

Cuba with Big Freedia

Nov 15 – 20, 2023



Cuba with Big Freedia

Travel to Havana with Big Freedia and enjoy unique, impactful, behind-the-scenes experiences curated by the Queen Diva. Explore the rich culture and history of Cuba. Connect with Cuban artists, musicians, entrepreneurs and activists. Explore the country's African roots and the decades long connection between New Orleans and Cuba. Learn from, support and celebrate Havana's LGBTQ+ community. And party it up along the way, enjoying the amazing sights, sounds, smells and tastes of our neighbor to the South.

“I’m looking forward to meeting lots of Cubans, exploring our shared history and culture and learning from each other. And we’re going to have a damn good time down there in Havana, so join me and my crew.” – Big Freedia

A woman in a black and white checkered dress is performing on stage, pointing her finger. She is surrounded by other dancers in similar outfits. The background is dark with purple and blue lighting.

Program Highlights

- Big Freedia Performance at the top Cuban music venue
- Big Freedia Happy Hour with Cuban creative community
- Cigar and Rum Tasting hosted by the Queen Diva
- Musical Exchange program with youth musicians at the music conservatory; instrument giveaway
- Fashion show and twerk competition celebrating Cuban designers and bounce music
- Learn from and support the LGBTQ+ community and Cuban artists and entrepreneurs
- Travel by classic American cars from the 1950s
- Exclusive, behind-the-scenes jam sessions with Cuban musicians

Day 1–Wed, Nov 15

TBD

Arrival in Havana, Cuba. Meet your local hosts at the airport and head to your accommodations.

Check-in at charming, luxurious boutique hotel. Enjoy a light lunch, and take time to get settled in.

Evening

Sunset Convertible Cruise. Cruise Havana at Sunset in classic American cars. Enjoy the Havana seawall, the backstreets of Central Havana and the lush Havana Forest.

Dinner

Welcome Dinner under the stars La Guarida, one of Havana's oldest and most prestigious paladares (private eateries). This was the setting for the groundbreaking film *Strawberries and Chocolate* (1993), which dealt with the taboo issue of homosexuality and pushed for changing mindsets. The rooftop enjoys 360 views of the city and unique blend of the sounds and smells of the city.

Enjoy a performance by the female hip hop duo, Reyna y Real.

Late

Night

Rum and cigar tasting hosted by Big Freedia. A local expert will explain the qualities and traits of fine Cuban rum and cigars, pairing them together for the perfect match.

(L, D)



Day 2–Thur, Nov 16

Morning **Dat Way Hip Hop Dance Group.** Enjoy a street dance performance by Cuba's top urban dance team, who will host us in their neighborhood, Central Havana.

21st Century Cuba: Discussion with Cuban entrepreneurs from different sectors about opportunities and challenges to doing business in Cuba, cultural trends amongst the Cuban youth and U.S.-Cuba relations.

Lunch **Lunch at Estudio 50,** an abandoned warehouse converted into an art gallery and multimedia workspace. **Finish off lunch with a performance by Habana Compas Dance,** a dance and percussion group that celebrates African sounds, rhythms and movements in a one-of-a-kind performance.

Afternoon **Youth Music Exchange with Big Freedia.** Visit the Guillermo Tomas School of Music in the Guanabacoa neighborhood, known for its strong AfroCuban roots. Enjoy youth performances, instrument donations to the youth and a jam with Big Freedia and music students.



Day 2 – Thursday, Nov 16 (cont.)

Evening **Big Freedia Happy Hour at Pazillo Bar.** Jam out to a mix of Big Freedia’s classics and what’s hot in Havana on the airwaves. Big Freedia’s dance team will be offering twerking lessons to get folks ready for tomorrow evening’s twerking competition. **We’ll be joined by Cuban creatives.**

Dinner **Dinner under the stars at Havana Paladar.** Paladares are privately run restaurants that were first allowed in the 1990s and have grown in size, food offerings and sophistication but continue to be run out of homes or former homes and run by small families.

