



Brenda Schoepp



Leader Tours Inc.

Presents...

"Agricultura Cubana!"

Discover Cuba's Eco - Agricultural Revolution

An interactive tour for young farmers and food entrepreneurs.

(January 25th to February 1st, 2016)



We invite you to experience the heartbeat of Cuba – through gardens, farms and food. Urban agriculture, permaculture, herbs and healing, botanical gardens, organics, bio-diverse sustainable agriculture, fruits, fish, food processing, forage management, music and dance and of course exploring the caves of Cuba.

This experience is for passionate young entrepreneurs who care about food and want travel that is reflective of the culture and respectful of the future. Short in duration: it is designed for young families so they can arrange farm and childcare or an added holiday to stay and play on one of Cuba's famous beaches. We have limited space and price is based on double occupancy.





WHY CUBA?

Cuba's quest for an organic and sustainable agriculture began in earnest with the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980's. Faced with a looming food shortage due to the sudden loss of agro-chemical and food imports from the eastern block, the Cuban people were at a critical cross-roads: somehow the country needed to produce far more of its own food with far fewer outside in-puts or face widespread starvation.

This crisis sent Cuba firmly down the path towards a widespread organic and localized food model. Massive educational campaigns and numerous demonstration farms were established to teach Cuban farmers organic methods. Comprehensive land reform measures were also set in place, transforming large state farms into worker-owned cooperatives and small independent family farms.

The urban agriculture movement emerged to provide thousands of Cubans with the opportunity to turn vacant urban lands into productive organic micro-farms. Cuba's journey into an organic and sustainable agricultural paradigm continues today.

Tens of thousands of scientists, researchers, agricultural technicians, agronomists, permaculture practitioners and farmers across the country continue to pioneer new agro-ecological strategies for creating long-term food security.

This Program provides you with the opportunity to come face to face with these visionary Cuban farmers in a way that is not normally available to tourists.





CUBA ITINERARY

Day 1, January 25th, 2016: Arrive in beautiful Varadero and enjoy a warm Cuban welcome along with a fun orientation. Our accommodation is at Casa de Carino on a quiet road and is steps from the beach features meals on a lovely veranda morning and evening.

Day 2, January 26th, 2016 : We travel by bus to Finca El Retiro. Finca El Retiro is an organic research farm located on the edge of Cardenas. The farm features a careful integration of live-stock, field crops, intensive vegetable production, tree crops, on-farm biogas production and small scale food preserving and processing. The farm provides food to numerous seniors centres and daycares in the Cardenas area and is a teaching centre for farmers in the region.

In the afternoon we visit Omar Gonzalez (a personal friend of Fidel Castro) with an amazing integrated farm design and the cultivation of the famous Moringa Tree – nature's healing tree. Omar will likely join us later in the evening with his famous stories.

Day 3, January 27th, 2016: We depart Varadero to visit the family farm of Hector and Odalis Correa. This highly integrated farm employs so much thought in design, function, beauty and production that one could stay here for a week. Hector and Odalis have also developed a high end pottery business on site (you may buy pottery here) and the family succession plan is worth asking about! Beautiful, amazing and emotionally powerful, this is a visit that you will not forget.

After a lunch on the farm we travel to the Indio Hatuey Research Station to explore alternative pasture and forage crop systems. It is here we discover tree crops for forage and annual trees for pasture! Now that's an environmental shift! The evening is in Santa Clara, established in 1689, and the home of the legendary Marta Abreu de Estevez, benefactor of the city. Overnight is in Hotel Los Caney.

Day 4, January 28th 2016: We depart for Santi Spiritus – one of Cuba's oldest cities established in 1514. Narrow streets and town squares lend for a fantastic day of urban permaculture - visiting the men and women farmers of Cuba who bring life to everything from old parking lots to river banks. It will be overwhelming to see the amount of food, fruit, fish, medicinal plants and tree food forests that can be produced in a small area with the appropriate design. Canada and Cuba have a long relationship in permaculture. There will be a great dinner in a museum which houses some of the most amazing artifacts.

Be prepared for a little dancing on the museum floor!



Day 5, January 29th 2016: It is a big travel day. On our way to Havana we stop at Cienfuegos Botanical Gardens – an astounding variety of plants. We will compliment this stop with a look at a medicinal plants project on route. Once in Havana we give you the ultimate Cuban experience staying at the Convento Santa Brigida – the lovely and calm convent that is known for the delicious breakfasts. This refuge will be home for two nights.

