meeting hotels, insurance, vaccinations, visas, and other information that will help you get ready for your trip.

These notes are updated regularly, so please ensure you have an up-to-date version of these trip notes.

The planned route and itinerary is the intention, but exact night stops and inclusions cannot be guaranteed. It occasionally happens that there must be a change to our planned itinerary - this may be for a variety of reasons, such as climatic, road or bureaucratic conditions. By their very nature, adventure travel needs to be approached flexibly and some regions can be unpredictable. Some Imaginative Traveller journeys go through off the beaten track areas, which often have poor infrastructure and less stringent safety standards than we are used to at home.

## **Our Groups**

Our groups are made up of people from around the world and are usually an interesting mix of nationalities and ages. On average there is a pretty even split, males to females and between solo travellers, couples and small groups of friends. We believe that adventure travel should be open to as many people as possible and so although some trips have a minimum age limit, as long as you are fit, healthy and passionate about travel, we are happy to take you. One of the highlights of group travel is the camaraderie and friendships that are formed along the way, and as well as the variety of people that you will meet.

The maximum group size depends on the operator and the style of transport, but will usually be a maximum of 15-16 or up to 21-22 on our overland journeys.

## **Accommodation**

Imaginative Traveller trips are designed for shared accommodation, whether staying in hotels, hostels, homestays or campsites, and therefore do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers will share with people of the same sex for the duration of the trip and those that book together will usually be able to share accommodation.

The type, variety and standard of accommodation will vary greatly depending on what options are available in the region you are travelling; hotels can vary from very basic rooms without electricity or running water to high standard hotels with good facilities! Generally in hotels most rooms will be twin-share. Hostels, gers and yurts are nearly always multi-share.

Many trips will feature a stay in a local homestay or community tourism initiative, allowing us to experience a slice of local life in the areas we travel through. On our overland trips, we will sometimes camp in campsites ranging from rather basic or even wild camps to those with excellent facilities, including swimming pools, restaurants and bars.

## **Dietary Requirements**

If you have any dietary requirements please tell us at the time of booking and also remind your leader at your welcome meeting. Our crew will try to cater for any particular dietary requirement or food intolerance whenever possible.

## **Health**

You need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in our trips. When selecting your trip

please make sure you have read through the itinerary carefully and assessed your ability to cope with the style of travel on that trip. We are always happy to give extra advice if you have additional concerns. Please note that if, in the opinion of our leader, you are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to yourself and/or the rest of the group, Imaginative Traveller or our partner operators reserve the right to exclude you from all or part of the trip.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information prior to travel, particularly if you have a pre-existing medical condition. We also advise you to declare any pre-existing medical conditions to your travel insurers upon purchase.

## **Altitude**

Imaginative Traveller offers some trips that travel to above 2,800m altitude above sea level - it is imperative at high altitudes to drink lots of water to stay hydrated, be careful not to get burned by the sun, and try not to exert yourself too much. Some pre-existing medical conditions are known to severely worsen at high altitude and be difficult to adequately treat on the ground, leading to more serious consequences. It is imperative that you discuss your pre-existing medical condition/s with your doctor. We understand certain medications are reported to aid acclimatising to high altitude; please discuss these options with your doctor.

## **Yellow Fever**

A valid international certificate of vaccination against Yellow Fever is required in many countries. You may need to present this on arrival at the airport or border crossing. Some countries will refuse entry if you are unable to present your certificate - please see each country's note above for details. It's also quite common for your home country to request a Yellow Fever certificate on your arrival back home.

It is your responsibility to check with your doctor well in advance of leaving home about the Yellow Fever requirements for the countries you'll be visiting.

## **Malaria and other mosquito-borne diseases**

Some areas we travel to have the risk of contracting malaria. If this applies to your trip, please get expert advice before travelling about types of malaria pills and take them as instructed. Recommended types do change from time to time and from area to area. Consult your GP / travel clinic for the most up-to-date requirements and to find the right option for you. If advised by your doctor to take a course of anti-malarial tablets, please complete the course as instructed as malaria can often manifest itself upon your return home if the course is not followed.

Other mosquito-borne diseases such as Dengue Fever, Chikungunya and Zika are continuing to spread and becoming a bigger problem around the world. Bite prevention is vital to avoid contracting any of these diseases as there are no vaccines or specific treatments available. Health professionals have issued warnings for pregnant women travelling to areas affected by the Zika virus.

The mosquito usually bites between the hours of dusk and dawn and so covering up by wearing long-legged and long-sleeved clothing, preferably light coloured and buttoned at the wrists, can help. Do not sleep without closing windows, use a mosquito net where possible and use mosquito repellent applied directly to your skin or soaked into your clothing.

