



## Cuba Mission Synagogue Solutions USA

*February 15 – 23, 2015*

**Havana, Santa Clara, Cayo Santa Maria**

**Join Cantor Rogerio Marx** on this insightful trip of cultural discovery and humanitarian effort. We will have experiences offered to few travelers to this tropical island nation. You will make a difference in the lives of our brothers and sisters.

***And you will experience Cuba***

Cuban culture's vibrancy and vitality is alive. Cuba is old, some of it is destroyed,  
and it feels as though time has stopped. But it is full of life from the aroma of cooking food, to the warmth of the people, to the rhythm in the way people move, to the sound of music in the air.

**Cuba is changing rapidly; Now really is the time!**

### **Deposit Deadline is October 1, 2014**

To download application, click on: [www.synagoguesolutionsusa.org/](http://www.synagoguesolutionsusa.org/)

**For further details or questions, please call:**

**Harry Silverman, 561-961-9460**

**Or email: [harry@synagoguesolutionsusa.org](mailto:harry@synagoguesolutionsusa.org)**

This mission is solely to assist the Jews of Cuba under a general religious license issued to Temple Sinai of Hollywood by the US Department of the Treasury.

## Your program includes:

- **Seven nights, eight days in Cuba**
- One night Miami.
- Round Trip Air Miami – Havana, American Airlines plane and crew
- Accommodations at:
  - **Crowne Plaza Hotel** – near Miami International Airport
  - **Hotel Melia Cohiba** - Havana (5-Star hotel) - 5 nights.

### Frommer's Review

Sitting just off the Malecón, this high-rise hotel, with its sharp angles and alternating walls of stone and glass, is probably the most modern building in Havana. Moreover, the Meliá Cohiba, comes closest to providing all the services and amenities luxury travelers are looking for in a top-rated hotel. Rooms are large and comfortable, and most have excellent views, particularly those on the higher floors...and it's got the best-equipped health clubs I've found at any hotel in Havana. The Cohiba has a wide range of restaurants and shops, and even its buffet restaurant is a treat, with live cook stations and enough space and flow as to not feel like a cattle car. The **Habana Café**; is one of the better club/restaurants in town, with a nightly floorshow and live music.

- **Melia Las Dunas on Cayo Santa Maria** - all-inclusive beach 5 star resort - 2 nights.

### Frommer's Review

The Melia Cayo Santa Maria - All Inclusive Resort is set in 12 hectares of grounds, alongside almost 400 meters of white, sandy beach. It owes its name to Santa Maria, one of the small islands in the Jardines del Rey archipelago. A spacious, white sandy beach, crystal-clear, turquoise waters, lush vegetation and abundant fauna have made it a Biosphere Reserve and one of the most exotic locations in the Caribbean.

- **17 included meals** – 8 breakfasts; 4 lunches; 5 dinners. Time to enjoy the *paladares* (privately owned restaurants) of Cuba.
  - There are no kosher restaurants or food in Cuba. However, for all included meals we have selected restaurants of high quality and **one course** option will comply with the following dietary requirements:
    - no meat, or meat and/or chicken stock in food preparation.
    - no shell fish or stock containing shell fish
    - options offered will include fish and/or pasta
    - cheeses allowed
- Your **guide** can assist you with your free time and evening activities to help you experience the vibrancy and rhythms of Cuban culture. Your guide will offer **optional group evening** activities that are not part of the mission itinerary.
- **Meetings** and discussions with the Jewish leadership and Community.
- **Shabbat evening** services at the main synagogue of Havana. Shabbat morning services at the Sephardic Center. Both synagogues are within walking distance of the hotel.
- **Professional** English speaking guide well versed in the history and culture of the island. Experienced driver.
- **Entrance fees** to included sites. To better understand the cultural environment of Cuba's Jewish community, the mission includes visits to Cuba's significant cultural

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and historic sites with particular attention to their significance to Jewish life in Cuba.

