

# Visions of Cuba:

A birding and Cultural Photo Journey

**MAY 8-16, 2026**

\*With Pre-Tour to Vinales  
May 7- 8, 2026

**MexiMayan Tours**

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### **For photographers and birders - from beginners to pros.**

Experience an inspiring 9-day journey across Cuba -where culture lives, landscapes breathe, and color takes flight. Be in awe while photographing vivid streets, sweeping valleys, and the jewel-bright wings of its endemic birds.

Along the journey, Cuba's culture becomes part of your composition: musicians in hidden courtyards, farmers in tobacco country, dancers, artisans, and everyday Cubans whose lives and laughter shape the island's enduring identity. These moments —shared over meals, music, and conversation - become some of the most meaningful images you take home.

Fully compliant under the U.S. Support for the Cuban People license and supported by long-standing partnerships within Cuba's conservation and cultural community, this experience reflects our trusted and heartfelt approach. Join us with an open lens and an open spirit & heart.

### **Your Tour Leaders**

This photography tour is hosted and guided by photographer Steve Carr, and special guest co-leader pro photographer Claudia Daniels, whose knowledge and skill in nature and wildlife photography enriches the experience.



# Daily Itinerary

## Day 1, May 8: Havana - Light, Rhythm & the First Frame

Arrive in Havana, where music drifts through the streets and sea light dances along the Malecón. Greeted on arrival by Lisbeth Noa, our Logistics Manager, and your incredible journey begins. After settling into your casa particular, join your guide for a **golden-hour photo walk** through Old Havana—sunlit plazas, pastel façades, and balconies spilling over with character. Evening **welcome dinner** at a private paladar, followed by blue-hour cityscapes and classic-car night shots beneath vintage streetlamps. Welcome dinner included. (D)

**Photo Focus:** Street scenes, color and character, Havana by night.

**Overnight:** Casa La Posada de Chacon, Habana Vieja.

## Day 2, May 9: Havana - Streets, Stories, Rhythms & Reflections

Meet acclaimed Cuban photographer **Adrián Lamela** for a morning of street and portrait photography amid Havana's early light—markets awakening, cobblestones glistening, daily life unfolding. Midday brings a **cultural encounter with local artists or dancers**, offering opportunities for expressive portraits and motion studies. In the afternoon, a short **editing and composition mini workshop** sharpens your creative eye before a sunset shoot along the Malecón, where lovers, fishermen, and musicians animate the horizon. (Meals B,L)

**Photo Focus:** Candid cultural portraits, movement, storytelling, sunset seascapes.

**Overnight:** Casa La Posada de Chacon, Habana Vieja







## Day 3, May 10: Havana - Architecture, Heritage & Timeless Cuba

Discover Havana's **architectural heritage**—colonial plazas, fortress walls, and quiet courtyards that whisper centuries of history. After lunch, climb into a **vintage convertible** for a classic-car cruise through Vedado Havana and photograph them in iconic locations.

As twilight arrives, capture the grandeur of the **Capitolio** and **Gran Teatro**, illuminated against the evening sky. (Meals B,L)

**Photo Focus:** Architecture, leading lines, curated cultural portraits, classic cars.

**Overnight:** Casa La Posada de Chacon, Habana Vieja

## Day 4, May 11: Playa Larga & Into the Wild of Zapata National Park

Greeted by Xochitl Ayon Güemes, Avian Curator with the Museum of Natural History, depart Havana for Playa Larga and **Zapata National Park**, Cuba's richest bird habitat and a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. After lunch, meet local field guides for your first **bird photography session** in the wetlands—an environment alive with herons, flamingos, and colorful endemic species. As the light softens, practice patience and perspective, crafting intimate portraits that reveal the quiet elegance of Cuba's wild heart. (Meals B,L,D)

**Photo Focus:** Endemic bird portraits, natural light bird photography.

**Overnight:** Casa Sol y Caribe, or Casa Zuleyda Y Vinola, Playa Larga



## Day 5, May 12: Playa Larga -The Art of Observation

A **pre-dawn departure** sets the tone for a day of pure immersion. Bee hummingbirds flash through morning light, Cuban trogons perch in emerald canopies, and woodpeckers hammer rhythmically on textured trunks. Work alongside expert naturalists who share insights on behavior, positioning, and ethical fieldcraft. Later, explore a contrasting habitat to broaden your portfolio, concluding with a **golden-hour shoot** in shifting wetland light—a masterclass in timing and tranquility. (Meals B,L,D)

**Photo Focus:** Bird portraits, behavior, soft background bokeh, and ethical field technique.

**Overnight:** Casa Sol y Caribe, or Casa Zuleyda Y Vinola, Playa Larga

## Day 6, May 13: Trinidad -Nature, Culture & Timeless Light

After an early morning birding session, travel south toward **Trinidad**, one of Cuba's most photogenic towns and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Along the route, keep cameras ready for roadside vignettes of sugarcane fields, ox-drawn carts, and palm-lined horizons. Arrive to find a city where time lingers—**pastel façades, tiled roofs, and cobbled lanes glowing in late-day light**. As the sun sets, capture the rhythm of life through your lens: children playing in plazas, musicians tuning guitars, and families gathering in open doorways as dusk paints the streets amber. (Meals B,L)

