



## West Cuba Trail

### CUBA

On this trail-riding holiday in Cuba, 'the Pearl of the Caribbean', ride the western provinces along sandy beaches, through fertile valleys and vast tobacco fields. Experience **Cuba on Criollo horses** riding past intriguing mogotes, Pan de Guajaibon and crossing the meeting point between Sierra del Rosario and Sierra de los Organos. On this **riding holiday**, meet local Guajiro, experience evenings alive with Cuban and Creole music and food and explore Havana.

<b>Trail Riding</b>	<b>9 days/ 6 days riding</b>	<b>From £1,940</b>	
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*Riding in the lush Cuban landscape*



*West Cuba Trail Ride - an opportunity to meet with locals*



*A wonderful riding and cultural experience*

### ITINERARY

## Highlights

- Ride with an owner/guide who is entertaining and has great local knowledge. This trail is accompanied by a bilingual professional equestrian guide with 20 years experience in Cuba.
- Ride through the Viñales Valley National Park, listed as a World Heritage site by UNESCO and home to the unique dome-shaped mogotes
- Spend 1 ½ days in Havana, one of the most exciting cities in the Caribbean
- See the intriguing mixture of colonial and Spanish architecture that is typical throughout Cuba
- Enjoy evenings spent dancing to the rhythm of salsa and Creole music
- Immerse yourself in the hospitality and the friendliness of the Cubans
- The long transfers are done in comfortable mini-buses.

## Day 1 — 1 : EUROPE - HAVANA - No riding

Hotel Presidente la Habana

You will arrive into Havana, the capital city of Cuba, from where you will take a taxi to your hotel near the Malecon seafront (taxi fare not included, payable locally). You will have a chance to relax a little before you meet you guide and the other riders in your group.

You will have dinner in a local Paladar (family restaurant) and spend the night in Havana.

## Day 2 — 2 : HAVANA - CHARCO AZUL - MIL CUMBRES - 3 hours riding

After breakfast, you will be driven to a finca (ranch) "Finca Charco Azul" (a 1h30 transfer), in the province of Artemisa. It is here, south of the Sierra de Rosario, that the Charco Azul natural springs are found and are known for their curative properties against rheumatism.

On the finca, you will get to enjoy a welcome cocktail and a c.3 hour ride across the 400 hectares of land that belong to Finca Charco Azul and run

alongside the Sierra del Rosario biosphere. After a dip in the pool and some lunch, you will be driven to Mil Cumbres (c. 2h30). You will have dinner and spend the night at a refuge in Mil Cumbres Natural Park as well as experiencing some local Cuban music.

## Day 3 — 3 : MIL CUMBRES - VINALES - 5 hours riding

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After breakfast, you will ride through the Natural Park and the foothills of Pan Guajaibon, the tallest mountain in the western part of Cuba with an altitude of 699m. Along the way, you will stop off at the home of a local "Guajiro" family and enjoy a cocktail. You will continue your ride through beautiful canyons in an area of abundant vegetation, home to several species of birds and native trees. This is where the Sierra del Rosario and the Sierra de los Organos meet.

After lunch, transfer to Viñales (1h). Dinner in a local paladar (family restaurant). Accommodation at the Hotel Los Jazmines or similar depending on availability. Optional night out at Casa de la Trova (musical show).

## Day 4 — 4 : VIÑALES – LA GUABINA - 5 hours riding

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 Finca La Guabina

For the day's ride, you will set out for around 5 hours through the lush Viñales and Palmarito Valleys. We will climb up along a bridle path to El Mirador del Valle, where we can drink a guarapo, a refreshing sugar cane juice, while you enjoy a magnificent panoramic view over tobacco plantations and the spectacular

'Mogotes' karst mountains which with their steep sides and domed summits are a truly unique sight. This land is home to numerous tobacco plantations and you will see, from horseback, the rural communities going about their daily work.

