

CUBA



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CUBA

With University of Washington Botanic Gardens

Led by Dr. Sarah Reichard

February 22-March 4, 2012



Cuba, the “Pearl of the Antilles,” has legendary history, romantic music and dancing, and a stunning assortment of indigenous species of flora and fauna. Dr. Sarah Reichard invites you to join her with members of UWBG on this special tour. Your journey begins in Havana, a capital city laden with culture. Havana’s streets are lined with museums, churches, schools, and historic buildings currently undergoing restoration. It may surprise you to see that despite revolution and economic hardship, botanical gardens, organic farms, private gardens, and agriculture have thrived in Cuba. You will travel to the Valley de Vinales, the tropical forests of Soroa, the infamous Bay of Pigs, and Zapata National Park. Do not miss this opportunity to experience the contagious passion of the Cuban people reflected in music, dance, and the preserved natural beauty of this embargued enchantress.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit the National Botanical Garden and meet members of the Havana Botanical Garden Society.
- Take a guided waking tour of Havana and learn about the historic buildings and restoration projects that are renewing this famous area.
- Visit several Orchid gardens and meet the owners to learn of their success with this beautiful family of plants.
- Enjoy a guided hike through an ecologically protected area of Mil Cumbres (Thousand Peaks), lead by a Biological Station expert guide.
- Meet the people who live and work at Las Terrazas, a self-sustained community named after the 5000-hectare reforestation project that is unique to their home.
- Learn about the use and sales of herbs in the typical Cuban diet from owners of Vinales Botanical Garden.
- Meet members of the National Institute for Research on Tropical Agriculture (INIFAT) and the Cuban Association of Crop and Forestry Professionals (ACTAF).
- Discover the methods used to garden the Organoponic Gardens and the significance of these unique Cuban gardens.
- Hike through Zapata Peninsula with conservation specialist Professor Tania Charletoin.

ITINERARY

FEBRUARY 22 - MIAMI

This morning you will depart on your domestic flight to Miami. Upon your arrival in Miami, you will take the airport shuttle to your pre-arranged hotel. *Overnight at Sheraton Hotel.*

FEBRUARY 23 - HAVANA

Late this morning you will transfer to the airport for your flight to Havana (included in tour cost). Upon arrival at the Havana International Airport, after clearing customs you will be met by your guide and transfer to Palacio de San Felipe. This afternoon you will meet with your guide and Dr. Reichard for orientation discussions and have the remainder of the late afternoon at leisure. This evening, enjoy a special welcome dinner at Dona Eutimia. *Overnight at Palacio de San Felipe. (D)*

FEBRUARY 24 - HAVANA

This morning you will visit INIFAT (National Institute for Research on Tropical Agriculture) for a presentation by members of INIFAT and ACTAF (Cuban Association of Crop and Forestry Professionals). Dr. Reichard will give a presentation about the similar departments at University of Washington. After your visit at INIFAT, you will meet the principal of a local elementary school and interact with students and faculty. Lunch today will be at Meson de la Flota. This afternoon you will meet Mrs. Ramona Oviedo and curators at the National Museum of Natural History to explore recent research on invasive species and ecosystems of the area. Dinner will be at Café del Oriente. *Overnight at Palacio de San Felipe. (BLD)*

FEBRUARY 25 - HAVANA

This morning you will attend a workshop on organic farming with Mr. Miguel Salcines at Alamar Organoponic Gardens. Miguel Salcines is the cooperative garden leader of this group of 160 cooperative owners. A delegate of approximately 10 of the owners will discuss the history and creation of the Gardens, as well as the challenges and accomplishments of the Gardens. They will discuss the success, requirements, horticultural practices, and needs of organoponics in Cuba, with to opportunity for you to share what has been done with the same at UWBG. After your time at the gardens, you will visit a Cuban food market before lunch at El Aljibe restaurant. This afternoon you will meet with Isabel Rigol, Professor of the Faculty of Architecture of Havana. You will begin a walking tour of Havana Vieja beginning at the Plaza de Armas, formerly at the center of influence in Cuba. Other highlights of the tour include the Palacio de los Capitanes Generales, Palacio del Segundo Cabo, and Plaza de San Francisco. Dinner will be at the private restaurant La Guarida, the location of the Cuban Oscar-nominated film "Strawberry and Chocolate". *Overnight at Palacio de San Felipe. (BLD)*

FEBRUARY 26 - SOROA

This morning you will visit the National Botanical Garden in the outskirts of Havana. An exciting workshop with a dynamic group of Havana Botanical Garden Society members has been arranged following a guided tour of the garden. You can learn from Dr. Angela Leyva Sanchez, General Director at NBG, Research Director Rosa Rankin, who specializes in endangered species, and Dr. Sarah Reichard, your tour leader. Afterwards there will be a reception in your honor and lunch at El Bambu ecological restaurant. This afternoon you will visit Las Terrazas, a self-sustained community named after their 5,000 hectares reforestation project. En route to Soroa you will visit the ruins of Buena Vista coffee plantation. Upon arrival in Soroa you will have the remainder of the day at leisure. *Overnight at Horizontes Villa Soroa. (BLD)*

