Karst and Caves in Cuba
February 3 – 16, 2016

Arranged by:
Sociedad Espeleológica de Cuba (SEC)
Antonio Núñez Jiménez Foundation for Nature and Humanity (FANJ)
Cuban Institute for Friendship with the People (ICAP) / AMISTUR
Marazul Charters, Inc.

Eco Cuba Network, Program Consultants

Guide/Interpreter: Amircal “Cal” Salermo
Tour Leaders: Dwight Deal, PhD; Mary Fletcher Deal, MA
FANJ and SEC Leaders: Angel Graña González, Alejandro Romero Emperador, Evelio Balado Piedra

Evelio will be with the group on the bus for the full trip, from Havana to Havana. Alejandro will join us in Sancti Spiritus and will continue with the group on the bus in his province and back to Havana. Other leaders and cavers will join us in each of the areas we visit.

Breakfast is provided daily at hotels.

Wed, Feb 3 (Arrival Day / Havana)
PM: Programming depending on time of arrival
    Check into the Hotel Copacabana
    Welcome Dinner with Cuban guests

Thurs, Feb 4 (Havana)
AM: Meeting at the Antonio Núñez Jimenez Foundation for Nature and Humanity
Overview of the history and work of the FANJ and of the Cuban Speleological Society, Led by director Angel Graña

Lunch: Old Town, Havana
PM: Walking tour of Old Havana with guide
Dinner: on your own – best option is to stay in Old Havana

Fri, Feb 5 (to Matanzas / Varadero)
AM: Drive to Matanzas and enjoy a city tour of this provincial capital
    Check into the Hotel Playa de Oro on the peninsula of Varadero

Lunch: At the hotel
PM: Visit “Cueva Ambrosio” - a small flank margin cave illustrating how caves form at the interface of fresh and salt water
    Dinner: at the hotel

Sat, Feb 6 (Matanzas)
AM: Visit “Cueva de Bellamar” with Esteban Graü Gonzales-Quevedo, Vice Secretary of the Sociedad Espeleológica de Cuba (SEC) and President of the Speleological Committee of Matanzas. This is a large polygenetic and complex cave system.
    Lunch: Join local cavers at their unique base, Jardines de Bellamar
    PM: Learn about the extraordinary conservation efforts by the cavers that stopped the planned development over beautiful and ecologically sensitive parts of the Bellamar cave system.
    Dinner: at the hotel
    Eve: a lot of fun at a neighborhood party, a true People-to-People experience!

Sun, Feb 7 (Matanzas)
AM: Santa Catalina Cave – enjoy the scenery as you walk through fields to reach the cave.
    Evelio, Esteban and local cavers will guide small groups that will choose their own pace

Lunch: TBD – choices may a) a box lunch and more caving or b) return to the hotel
PM: Caving or hotel/local activities
Dinner: at the hotel with a wrap-up with Esteban and other cavers
Mon, Feb 8 (to Sancti Spiritus)
AM: Travel to Sancti Spiritus, about 5 hours
Lunch en route
PM: Arrival and hotel check-in
Dinner Informal welcome, drinks and dinner with Alejandro Romero, President of the Cuban Speleological Society, and local cavers

Tues, Feb 9 (Sancti Spiritus)
AM: Meeting at the regional FANJ office and museum, led by Alejandro
Lunch TBD
PM: Tour the city of Sancti Spiritus
Dinner in town - on your own
Optional Casa de la Trova – performance of traditional Cuban music – cost not included

Web, Feb 10 (to San Jose del Lago)
AM: Depart for the karst and caves in the northern section of the province
– discussion of karst features en route
Arrive in Mayajigua / San Jose del Lago and check into our lodging
Lunch en route
PM: A chance to see one of the karst areas; visit a cave that is accessible to all
Dinner at the hotel

Thurs, Feb 11 (San Jose del Lago and Remedios)
Day-long excursions / in two separate groups:
1) Parque Caguanes / Caving w/box lunch – by truck with local cavers
   Cueva de los Chivos; Cueva Humboldt; Cueva de Ramos (exact cave TBD)
2) Day-trip to the Colonial City of Remedios with our guide Cal on the group bus
   Include Sugar Mill Museum, trains, possibly old printing press
Lunch Box lunch for cavers; a restaurant in Remedios for others
Dinner at the hotel with a sharing session on activities of the day

Fri, Feb 12 (to Trinidad)
A day of learning about the karst and landscape of this province as we travel south to the
Colonial City of Trinidad on Cuba’s southern coast
Visit Bocorones, a large and significant river cave – a choice to wade across the river and enter
the cave or enjoy the landscape outside of the cave with walks and hikes as you wish
Lunch en route – perhaps at a “paladar”, a local Cuban home (cost on own)
PM Various stops and discussion en route to Trinidad
Dinner in Trinidad (TBD)

Sat, Feb 13 (Trinidad)
AM Explore Trinidad all day with our guide Cal
Lunch Sol Ananda Paladar
Dinner on our own and enjoy what cultural happenings Trinidad has to offer

Sun, Feb. 14 (to Havana)
AM Travel back to Havana along the shore route
   with karst stops and explanations by Alejandro and Evelio en route
   Stop in the City of Cienfuegos for a tour
Lunch Club Cienfuegos
PM Arrive in Havana and back to our Hotel Copacabana
Dinner on your own
Mon/15 (Havana)
AM  Wrap up meeting / final session at Local/Regional Speleological House
Lunch  Fusterland
PM  visit the home/studio of artist Jose Fuster
Dinner  Farewell Dinner with guests (TBD)

Tues/16  Flight to Cancun

End of Karst and Caves of Cuba trip
Program is subject to variation

COSTS

Costs are based on the group size and on the additional special arrangements for our group. Fees based on recent expectations in Cuba are:

$4,965 for 21 or more participants, which comprises:
- $4,465 Land
- $  500 Air from Cancun

$5,250 for 16 – 20 participants, which comprises:
- $4,750 Land
- $  500 Air from Cancun

Currently we have  20 participants who have expressed their intent to join the group. Others are contemplating the trip.

Invite your friends to join you!

Trip costs begin with the flight from Cancun to Havana and end with your return flight to Cancun. You will be responsible to get to Cancun by February 2nd, 2016. Departure for Cuba is on February 3rd.

To cover personal expenses while in Cuba, you should bring about $350 or more, depending on your spending decisions. Credit cards are not accepted in Cuba.

Travel insurance is recommended to cover medical and cancellation cost should an emergency situation arise.