You will enjoy a picnic lunch in the home of another Guajiro family, where you will get to watch a demonstration of the cigar making process. You will have your dinner out on the terrace of a local paladar.

You will then be driven to Finca La Guabina found 12km from Pinar del Rio. You will have your dinner and spend the night at Finca La Guabina and enjoy a night of traditional Cuban musical evening.

## Day 5 — 5 : LA GUABINA - 5 hours riding


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 Finca La Guabina

After breakfast, you will ride out for c.5 hours through the grounds of Finca la Guabina to discover the beautiful countryside. After stopping for lunch and riding to the finca itself, you will have the option to watch an exhibition of the magnificent Apaloosa and Pinto horses on the ranch. You will have your dinner and spend the night at Finca La Guabina and enjoy a night of traditional Cuban musical evening.

## Day 6 — 6 : LA GUABINA – PINAR DEL RIO - HAVANA - 3 hours riding

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 Hotel Presidente la Habana

Riding for about 3 hours towards Pinar del Río, with the royal palm trees, rice fields and tropical fruit plantations, like guava and pineapple. Lunch at the finca, after which you will be transferred to Havana. In Havana, you will have the rest of the afternoon free to explore the town that is known for its stunning architecture, complicated history and unique rhythm.

In the evening, you will have dinner in the famous El Vedado restaurant district. Accommodation tonight at Hotel el Presidente or similar.

## Day 7 — 7: HAVANA - 3h riding

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After breakfast, you will be driven to a finca (ranch) near to the Playas del Este beaches (c. 30min). Here, you will ride down to the beach, make sure to bring your swimsuit as this will be a perfect occasion to take a dip in the Straits of Florida! You will enjoy a fresh lunch of fish or seafood before returning to the finca by a different route.

Transfer to Havana.

Farewell dinner with a great musical show. Accommodation at the Hotel Presidente or similar.

## Day 8 — 8 : HAVANA - No riding

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Your morning will be dedicated to sightseeing in Havana taking in the blend of modern and historic architecture and contradictory nature of this city. Lunch is not included, so you can choose your own local spot. You will be transferred to the airport for approx. 18.00 - if this time does not suit you, you can take a taxi (at your own cost).

## Day 9 — 9: EUROPE

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Arrival into the Europe.

### DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	PRICE INCLUDING FLIGHTS	STATUS
14/11/2020	22/11/2020	£1,940		Open

### Price details

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- Flights to your destination (international/domestic) are not included, but can be booked on request - please contact us for rates.
- Rates are per person, based on two riders sharing a twin or double room.
- Group size: usually a minimum of 6 to 12 international riders, plus guides.
- There is a single supplement of approx.€200/£180 if you are in a single room (and no sharer is found). Payable locally. If you would like to specifically request a single room then this will be simply invoiced upon booking.
- Transfers: the first transfer from the airport to Havana is not included and payable locally (taxi fare). Included in the price is a transfer to Havana airport on the final day leaving at 18:00. If you require an earlier/later transfer time, this is not included in the cost, please contact us for details.
- You must have taken out medical and travel insurance BEFORE arriving into Cuba (please bring a Spanish copy). To enter Cuba, British nationals must have a visa, known as a tourist card, which allows for a stay of 30 days and is valid for a single entry. The cost for a tourist card is approx. £26.
- The weight limit for this ride is 14 st/198 lb/90 kg, please contact us if you are an experienced rider exceeding this weight

#### IMPORTANT:

Prices are linked to the CUC rate of exchange and may be changed, up to 2 weeks before the ride departure, if there is a significant change in the rate  
Please Note

The itinerary may be modified at anytime for security reasons, meteorological or events beyond our control such as blocked roads, rivers in flood, drought, strikes and local holidays. Equus Journeys, our local partners and their local guides will always strive to find the best solution and will alter the itinerary as needed.

The names of the hotels and accommodation are given for information only and depending on availability, they may be modified without notice and replaced by another of a similar standard.

