



International Bicycle Fund

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A non-governmental, nonprofit organization promoting bicycle transport, economic development and understanding worldwide.

Pinar del Rio Educational Program Curriculum

Small group, multidiscipline, educational program. The objective of the program is to strengthen your knowledge to better enable you to participate in important public policy discussion on a wide range of topics that affect your life. The program provides and opportunities to comparing and contrasting the work environment, quality of life, social programs, political structure and policies, economic policy and structure, environment, and culture that you are familiar with, to those of Cuba. Day-to-day, on an ongoing basis throughout the program there will be opportunities to meet people, small group discussion with Cubans and excursions and presentations on history, architecture, culture, ethnic diversity, social systems, gender rights and roles, politics, agriculture, mining, industry, fisheries, music, language, religion, geology, botany, and ecology.

The following curriculum fails to include literally hundreds of serendipitous people-to-people encounters when we purposefully visit small towns and villages to buy snacks and refreshment to talk to people, strike up conversations, and ask questions. Ironically, some of the most meaningful and enlightening people-to-people contacts are the hardest, and virtually impossible, to document.

Day 1:

“Anatomy of the capital of the Capital: Introducing information on the history and change of Havana, and specifically *Vedado*”: architecture (residential and commercial), use patterns (park boulevard, parks, residential and commercial), public institutions (schools, hospitals (8, including cardio and oncology)), religious institutions (churches, convents and a synagogue), monuments and statues (John Lennon, socialist world leaders, military, politician, intellectuals, Jose Marti) and transportation. The contrast between similar government businesses and private businesses. It is also interesting what is prevalent (micro-stops, *cafeterias*, restaurants, *creameria* and cinemas (Ave, 23 has six)). And what is absent (consumer *tienda / bodega / stores*; boutiques, cell phone stores, chain stores, etc.) Buying and selling of real estate and private items.

Dinner: Family restaurant, in a converted garage.

Day 2:

Breakfast at family restaurant and discussion with revolutionary family.

“Havana: 1500 to the present.” All of Cuba’s major historical events have eventually left finger prints in Havana, be there be conquered, attempted revolts, successful revolts, ethnic immigration and economic ups and downs. This fascinating story are reflected in our in-depth visits and discussions with experts:

Morning program covers: Colon cemetery (lessons in history, sociology, art, architecture, social structure, and beliefs), Revolution Square (started by Batista, national gathering point for important occasions), José Martí Memorial (national hero for both nationalists and revolutionaries), National Bus Terminal (history of mass transportation), Relay by American sculpture Anna Huntington, Quinta de Los Molinas (residence of the hero Máximo Gómez and botanical garden), Central Havana architecture: Renaissance, Baroque, Beaux-Arts, Art Nouveau and others, Mason's Lodge (associated with leaders since José Martí, a frequent cell of decent), Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Chinatown (post-slavery immigrant workers), Fraternity Sq. (Marks a conference of the fraternity of countries of Spanish-America), Cebia Tree, Cigar Factory, Capitol (architecture inspired by USA, now repurposed), Gran Teatro de la Habana, Payret Teatro, Belle Arts Museum, Central Park, José Martí by José Vilalta de Saavedra., Floridita (originator of daiquiris and an Ernest Hemingway hangout), Engineer Francisco de Albear y Lara by José Vilalta de Saavedra, Havana Club (consumer beverage), Russian Orthodox Church (ethnic and religious diversity), Synagogue, Casa Blanca, el Cristo de Habana viewpoint (history and geology lecture); Che's post-Revolution command, defensive fort for Habana Bay, limestone outcropping #1. Lunch at family restaurant and discussion with family and local residents.

Afternoon program: Old Habana; architecture, economy, markets, infrastructure, the four squares and their unique history and place in history (San Francisco Sq., Old Sq., Army Sq., Cathedral Square), El Templete, Malecon, National Hotel (historically significance), limestone outcropping #2, Tribuna Antiimperialist José Martí (Cuba – USA relationship), American Embassy, and Ave de los Presidentes (reflection of political values and culture).