**Photo Focus:** Golden-hour Street scenes, texture, evening culture

**Overnight:** Casa Lola, Trinidad







## Day 7, May 14: Trinidad – Morning Light & Human Connection

With morning light softening the colors of the city, wander Trinidad's narrow lanes to capture **the human side of Cuba**—the quiet dignity of local craftspeople, the laughter of schoolchildren, and the interplay of light and shadow across weathered doorways. Pause at Plaza Mayor for one last coffee and candid portrait before departure. The heart of Trinidad lingers in every frame: **a meeting place of nature, culture, and enduring spirit.** (Meals B,L)

**Photo Focus:** A complete visual story of Cuba—people, birds, and place.

**Overnight:** Casa Lola, Trinidad

## Day 8, May 15: Trinidad – Havana

Morning departure to Havana with arrival mid-afternoon. You have time for editing, personal shooting, or shopping before one last blue hour shoot and our Farewell Dinner.

(Meals B,L,D)

**Photo Focus:** A complete visual story of Havana, Cuba.

**Guides:** Lisbeth Noa, Expert Guide/Logistics Manager.

Adrian Lamela, Photographer.

**Overnight:** Casa La Posada de Chacon, Habana Vieja (Confirmed)

**Day 9, May 16: After breakfast, transfer to Jose Marti International Airport and flights home.** (Meals: B)



# OPTIONAL PRE-TOUR EXTENSION- MAY 7, 2026

## Day 1, MAY 7: Havana, Las Terrazas, & Viñales – Golden Valley Light

Arrive in Havana and set out west toward **Las Terrazas**, an eco-community nestled in the Sierra del Rosario Biosphere Reserve. Here, forested hills, mirror-like lagoons, and singing birds make an inspiring introduction to Cuba's natural world. A local expert joins the group for an overview of the area's unique ecology and conservation story, while photographers enjoy opportunities to capture its **lush landscapes and birdlife** in soft morning light.

After lunch, continue on to the **Viñales Valley**, a UNESCO World Heritage landscape of dramatic **limestone mogotes**, fertile red-clay fields, and patchwork tobacco farms. Settle into your casa particular overlooking the mountains, then head out for your first **golden-hour shoot**—long shadows stretching across the valley floor, the scent of tilled earth, and the warm glow of sunset bathing the mogotes.

Enjoy a delicious **lunch at one of Viñales' charming paladares**, known for garden-fresh ingredients and countryside hospitality. After lunch, capture your **final images** in town or join a short optional shoot with a local guide. (Meals L)

**Photo Focus:** Grand landscapes, golden-hour horizons, atmospheric blue-hour scenes.

**Overnight:** TBD Vinales

## Day 2, May 8: Valle del Silencio - Nature, Caves & Country Life – Havana

Begin the morning with a misty sunrise shoot from a view point over the **Valle del Silencio**, a peaceful, lesser-visited corner of Viñales where time seems to pause. Photograph **backlit palms, dew-touched leaves, winding dirt paths, and farmers moving through the haze of morning light**. Breakfast is waiting at the casa after which we head back to Havana and rendezvous with the main group as they arrive at the casa. We will have lunch and time to rest before beginning our golden hour photo walk and evening Welcome Dinner. After lunch, capture your **final images** in town or join a short optional shoot with a local guide before departing for Havana in the late afternoon. You return with a **portfolio of landscapes and rural life** that beautifully sets the tone for your main Cuban photo adventure—a **story of light, land, and human connection**. (Meals B,L,D)

**Photo Focus:** Nature details, scenic storytelling, final portfolio shots with texture and depth.

**Overnight:** Casa La Posada de Chacon, Habana Vieja





**Included:**

- Cuba Travel Visa
- Cuba accommodations in casa particulars (privately owned lodging)
- Airport R/T transfers, transportation to areas in itinerary
- Professional English-speaking Cuban guide services
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary
- Entrance and guide fees for National Parks, museums, and exhibits
- Department of Treasury, OFAC license and authorization letter for legal Cuba travel. OFAC Cuba License No. CT-2013-305326-2
- Mandatory Cuban medical insurance

**Not included:**

- Airfare to Havana (Mariah can assist with arranging the best flights)
- Lodging or meals in Miami or departure city
- Meals in Cuba other than as listed as included in itinerary
- Any personal items
- Transportation other than mentioned in itinerary
- Alcohol beverages other than what is included with meals. Most lunch and dinner meals include a choice of wine, beer, mojito, or Cuba Libre.
- Gratuities for guide(s), wait staff, baggage assistance, housekeeping, etc

**PLEASE NOTE:** US Passports MUST be valid for 6 months after your arrival date to Cuba

**This itinerary is subject to change and probably will. Cuba is a wonderful country with beautiful people and natural/cultural beauty, however sometimes things simply do not go as planned. Flexibility and patience are key.**

As always, your health & safety is our #1 concern. I hope you will feel comfortable trusting Mariah Travel to ensure your well-being while traveling.