### Price includes

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#### SUPPORT TEAM

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- 1 English-speaking horse guide
- 1 or 2 local equestrian guide(s) during the trail

#### LOGISTICS

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- 1 vehicle and driver
- 1 support vehicle
- 1 horse equipped with saddle and bridle per rider

#### INLAND TRANSPORT

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Fixed airport transfer on the final day at 18:00 - outside this time it is not included

#### ACCOMMODATION

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- Double room - local hotel 2\*
- Double, 3 person or dormitory style rooms in homestays or rural hotels through the ride

#### MEALS

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Full board during the ride

## Price doesn't include

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### MEALS

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Beverages and personal extras

Meals in Havana are not included in the price

### TRANSPORTS

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International flights bookable on request

Taxi fare from the airport to the hotel on day 1

### EXTRAS

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Tips to the local team - approx. £45

Small group supplement - see above for the details

Park, museum and other site entry fees

Tourist card to enter Cuba

### INSURANCE

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Cancellation and travel insurance are not included in the above listed price. Please note that insurance is mandatory. We recommend taking out an insurance policy as soon as your trip is booked to cover you in case of cancellation

## Optional

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### ACCOMMODATION

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Single room supplement only possible in Havana

## EQUESTRIAN INFO

## Horses

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The horses are cross Appaloosas, Pinto Cubano and Criollos. They are all well behaved and in good condition, they are very well suited to the climate and the terrain. All are ridden in western tack.

## Minimum riding ability

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### MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

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You must be comfortable and balanced at all 3 paces - walk, rising trot and gallop - in open countryside and over varied terrain. You must be an intermediate to experienced level rider.

### PACE

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The main pace of the ride is a walk with trots and canters only when the terrain allows.

### TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

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The teams at the different fincas, ranches, along the route are responsible for the care and feeding of the horses. They will tack and untack your horses, but your help would always be appreciated!

### TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

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No previous trail ride experience is necessary, but it is an advantage. You do need to be balanced in the saddle and physically fit.

It is recommended that if you do not ride regularly, you should get back in the saddle before the trip to once more get used to riding long distances.

Visiting a new country offers the opportunity to meet other cultures with different mentalities, therefore it is important to accept these differences and respect the local way of life.

### EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

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## TRAVEL INFO

### COMFORT

During the trail, you will sleep in small local fincas, homestays or rural hotels, mostly composed of comfortable wooden bungalows with double or 3-bed rooms and private bathrooms.

The accommodation at Mil Cumbres is more basic - it has two double rooms with a shared bathroom, plus a dormitory style room with 6 beds which has its own bathroom. Single rooms are not possible here.

In Havana you will stay in a small hotel, unpretentious but chosen for its excellent location. You will stay in double rooms with a private bathroom.

### MEALS

The produce used for meals is, for the most part, organic, varied and healthy.

Vegetarian options are available.

Cubans eat at all hours and are not used to eating fruit during meals but rather throughout the day as snacks.

Make sure you don't drink water from any source of which you are not certain that the water is potable.

### CLIMATE

Cuba has a subtropical climate. The tropics have two distinct seasons: the dry (autumn/winter) and the wet (spring/summer). The average temperature is between 20°C - 30°C.

The dry season lasts from around November to May with an average temperature of around 25°C. The temperature can drop to as low as 14°C and in a country that's not built to be cold you can feel it!

The rainy season kicks off in June and lasts until October/ November. Heavy but short rain storms are typical, alongside hot temperatures – with an average of 27-28 °C.

### GUIDE AND LOCAL TEAM

The trip is led from Havana by Rafael. He has been a professional equestrian guide for a long time and has his family roots strongly tying him to Cuba – he is knowledgeable and will show you the best of the country. Rafael speaks Spanish, French and English.

You will also be accompanied by a second Cuban equestrian guide.

### TIPS

Tipping is quite standard in Cuba - plan to tip around £45. Certain restaurants include a 10% service charge. Tipping rests at your own discretion.