Dinner at family restaurant and discussion on architecture, housing, economy, urban planning, traffic management and history of Habana.

Day 3:

Botanical garden: Expert provides information on the collection's endemic and exotic species, medicinal plants, ornamentals, tropical fruits, and edible spice and food plants.

Central Viñales traditional town layout, central square and church.

Lunch at family restaurant and discussion with family and local residents.

Study *Cavern de Santo Tomas*, the second largest cavern formation in Latin and South America and Cuba geology and plate tectonics, with a local expert. The program covered the salt intrusion of the base basalt magmatic rock, fractures and cracks that occurred during a subaqueous period and cave fauna; fish, shrimp, crabs and bats. After the base formation was pushed above sea level, the overlying limestone/calcium dissolved and seeped through the fracture to form stalactite and stalagmites, helictite, columns, calcium ribbon wall, and dozens of other forms of mineral crystal formations. Other scouring by the ocean and rivers etched and carved the walls and floor of the cave.

Malagones Memorial: This recognizes a 12-man militia that formed in Pinar del Rio, 1959, to support the Revolution. It was the first rural militia to form after the revolution. They fought counter-revolutionary bands that hid in the areas mountains. Each member of the group has their own memorial. The large statue is Leandro Rodríguez Malagón, the leader. To the side is a relief of the fighters.

The town of *El Moncada* was another of Fidel's ideas. The streets are supposed to be laid out to form a C, U, B, and A. From an aerial view, looking south, if you consider the connection between streets, houses, vegetation and land use you can imagine this design. The housing has a distinctly suburban feel, for an otherwise very rural area.

Near *Moncada* is a 2-meter-thick section of marine sandstone-claystone from the Chicxulub asteroid's impact on the Yucatan Peninsula 65 million years ago. The deposit records impact-related features like abundant shocked quartz fragments, tsunami deposits, and high iridium concentrations.

Visit with students and professors of *Escuela el Campo (Campemento)*. *Escuela el Campo* is a program that moves students and professors to the dorms in the countryside, for not more than a month a year, to learn about different types of agriculture production and to help a variety of farmers (state or private) with production. This is a principal from Jose Marti that students should combine study and work for the best development and to learn the values of working.

Dinner at family restaurant and discussion with family and local residents.

Evening: Roundtable with Specialist doctors in Cuba: Development of health care since the revolution; medical schools, team health care, types of health care specialty from head to toe, by disease and body part and pain, oral health care, ophthalmology, health care technology, health care equipment, prescription drugs, Cuban pharmaceutical industry. Impact of embargo on different specialties. Cuba's worldwide medical service exports. Impact of on health care in Cuba with the export of so many doctors. Latin America School of Medicine (ELAM) training students from north and south America, Africa and Asia (approximately 19,550 students from 110 countries).

Day 4:

Breakfast at family restaurant and discussion with family.

Tabaco farm, drying shed, and cigar rolling.

Lunch at family restaurant and discussion with family and local residents.

Observation of organic farm; intercropping, raised bed gardens, irrigation and crop variety.

Dinner at family restaurant and discussion with family and local residents.

Evening: Panel presentation on "Women After the Revolution". Topic addressed included: Social, political, economic and quality of life profile, of urban and rural woman before the Revolution. Women role of authority in the liberation movement. The creation, leadership and impact of the Cuban Women's Federation soon after the revolution. The change in definition for women roles in Cuba. Details and impact on expanded day care, literacy and maternity programs. The revolution incorporation of gender equality; right to study, equal opportunity in society, equal pay for equal work, gender equality in the law, and reproductive choice. Political versus social change: Generally, acceptance of the cultural change was a slower process. Cultural norms still control roles in the household. Reflections on "the new wave of male chauvinism on the island."

Day 5:

Breakfast at family restaurant and discussion with family.