FEBRUARY 27 - SOROA

Today you will be given a guided tour of the Orchid Garden, run by the University of Pinar del Rio. You will meet with the garden's owner for a special walk through the garden, featuring over 20,000 plants and 700 species of animals. The garden also hosts a botanical research center belonging to the University of Pinar del Rio. Lunch today will be at El Salto restaurant. This afternoon enjoy an interpretive short trekking adventure (2 km) on the trail "Maravillas de Soroa" with Alberto, a local naturalist and an expert of the native flora and fauna. *Overnight at Horizontes Villa Soroa. (BLD)*

FEBRUARY 28 - VIÑALES

This morning you will take a guided hike with the biological station's expert guide in the ecologically protected area of Mil Cumbres (Thousand Peaks), home to the highest concentration of endemic species

in Cuba. Later you will have the chance to interact with local farmers in the nearby San Juan de Sagua community and try the famous local coffee. Following a boxed picnic lunch you will depart to Valle de Viñales. *Overnight at La Ermita. (BLD)*

FEBRUARY 29 - VIÑALES

Today you will have breathtaking views of the Valley and the Mogotes; flat-topped hills dating back to the Jurassic period that can be found in only 4 countries in the world. This morning a special visit has been arranged with Carmen and Caridad Miranda, owners of a unique Botanic and Herb Garden. You will be able to enjoy informal discussion with the owners and their employees about the use and sales of herbs in the typical Cuban diet, and the use and sales of herbs in the Seattle area, as well as specific projects being done by UWBG with the community at Seattle markets. Your lunch today will be at the Prehistorical Mural restaurant. Viñales Valley is also known as one of the main tobacco growing regions in Cuba. This afternoon you will visit a farming family and tour their tobacco farm. Your host will explain how Cuban farmers work together with the government in order to get farming supplies and transport produce to market. *Overnight at La Ermita. (BLD)*

MARCH 1 - ZAPATA PENINSULA

This morning you will travel to the Zapata Peninsula. En route, you will have the opportunity to visit an herbal store influenced by the Afro-Cuban religion in Pinar del Rio. Lunch will be at La Giraldilla. This afternoon Conservation Station specialists will discuss Zapata Park's ecosystem and the latest conservation efforts in the area during an engaging workshop. Dr. Reichard will discuss the ecosystems and conservation efforts around the marine areas of Seattle. Zapata Park is renowned for its great diversity of ecosystems, in which more than 1,000 species of plants and 37 species of reptiles, including the Cuban Crocodile, inhabit. The park is also considered one of the premier bird watching destinations in the world. After your workshop, the rest of the day is at leisure. This evening you will learn about the development of the KORIMACAO Project and watch a performance by the students. *Overnight at Playa Larga Hotel. (BLD)*

MARCH 2 - HAVANA

This morning you will have guided hikes within Zapata Peninsula guided by Professor Tania Charletoin. Following lunch at Cueva de los Peces, you will return to Havana. This evening a special farewell dinner has been arranged to celebrate your last evening in Cuba at La Campana in the section of Miramar. *Overnight at Palacio de San Felipe. (BLD)*

MARCH 3 - MIAMI

This morning you will be transferred back to Havana for your afternoon flight to Miami (included in your tour cost). Upon arrival, you will take the airport shuttle to your airport hotel (included in your tour cost). *Overnight at Sheraton Hotel. (B)*

MARCH 4 - FAREWELL!

Today you will take the airport shuttle to Miami International Airport for your domestic flight to Seattle or your city of choice.

PROGRAM PRICING

\$3758 (15 participants)

Single supplement available for \$425.

THE FINE PRINT

Cost includes all accommodations (including Miami hotel), international airfare Miami/Havana/Miami, private transportation, Cuban travel insurance, visa fees, expert guides, activities, meals as indicated, and \$500 donation to UWBG. Cost does not include items of personal nature, airfare Seattle/Miami/Seattle, airport departure taxes, personal travel insurance, gratuities to guides, drivers, and hotel personnel, alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, or bottled water. Program may incur unforeseen fuel surcharges. Cost is based on double occupancy for all participants. A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form is required to secure your space on the trip. This deposit is refundable until 95 days prior to departure excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. Final payments are due no later than December 9, 2011. Cancellations received less than 95 days prior to departure are not refundable. For more information call Travel Insured at 800-243-3174. Holbrook Travel's agency number is 15849.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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