### PACKING LIST

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##### Head

- A riding helmet is compulsory and we recommend that you take your own to ensure a correct fit. Helmet makers (GPA, HKM, LAS Helmets, Lamicell, Troxel, Equithème) now offer horse-riding helmets that are ventilated, strong, light and comfortable. You also have the option of buying protective shells to go under your hats (Ranch & Rider, Lexington Safety Products) or western hat helmets (Troxel).

- Sunhat (indispensable)

- Sunglasses with high protection lenses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding

- Buff or bandana for protecting your neck and face from the sun, wind or rain

##### Upper body

- T-shirts in cotton and long-sleeved shirts (to protect against the sun) or t-shirts made from rapid-dry material

- 1 lightweight fleece or jumper

- 1 lightweight waterproof jacket made from Gore-Tex or a similar material that is waterproof and breathable

##### Legs

- 2 pairs of lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub

- 1 change of riding trousers or jeans
- A swimming costume and a towel
- Non-irritant cotton or synthetic underwear

#### Hands and Feet

- 1 pair of comfortable riding or walking boots. We recommend short boots with half-chaps specifically for riding. We don't recommend taking your favorite leather boots in case they get damaged
- 1 pair of lightweight shoes or trainers for the evenings
- Several pairs of socks
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun whilst riding

#### Other useful items

- Travel bag 60-80 liters (hold luggage)
- Travel bag 25-30 liters (cabin bag)
- Double saddlebags are available on request; Only in some places saddlebags are included
- Water bottles - 2 bottles x 0.5L
- Headtorch or small torch for moving around at night - bring spare batteries and bulbs
- Toiletries
- Protein or cereal bars for the longer stretches of riding
- Toilet paper and a lighter to burn it after use
- Swiss army knife or equivalent (in checking-in luggage!!)
- Small plastic bags for you rubbish
- Ear plugs (may be useful)
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- A pair of binoculars

#### Medical kit

Cuba's pharmacies are woefully void of pharmaceuticals, both prescription and over the counter. There are dollar only "Tourist Pharmacies", but your best bet is to bring with you whatever you may even remotely THINK you may need.

Make sure any allergies (to medication or otherwise) are clearly stated in your medical kit

- Any medication you regularly take
- Painkillers
- Imodium or similar anti-diarrhea medication
- Vitamin C tablets
- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor
- Insect repellent
- Eye drops
- Hydrating/ soothing cream
- Plasters
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc..
- 10cm wide bandage
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Re-hydration sachets
- Antiseptic wipes
- Handwash gel

#### Our Recommendations

- Backpacks cannot be worn whilst riding. We recommend a small bumbag or a coat with pockets so that you can carry small items with you during the day (camera, sunscreen, lip balm etc)
- A soothing cream may be useful to treat areas irritated by long hours in the saddle
- We recommend travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes in your hand luggage - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!
- We recommend taking a copy of your passport and insurance documents with you in case you lose your originals. Your insurance policy must be in Spanish.
- Hand luggage mustn't contain any sharp objects (knives, scissors, nail file or nail scissors, etc.) and the quantity of liquid allowed per passenger is limited to 100ml per container. Check with the airline for their imposed weight limits for hand/ hold luggage.
- If you wish to travel 'light' and wash your clothes throughout the ride, please bring with you laundry detergent that is biodegradable

## Formalities

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### Passports:

A passport valid for two months after departure from Cuba is required by all UK, USA, Canadian and other European nationals. Nationals not referred to are advised to contact the embassy to check visa requirements.

### Visas:

Visas for Cuba are required by all nationals from the USA, Canada, UK and the EU.

The required tourist visa, known as a tourist card, allows the holder to stay in Cuba for 30 days and is valid for a single entry. You must provide proof of confirmed return flight and booked accommodation.

### Visa note:

Nationals of the USA are subject to the Cuban assets control regulations enforced by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC;

<https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/pages/cuba.aspx>

### Types and cost:

Tourist card: £15; business visa: £41, plus £19 processing fee for either if applying by post, courier or third party.