Visit old copper mining towns. At the time of the revolution the mining company virtually, and sometimes literally, worked their employees to death. Because of this, the local citizen saw great opportunity in the Revolution. Though the mines in town have closed, the town still has a noticeably high concentration of revolutionary slogans, murals, statues and other public art. The economy and curb appeal doesn't reflect past hard times. The most prominent building in town is the Catholic church, which is open and in excellent condition. Forestry is now the largest part of the local economy and new copper and gold mines have opened in the area.

Lunch at family restaurant and discussion with family and local residents.

Look at the impact of human infrastructure and economic development on the coastal ecology and mangrove ecology. Mangrove: salt tolerant trees, adapted to life in harsh coastal conditions, contain a complex salt filtration system and complex root system to cope with salt water immersion and wave action, and are adapted to the low oxygen (anoxic) conditions of waterlogged mud. Cuban varieties are: red (*Rhizophora mangle*), black (*Avicennia germinans*), white (*Laguncularia racemosa*) and button (*Conocarpus erectus*).

Dinner at family restaurant and discussion with family and local residents on local economy, fisheries, and closed Sulphur factory.

Day 6:

Breakfast at family restaurant and discussion with family.

The *pinar* in *Pinar del Rio* is for "pine". A driver of the local economy is derived from natural pine forest, farmed pine plantations, and pine forestry. The sawmills are simple and lack most of the characteristic features of an old growth Douglas fir sawmill.

Visit family medical clinic and meet medical staff. Discussion about clinics involvement community health care and prevention, prenatal care, infant care, students' health, adolescent health issues, women health (breast exams, cytological tests, HPV), pregnancy management, general adult health issues, lifestyle issues (hypertension and diabetes), communicable diseases (TB, AIDS, STD), family planning, mosquito borne disease (dengue, Zika), medical record keeping, consultation and examination rooms. Immunization program: polio, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, rubella, measles, mumps, tuberculosis, hepatitis B, haemophilus influenza B, meningitis B, and meningitis C.

School for Children with Special needs. Regional school for children with Downs Syndrome, Autism Spectrum disorders and other learning challenges. Provides room and board for children from distant locations.

Lunch at family restaurant and discussion with family and local residents.

The *Sierra de los Órganos* and *Sierra del Rosario* hill parallel the coastline. These "mountains" are part of the fold and thrust of the *Guaniguanico Terrace*. The *Sierra de los Órganos* displays a sequence of exposed Mesozoic marine limestones and Paleogene marine to continental sedimentary rock. In the

1800, Manuel Fernandez de Castro first found Jurassic marine invertebrate fossils on a mogote 10km north of the town of Pinar del Rio (*Abra de Ancón*).

Cueva del Indio (Sierra de los Órganos) exemplifies a mogote cave system formed by both surface river and groundwater action.

Visit to Primary school and meet staff and student. Observe education, teaching aids and educational materials, school organization, instruction schedule, class size, instruction in specialty subjects. Allocation of resources in rural areas where schools have one or two teachers, low enrollment and multiple grades. Observation, evaluation, testing and development of instruction plans for students with special needs.

Forest walk examining the interactions in the forest ecology and learning about man's use of the forest for economic purposes and local ethno-botany and pharmaceutical properties of local flora.

Meet with woodworker and visit his woodworking shop.

Cimarron or Maroon were Africans who had escaped from slavery on Caribbean Islands and in South America, and formed independent settlements. The term can also be applied to their descendants. In Cuba, escaped slaves had joined refugee indigenous Taínos. There were Cimarron communities in the *Sierra de los Órganos*. In their new communities, they tended to follow the lifestyle, culture and religion that they had learn growing up in Africa. The Cimarron Cave does not do the topic justice.

Dinner at family restaurant and discussion with family and local residents.

Evening discussion on "Literacy Pre- and Post-Revolution": Literate people from urban areas were trained to teach literacy in rural areas. The teachers would live with rural families, often in conditions much more basic than they were used to. After literacy was maturing, expansion of the primary schools was undertaken. Subsequent post primary education programs included free university education.