- **Time to explore on your own.**
- Presentation by historian of the Jewish Community on the **history of the Jewish people in Cuba**
- **Tour of Bellas Artes Museum** by curator who is a member of the Havana Jewish Community.
- **Tips** at included meals.
- **Gratuity** to your driver and guide – a small “thank you” voluntary gratuity to guide and driver is usual. Normally \$23 pp for the guide; \$15 pp for the driver
- **Water when on the bus** – 2 bottles per person per bus day.
- Airport **transfers** in Cuba and Miami.
- **Porterage** and tip at Miami airport and hotels in Cuba.
- USA airport **tax**.
- Cuban **Visa** for US citizens. ( Cuban born require special visa)
- Land transportation in Cuba by private **A/C motor coach**.
- An extensive **educational packet** on Cuba and the History of the Jews of Cuba and practical travel information.
- **Health insurance** in Cuba includes Medevac to USA.

### **Not included:**

- Trip cancellation/health insurance – **strongly recommended**
- Air to/from Miami
- Cuban Airport departure tax (\$30)
- **Cash Tzedakah** for Cuban Jewish communities - a minimum donation of \$60 - \$100 per participant to be distributed to the two synagogues and one Jewish community we will visit.
- **Donations per participant** – 10 pounds of donations for distribution to the Jewish Community – participants will be provided with an up to date needs list once deadline has passed.

### **Price per person from Miami to Synagogue Solutions**

Price is based on a minimum of 20 full pay passengers –

- fewer would be higher price

Double occupancy: \$ 3,495.00 (per person)

Single occupancy: \$ 3,995.00 (per person)

### **Deadlines:**

- Deposit and registration forms must be received no later than **October 1, 2014**.  
No refund of deposit will be given after this date.
- Balance payment – due **January 8, 2015**. No refund of balance payment will be given once deadline has passed.
- You may receive a full refund of your deposit or balance payment if written cancelation is received before the close of business on relevant deadline dates.

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## **IMPORTANT PASSPORT INFORMATION**

To participate in this mission your passport must be valid for at least six months after our entry into Cuba.

**INSURANCE IN CUBA** – In case you need medical treatment, hospitals and clinics for tourists are conveniently located throughout the country. **Cuban medical insurance is included in the price of the mission** and covers 100% of medical expenses up to \$25,000 and re-patriation or transportation due to illness, accident, or death (up to \$7000) - except as noted below. Your hotel has first aid station and nurse for immediate attention to minor illnesses or injuries. Your insurance will cover treatment in the hotel and at a clinic if necessary. **PLEASE NOTE:** Cuban health insurance does not cover treatment for **a pre-existing condition** – you are liable for the costs incurred from the treatment of a preexisting condition. You may seek reimbursement from your USA insurance company; if your USA policy so provides.

**HEALTH** – **This is not a very strenuous trip.** However, there will be walking over cobbled stone streets and so a certain level of mobility is required. Some buildings that we will visit do not have elevators and stair climbing is necessary. If you have a pre-existing condition, chronic medical condition or question your ability to keep up with the group, **you must speak with Cantor Rogerio Marx.**

### **ITINERARY Outline**

This itinerary is by necessity subject to change

**Sunday – February 15** - Miami (no included meals)

Overnight at a hotel near airport; your room is guaranteed regardless of arrival time. Continental breakfast the next morning.

**Day One – Monday – 2/16 – Miami – Havana- (B, D)**

- Group transfer to airport.
- Current Flight to Havana – Depart 11:30 am; Arrive 12:30 pm. These are American Airline planes and crew but not scheduled AA flights. They are leased by the Department of the Treasury license holder.
- Lunch is not included – please eat at the Miami Airport
- Visit and meeting with Dra. Mayra Levy – president of the Centro Sephardim – Shoah Memorial and Senior Center
- Transfer to Hotel - check in
- Presentation on the history of the Jews in Cuba by historian of the Jewish Community
- Welcome Dinner at El Patio – (included meal)

**Day Two –Tuesday – 2/17 - Havana – (B, L)**

- Guided cigar factory tour – the art of making a fine cigar
- Walking tour of Old Havana
- Lunch at El Templete in Havana Vieja ( included meal)
- Continue tour of old Havana.
- We will visit the Casa de la Comunidad Hebrea de Cuba (El Patronato) the JCC of Cuba. We will meet with the president of the synagogue

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- A farmers market – where the Cubans buy!
- Evening at your leisure to enjoy the many private restaurants (Paladares) and night life of Havana. Your guide will assist you with your selection.