## **Vaccinations**

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection vary according to different regions and recent bulletins issued by health authorities. It is essential to get the latest advice on the region(s) you are planning to travel in so please check with either your doctor or travel clinic in good time before you travel.

We also recommend you check out any specific health advice for the country you are travelling to either via your GP or the following websites: [www.nathnac.org](http://www.nathnac.org) or [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk)

In the UK, we have been working with Nomad Travel for many years and their website has comprehensive,

up-to-date vaccination and health information. You will receive a 10% discount off all vaccinations given at Nomad Travel clinics.

## **Activities**

Included activities are listed in the day-to-day itinerary, all other activities are optional and at your own expense. If you choose not to participate in the included activities on this itinerary, the cost will not necessarily be refunded; this is something you will need to check with your leader.

A selection of optional activities is listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This list is designed to be a helpful guide as to what is commonly available in each location, and is neither an exhaustive list, a guarantee that the activity is available, or an endorsement or recommendation. Please note that certain activities may not be available on your particular visit if they are overbooked, underbooked, out of season, or for any other reason - the list of activities is made according to our latest information and in the best faith, but please be aware that things may change between our last visit and your arrival. Please also note that it may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination, and it is recommended to give yourself extra time in your joining or ending city if you would like to participate in some optional activities there.

If you do any optional activities, you do so at your own risk and it must be clearly understood that your participation is your own decision and does not form part of your contract with Dragoman. You may be required to sign/complete a waiver form or optional activity form for some optional activities.

## **Insurance**

It is a condition of booking that you have comprehensive travel insurance. Without evidence of valid travel insurance you will not be allowed to start the trip. This can be arranged by Imaginative Traveller through our website or by contacting our team of travel consultants.

If you prefer to arrange your insurance independently, it should have a minimum medical (including repatriation) cover of £2,000,000. We recommend that any policy also has a minimum level of cover for Personal Liability of £2,000,000 and for Cancellation and Curtailment of £5,000. Cover for loss of baggage, personal effects, money and other inclusions are down to personal choice although please bear in mind that personal effects are more likely to go missing whilst travelling and you should ensure that your policy is adequate to cover the value of your personal effects e.g. cameras, tablets, phones etc. Please note that Imaginative Traveller and our partner operators are not responsible for your personal effects and are not insured for their loss.

If you prefer to arrange your insurance independently, it should cover you for any activities that you may wish to participate in, such as white-water rafting, trekking, horse-riding, etc. and the 24-hour Emergency Assistance Company must be experienced in handling situations in developing countries if applicable (e.g. they have the ability to arrange repatriation from remote areas such as the Sahara or trekking in the Andes). If you are travelling to high altitude (such as embarking on a trek to the summit of Kilimanjaro), please make sure that this is also covered.

Please double check if you have annual travel and/or credit card policies to ensure they have the cover you require, as many of these policies are not suitable with adventure travel to remote areas. Many credit card medical insurance policies are not valid for travelling outside your country of residence or outside the EU.

Please also check the age limits on any policy you wish to take out and make sure that you thoroughly inform the insurance company of any pre-existing conditions.

## **Passports**

Check that your passport will still be valid for 6 months after the end of the trip - this is important as some countries WILL refuse entry to anyone whose passport is due to expire. A temporary or emergency passport is not valid on our trips. You will need to provide us with your passport details prior to departing for your trip. If you change your passport please remember to inform us.

## **Pre and Post Trip Accommodation and Transfers**

At Imaginative Traveller we believe you should make the most of the places you visit, so if you would like to see more of the joining or finishing point cities, why not book additional accommodation to extend your stay? We can take away the hassle of time zones and language barriers by making the booking for you. This accommodation is only available at the joining or finishing city of your trip, immediately before or after the trip you are travelling on. Please note our rates do not reflect last minute walk-in rates or internet specials.

We can also book arrival airport transfers for you as long as we have your flight arrival details. These are normally payable in cash upon arrival; however we do have pre paid transfers in a few destinations.

Please contact our reservations team for details of the accommodation and transfers that we can offer, as not all hotels offer this service.

## **Responsible Tourism**

Imaginative Traveller is committed to ensuring that we have a positive impact on local communities and that we implement policies to minimise any negative impact on the local environment. We recognise that we are guests of local communities and strive to make them benefit directly from our visit. You can find full details of Imaginative Traveller's responsible tourism policy on our website.

## **Issues on the trip**

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip, it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local partner straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction. If this is the case please contact our customer relations department on

[customer-relations@imtrav.net](mailto:customer-relations@imtrav.net)

You may also choose to provide details in your feedback questionnaire which we ask you to complete at the end of your trip, but we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

## **Feedback**

After your travels, we want to hear from you! We rely on your feedback. We read it carefully. Feedback helps us to understand what we are doing well and what we could be doing better, and it allows us to make improvements for future travellers.