Evening: Private small business in Cuba. The forces that control small business. Chronology of changes in regulations affecting business after Raul assumed the presidency. Elements for supply and demand. The most popular private businesses. Contrast in service and incentives between state and private business. Private tourism enterprises in the Cuban economy.

Day 7:

Breakfast at family restaurant and discussion with family.

"Overview of Pinar del Rios Diverse Agricultural Economy:" This is a day long series of rural farm visits, and interactions with local residents. At successive stops we learn general aspect of some of the important crops of the regions and their role in the society and economy, and growing and processing them (coffee, yucca, rice, *mulanga*, tobacco, and a number of minor ones).

Geologically we learn about the contrasting red soil and the white limestone hills (mogotes) of *Reserva Ecológica Sierra la Güira*.

Cueva de los Portales: This was originally (19th century) a large, riverside, recreation garden and cavern for the wealthy Portales family. During the 1962 October crisis, Che Guevara, and nine senior staff, set-up here for 45 days, to command the Army of the West, for Cuba. Outside the cave, they were guarded by several hundred troops. Inside the cave, there was a communication room, map room, and Che quarters, which included a simple desk and chairs, a telephone, and in a deeper cave, his bed. Outside his office is a bench at which he played checkers, and a couple of trees between which he lounged in a hammock.

Lunch at family restaurant and discussion with family and local residents.

Art studio: Miguel Antonia Remedio, painter, has mastered several styles of painting and uses a variety of media, and teaching local kids and secondary students art.

Hacienda Cortina, La Guira: One of the homes and estates of an extraordinarily wealthy José Manuel Cortina y García (journalist, lawyer, politician, diplomat (in Asia)). At one time, he controlled the land of a significant part of eastern Pinar del Rio Province (*Parque Nacional La Güira*). Some of the buildings and formal gardens still remain. After the revolution, it was confiscated by the state and the former residential grounds are being developed as a passive public recreation area.

San Diego school library: This is the oldest of its kind in Cuba. The small room also included the desk space for the librarian, English teacher and physical education teacher. The physical education department is looking for footballs or money to buy them. The English teachers, who also teach English at Pinar del Rio university, is looking for English language classics to introduce to his secondary school students.

San Diego de los Banos: The main feature is a mild sulphur health spa. Its curative properties were purportedly discovered by a slave, with a skin disease, who was put out so he would not infect anyone else. The warm water is supposed to be especially good for curing skin ailments. The spa is not frequented by tourists, but is a working medical center, and is prescribed as treatment for some conditions by Cuban doctors. There is a full medical staff at the facility. The pools are used as physical therapy pools.

Dinner at family restaurant and discussion with family and local residents.

Evening discussion on Cuban rituals for christenings, baptism, *quinceañeras* and weddings.

Day 8:

Breakfast at family restaurant and discussion with family.

Saturday is laundry day. Passing through towns, villages, and the countryside, it is easy to pick up the pattern of people scrubbing laundry, ringing laundry, and hanging it out to dry – even when the skies look threatening. We gain some insight in the people and the homesteads get added bright colors.

- Organic farmer
- Black smith
- Barber
- Ponchera

- Laundry, mowing lawns, household chores
- Bicycle traveling sales people
- Cuban Sunday socializing

Birds of the day: falcon, woodpecker, vultures and a variety of others.

Lunch at family restaurant and discussion with family and local residents.

Pinar fault runs from near San Cristobol, southwest 110km through El Corojo and into the Caribbean Sea. The fault's formation resulted from a change of direction in the Caribbean Plate's motion from the north-northeast to the present easterly direction. Approximately 70% of seismic activity in Cuba emanates from the Oriente fault zone, located in the Bartlett-Cayman fault system which runs along the south-eastern coast of Cuba and marks the tectonic boundary between the North American Plate and the Caribbean Plate.

Biosphere Reserve of Sierra del Rosario; the oldest in Cuba. Declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1985. It covers about 27,000 hectares of mountainous forests, drained by several picturesque rivers.