Day 6, January 30th 2016: It is true! Havana is full of old cars and vibe but we will fill our day at the family farm of Fernadito Funes. Fernando Funes is a younger academic with a Doctorate degree in agro-ecology. Not satisfied with sticking to theory, Fernando has created a model ecological farm with a high degree of diversity and integration from bio-gas to bees and vegetable to vermiculture. The farm is located is an excellent example of the Cuban state’s program of free land grants to new farmers.

Vilda Figueroa and Pepe Lamez who run a community food preservation and healthy eating project in a marginal neighbourhood of Havana host us later in the morning. For twenty years, this dynamic couple has been promoting healthy eating and food preservation techniques across Cuba through National radio and TV programs. They have trained hundreds of community leaders throughout Cuba and are authors of over 15 books and DVD’s.

Enjoy your free time in the afternoon and then we get cultural in the evening in “Old Havana”!

Day 7, January 31st 2016: It is our last day touring but it promises to be just as exciting as all the rest. We start with a visit to the famous Vivero Alemar. Vivero Alemar is an urban cooperative on the edge of Havana that has over 150 full-time members. Together they produce a tremendous amount of vegetables, herbs and seedlings that are sold in the neighbourhood of Alemar and throughout Havana. The Co-op has a high degree of social organization providing training opportunities, social benefits, and a very positive and healthy work environment for its members.

Matanzas is the final destination and we hike deep into one of the 30,000 spectacular caves in Cuba. We finish our explorations in Cuba at Bella Mar, a permaculture project started to protect the caves from housing development. If you want to chop and drop with a machete or weed in an organic garden you are welcome to do so here. Our fantastic hosts Cusa and Roberto will once again reflect the passion for all things green – in Cuba. Our day wraps up walking the beach and dining on the veranda of Casa de Carino in Varadero.

Day 8, February 1st 2016 is your travel day home or the extension of your stay. If you wish to stay and play in Varadero then Leader Tours will arrange that for you with an alternate flight home. Either way – it will be a memorable trip reflecting the truly revolutionary growth and passion for farming and food in Cuba.

Tour Leadership and Host for Cuba



Ron Berezan: After a lifetime of growing food in cities, Ron became a permaculture teacher and promoter of urban agriculture in 2004 when he started The Urban Farmer (www.theurbanfarmer.ca). He has taught hundreds of students in Canada and facilitated numerous community and private permaculture projects throughout the country. Over the past 7 years, Ron has taken over 260 people to Cuba for organic farm tours, permaculture internships, and experiential learning programs. He is a fluent Spanish speaker with a deep love of the Cuban people and their fascinating social experiment. Ron has cultivated a close working relationship with many Cuban agriculture organizations and was one of the instructors in the Permaculture Design Course at the International Permaculture Congress in Cuba in November 2013. Ron lives, gardens, and frolics on Canada's west coast in Powell River, BC.



Brenda Schoepp: Brenda is deeply rooted in agriculture and food. She has traveled to sixteen countries working with farmers, food processors, educators and politicians with a goal to empower people to grow food, protect environments, strengthen trade and secure financial independence for themselves, their families and their communities. An international mentor and published author, her work has been featured in the UK for World Food Day, by the USDA in resource conservation and by a multitude of young farmer and youth clubs. Her blog www.brendaschoepp.com and twitter @BrendaSchoepp are followed by young entrepreneurs around the globe. Brenda was awarded the Nuffield Canada Scholarship for her studies of women in agriculture and she remains an advocate for gender equality and human rights. She owns a ranch and horse rescue operation in Alberta, Canada.



Leader Tours Inc.



Lawrence Rowley from Leader Tours is originally from New Zealand and is the owner operator of Leader Tours based in Calgary. Leader Tours specializes in group travel and has been offering custom built itineraries focused on the agricultural industry worldwide. Australia, New Zealand, Argentina & Brazil are destinations that we know very well & have sent many group to experience the ag industry. Cuba is an exciting and new destination for Leader Tours and working in partnership with Ron and Brenda will help us offer the best possible travel experience to Cuba for our travellers.

I am looking forward meeting and getting to know everyone that signs on for this adventure to Cuba!

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PRICING: LAND ONLY: \$2710 per person

\$500 per person tour deposit to secure your seat!

Deposit due on or before October 1st 2015

Space is limited to 15 participants!

Price includes accommodation, all agricultural visits, meals, transportation, gratuity, translation and visas.

Alcohol is not included. Please ensure your passport is valid for at least six months from point of departure. Accommodations will vary from bunk beds and shared bathrooms to great little hotels.

FLIGHTS: Leader Tours will help with your travel bookings. (You must arrive in Cuba the day of January 25th 2016)