### Validity:

The tourist card is valid for one entry of 30 days within 180 days of issue and can be extended in Cuba for a further 30 days.

The USA officially prohibits its citizens from travelling to Cuba unless they obtain a special license and very heavy fines are imposed on visitors not fulfilling this requirement.

The US government will allow the following to travel to Cuba (decided on a case by case basis): official government travelers, journalists, persons visiting close relatives once in 3 years, full-time professionals conducting research, full-time professionals attending certain international conferences, and persons who have received a specific license.

### Embassies

#### British Embassy in Cuba

Telephone: (7) 214 2200. Website: <https://www.gov.uk/world/cuba> Opening times: Mon-Fri 0800-1530.

#### Embassy of Cuba in the UK

Telephone: (020) 7240 2488 ; (020) 7379 9582.

## ADDRESSES OF CONSULATES

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- Consulat de Cuba  
14 rue de Presles  
75015 Paris  
Tél. : 01 45 67 55 35  
Fax :
- Office du tourisme de Cuba  
280 boulevard Raspail  
75014 Paris  
Tél. : 01 45 38 90 10  
Fax : 01 45 38 99 30
- Ambassade de France à Cuba  
Calle 14, N° 312, entre 3a y 5a avenida  
MIRAMAR  
Tél. : (00 537) 201 31 31  
Fax : (00 537) 201 31 07

## Health

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There are no vaccinations legally required to travel to Cuba. It's a good thing to get your vaccinations in order before travelling to Cuba. The general vaccination against Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio (DTP) are recommended. Also a hepatitis A vaccination is recommended and vaccination against hepatitis B, rabies and typhoid are also sometimes recommended for stays longer than 3 months.

Dengue sometimes occurs as well. There is no vaccination, so buy mosquito repellent (preferably with 50% DEET) and sleep under a net. Also wear long sleeves if possible.

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## Insurance

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It is a condition of your booking with Equus Journeys that you have travel insurance which covers you for the riding activities to be undertaken. Your travel insurance should cover you for medical expenses and repatriation. You must show a Spanish translation of your policy on arrival at the airport - if you do not have it with you, you will be asked to purchase one at the airport.

Your guides will require your travel insurance details before they allow you to ride and may refuse to let you ride if you cannot provide them. You should take your insurance documents with you.

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## Voltage

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110/220 volts AC, 60Hz. American-style flat two-pin plugs are generally used, except in certain large hotels where the European round two-pin plug may also be found.

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## Budget and money

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There are two currencies in use in Cuba - the CUC (Convertible Peso) and the CUP (Cuban Peso). Tourists use the CUC. Cubans call the tourist dollar a "chavito" and the Cuban peso "moneda nacional" or MN. Very few travellers will see the Cuban Peso during their trip. The CUC has a pegged currency exchange rate of \$1.08 and is officially only exchangeable within the country. There is an additional 10% penalty assessed on US dollar conversions, so travellers are advised to bring Canadian, Mexican or European currencies.

Coins in circulation are one, five, ten, 25, and 50 centavo coins and one and five peso coins. The one centavo piece was introduced in 2000, and the five peso coin is very rare. Banknotes in circulation are one, three, five, ten, 20, 50 and 100 convertible peso bills.

To exchange money, currency exchange desks are set up in airports near the luggage carousel. In Havana's Jose Marti Airport, there is also an exchange counter in the public reception area and a bank on the 2nd floor. Throughout Cuba, any bank and most CADECA exchange counters will convert for you. When departing Cuba, you can exchange most of your CUCs prior to arriving at the airport as occasionally, your currency of choice may not be available.

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## Telephone and jetlag

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The country calling code to Cuba is 53. To make an international call from Cuba, the code is 119.

Telephone calls from Cuba are very expensive. You should ask your telephone company for the option» (Roaming international).