**Day Three –Wednesday- 2/18 – Havana – Santa Clara – Caibarien – La Dunas on Cayo Santa Maria (B, L, D)**

- Morning departure for Santa Clara.
- Santa Clara, founded in 1654, is where in 1958 Che Guevara fought a decisive battle that cut the island in two which led to Batista fleeing the country days later.
- For a very different “religious” experience we will visit the Che Memorial.
- A buffet lunch at La Granjita ( included meal)
- We will visit with the small Jewish community at the new synagogue - the first built in Cuba since the Revolution and to the Holocaust Memorial located at the cemetery.
- We move on for our final destination the lovely all inclusive beach resort of Melia Cayo Santa Maria that will be our home for two nights. (All food and beverages are complimentary and you may dine at your leisure)

**Day Four – Thursday – 2/19 - Cayo Santa Maria (B, L, D)**

- Free day to take advantage of the resort’s activities or just enjoy the beautiful beach and water.
  - You will be provided with a list of activities and prices offered by the resort including
    - 1 hour “cigarette” boat trip with snorkeling;
    - swimming with the dolphins;
    - all-day large catamaran trip with lunch and snorkeling.
- **Morning optional included activity:**
  - 9:00 am - Depart for Caibarien on the coast
  - Visit of this once prosperous port town with local guide including visit to still functioning 19<sup>th</sup> century printing house
  - Visit to local artist studio and the Community art project that she created using recycled materials. Some of the pieces the project creates are for sale; additionally in the town square a local artist sells “ecological art” created from coffee and banana leaves and other local flora.
  - On to Remedios perhaps to visit to its famous church.
  - We will stop on the main square for a drink at El Louvre which has been in continuous use since 1866 – it has been decorated by a local artist who may greet us if he is in town.
  - Some time to see the local artists around the square and then back to Caibarien to meet with Julio the leader of the very small Jewish Community.
  - Return to the Cayo in time for lunch around 1 pm and remainder of the day at leisure

**Day Five - Friday– 2/20 - Cayo Santa Maria - Havana (B, D)**

- Early morning departure for Havana.
- To allow for more time in Havana, we will stop on the way for a quick bite and beverage; make a sandwich at breakfast for the road.

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- Outside of Havana we will visit Hemingway's beloved La Finca Vigia – his home in Cuba; maintained exactly as he left it for the last time before returning to the USA and his tragic fate. Hemingway said of Cuba that "it was the best place to write on earth." He wrote many of his novels here including 'The Old Man and the Sea'.
- Check into our hotel
- Transfer to Patronato for Erev Shabbat Services. The Community members lead this warm and lovely service. After services we will as a group share our Shabbat dinner at with the Community at the Patronato.
- Return to Hotel

### **Day Six – Saturday – 2/21 - Havana (B)**

- Day at leisure
- Shabbat services at Centro Sepharadi
- Afternoon Optional Non Included Activities:
  - Salsa lesson – 1 ½ hours – a very authentic venue
  - Rum Tasting with cigar
  - For the serious collector visit to two private galleries
- Dinner at leisure
- 8:30 pm - Evening Optional Non Included Activity – performance at the National Teatro – your guide will reserve orchestra seats for those wishing to attend the performance.
- Time to enjoy Havana's varied nightlife. You will be provided with a list of some of Havana's best evening activities.

### **Day Seven – Sunday – 2/22 - Havana (B, L, D)**

- 10:30 am - Guided tour by museum curator and member of the Jewish Community of the Bellas Artes Museum – Cuba Collection – the history of Cuba through its art.
- Lunch together at La Fermina ( included meal)
- Visit to Fuster – he has transformed his home and neighborhood into a work of art.
- A couple of unusual sites.
- Return to hotel.
- Farewell dinner at Café Oriente (included meal)
- 10:30 pm – 12:30 am - Evening Optional Group Non Included Activity - the Tropicana Show – a Cuban institution since the 30's

### **Day Eight – Monday – 2/23 – Havana – Miami (B)**

- Late Checkout of hotel
- Stop a Plaza de la Revolucion for a group photo. This is the site of Fidel's 7 – hour speeches.
- Flight to Miami. departure 1:30 pm – arrival 2:30 pm

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