Late Night **Havana Nights.** Check out Cuba’s cultural scene, LGBTQ+ nightlife and live music, hopping from spot to spot with Cuban friends.

(B, L, D)



Day 3 –Fri, Nov 17

Morning **Old Havana by Foot.** Havana is an architectural jewel. It's also an incredibly unique and complicated city. From Old Havana's beautiful plazas and world-famous cathedral and capitol building to black market activity and single-family homes converted into multiple dwellings, we'll explore both sides of Havana.

Lunch Lunch in the heart of Old City.

Afternoon Active Cuba (choose your activity):

- Boxing lessons
- Afrocuban percussion class
- Printmaking class

Dinner **Dinner** in the courtyard of your boutique hotel.

Evening **Creative Cuba.** We're taking over La Lavanderia, an abandoned, industrial laundromat turned art studio and gallery, where we'll enjoy an evening of fashion shows, DJ sets and a winner-takes-all twerking competition with celebrity panel of judges.

(B, L, D)

Day 4 – Sat, Nov 18

Morning Havana Driving Tour. Explore historical and culturally relevant spots in the city and wander down side-streets to get a better sense of Havana's culture, history and day-to-day life.

Lunch on your own

Afternoon LGBTQ+ panel discussion & Happy Hour. Roundtable discussion with members of Cuba's LGBTQ+ community, followed by a happy hour.

Evening Havana Rooftop Dinner at El Cocinero, housed in a former factory and home to Havana's hip, you might think you are in Soho or Madrid.

Enjoy art, music and the company of Cuban millennials at Fabrica de Arte Cubano. The brainchild of Afro-Cuban musician X-Alfonso, this is one of Havana's finest cultural projects, an intellectual and artistic nexus that draws Cuban and international visitors. Explore the multi-media gallery spaces and catch a live performance.

VIP viewing for first-ever Big Freedia concert in Cuba.

(B, D)

Day 5 – Sun, Nov 19

Morning Seaside Brunch Marea. Enjoy a tasty lunch alongside (or in) the turquoise water of the Caribbean.

Cuban Hip Hop and Gender Issues. Visit the home of a female hip hop duo using their music to address social issues. Discuss gender, race and the underground hip hop scene and jam out with this dynamic duo.

Dinner Farewell dinner in Old Havana.

Jam Out with Cuban musicians. Hit a local bar for a jam session with Cuban musicians.

(B, L, D)



Package Pricing

INCLUDED

- 5 nights' accommodations in Cuba
- Daily breakfast
- Meals (as specified on the itinerary)
- Meal reservations (as specified on the itinerary)
- Professional, bilingual guide for listed activities
- Local ground transportation for listed activities
- Pre-trip departure information
- Compliance with U.S. Treasury Department regulations
- Speaker fees
- Admission to all museums and public buildings mentioned
- Coordination of all listed activities

NOT INCLUDED

- Round-trip airfare
- Cuban Visa
- Meals and activities other than listed on itinerary
- Individual house or hotel expenses (*mini bar, room service, laundry fees, etc.*)
- Tips for local guides, drivers, restaurant service, etc.

Double occupancy	\$3,125 per person
Single occupancy	\$3,675 per person



About Us

We are Cuba aficionados. **Cuba Educational Travel** was established by Collin Lavery in 2012. Collin, today a leading expert on Cuba and U.S.-Cuba relations, began his career with the Center for Democracy in the Americas, bringing U.S. Congressional delegations to Cuba and advocating on Capitol Hill.

From CET's platform, we launched **Havana Strategies** in 2015, which offered business advisory services to companies such as Airbnb, Google, and Cummins that saw an opportunity to enter the Cuban market after President Obama initiated a process to normalize relations between the US and Cuba in 2014.

In 2017, we established **HabanaLive**, to cater to the specialized production and service requirements of MICE and high-end leisure clients.

We believe the best of Cuba lies in its warm, talented people—and we bring this to you, by providing access to the country's top artists, academics, tastemakers, and cultural icons. Our experiences span family trips, VIP travel, student groups, trade & policy delegations, retreats, and large-scale events for Fortune 500 companies.