Dinner at family restaurant and discussion with family and local residents.

Day 9:

Breakfast at family restaurant and discussion with family.

Soroa Botanical Garden and Orquidearo has 6,000 species of tropical plants and flowers, including 700 species of orchid, 250 of which are endemic to Cuba. Tomas Felipe Camacho, a lawyer and naturalist, started the garden in 1943 to honor his wife and daughter. He only cultivated orchids, adding species from Central and South America to the Cuban endemic varieties. The garden was heavily damaged in 2008 by hurricanes Gustav and Ike.

The Las Terrazas eco-community and alternative economic community: Established to encourage rural development and reforestation, in 1971. European settlers cleared the forest that originally surrounded the community (Sierra Rosita) for coffee cultivation and cattle grazing. An extensive regeneration project was initiated in 1968, with the bulk of the tree planting occurring from 1983 to 1990, when 8 million trees were planted in an area of almost 4,900 hectares. The reforestation effort required terraces to be built to avoid erosion, hence, the community was renamed Las Terrace. Economically, it is the first community to try the intermingling of state and private business and property ownership.

Lunch at family restaurant and discussion with family and local residents.

Cafetal Buenavista, built in 1801, built by French refugees from Haiti, is Cuba's oldest coffee plantation. It is now restored and can be toured. The plantation's master house is now a restaurant. During Cuba's coffee boom, 1820s to 1830s, 54 coffee estates were scattered throughout the area of Las Terrazas.

Dinner at family restaurant and discussion with revolutionary family.

Day 10:

Breakfast at family restaurant and discussion.

Sugar cane farming, cleaning, railway and processing.

Guanajay Farmers Market,

Fruit salad road: Large farms specializing in the production of mango, papaya, banana, citrus, guava, and other fruits. There is also an ornamental tree farm.

Escuela Internacional de Cine y TV: EICTV was founded on December 15, 1986, by Colombian journalist, writer, and Nobel laureate Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Argentinean poet and film maker Fernando Birri (considered the father of the new Latin America cinema), and Cuban theoretician and film maker Julio Garcia Espinosa, amongst others, including Sergio Muniz, a Brazilian film maker. Each year around 40 students are selected from across Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe to complete the school's Curso Regular (Regular Course). The Curso Regular is an intensive three year syllabus; each student specializes in one of the following disciplines: documentary, directing, edition, cinematography, sound, production, or screenwriting.

Lunch at family restaurant and discussion with family and local residents.

Museo del Humor: San Antonio de los Baños has a history of producing famous humorist and satirical publication. From this came the Museo del Humor, the oldest of its kind in Cuba and Central and South America. Its archives include tens of thousands of pieces. Exhibits include paintings, sculptures, videos and caricatures. It hosts the International Biennial of Graphic Humour in early April of odd number years, that includes all types of presentations of humor. 2017 marks the twentieth biennial.

Instituto de Investigaciones de Granos: The institution carries out research to provide the technical and scientific basis for improved grain production systems on rice, beans, soybeans, sorghum, maize, sesame, vines, peanuts and chickpeas. It is responsible for the conservation, reproduction and characterization of the genetic qualities of the plant varieties that it investigates.

Universidad de las Ciencias Informáticas. Formerly the Lourdes SIGINT (Signals Intelligence) facility. It was the largest facility of its kind operated by the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service or SVR, outside of Russia. At its peak during the Cold War, the facility was staffed by over 1,500 KGB, GRU, Cuban DGI, and Eastern Bloc technicians, engineers and intelligence operatives. The one-mile long, 6-lane, concrete, "country-highway", in front, is not an accident.

Memorial al Soldado Internacionalista Sovietico: A low visibility monument, inaugurated on 23 February 1978, it contains the remains of 67 Soviet military personnel who died in Cuba, mostly during the 1962-1964. Most were around age 22. There is an eternal flame and a time capsule at the center of the memorial.

Dinner at family restaurant and discussion.

Day 11:

End of program.