



WORTH AVENUE YACHTS

Cuba



7 Day Cuba Itinerary by Tom Isitt

Cuba is a huge island, around 800 miles long by 80 miles wide, so you are unlikely to be able to see more than a fraction of it in just seven days. We would suggest a cruise starting and finishing in Havana, and taking in the western-most third of the island.

If you have the time (two weeks or more), head round to the Gulf of Batabano, where the cays are stunning and waters are turquoise and unspoiled. For a one-week cruise, stick to the north-west coast, where you'll get a taste of the island without travelling long distances.



Day 1: Havana

Join your yacht at the Hemingway International Yacht Club, a few miles west of downtown Havana. Once you've settled in, take a taxi into Havana and immerse yourself in the delights of this extraordinary city. Be warned, such are the attractions of Havana that you may not make it back to your yacht until the early hours of the morning. Hemingway enthusiasts may like to take a daiquiri at La Floridita and a mojito at La Bodeguita del Medio (Hemingway's two favorite watering holes in Havana). Dinner at El Patio overlooking the Plaza de La Catedral offers a great taste of Havana nightlife in an exceptional setting.

Day 2: Bahia de Cabanas

Heading west from Havana, the coast is an entrancing mixture of reefs, beaches, and the occasional industrial horror (such as Mariel, with its cement works and submarine pens). You are not in any rush, so take your time, relax, and soak up the Cuban vibe. Anchor up in one of the many attractive bays, have lunch, and maybe do some snorkelling or diving on the beautiful reefs just offshore. At the end of the day, drop the anchor in the Bahia de Cabanas, and make the most of its excellent shelter. You could even take the tender ashore and explore the one-horse town that is Cabanas.



Day 3: Cayo Levisa

Coast-hopping westwards brings you, after 40 miles or so, to Cayo Levisa. The beaches on the north side of the cay are fabulous, and on the south side the mangrove swamps are fascinating. Find a well protected anchorage, do some diving and snorkelling, or explore the swamps in the tender. This is about as typical as you can get for Cuban cays, crystal turquoise waters, long sandy beaches, palm trees, and almost nobody else but you.

Day 4: Cayo Jutias

Still heading west, another couple of hours cruising brings you to Cayo Jutias. This narrow strip of land, like most cays along this coast, is fronted by beautiful beaches and backed by mangrove swamps. A narrow causeway connects Cayo Jutias to the mainland. The reefs around these cays are extremely treacherous in bad weather, and there are numerous wrecks of Spanish galleons scattered amongst these islands. The facilities here, like much of this coast, are limited to a couple of beach bars, so you need to make sure that the yacht is fully provisioned before you set out from Havana.



Day 5: Cayo di Buonavista

If you haven't had enough of deserted beaches, idyllic anchorages, and warm turquoise waters, keep heading west for more of the same. There is very little in the way of development along this part of the coast, and you are very much on your own apart from the occasional adventurous yachtsman. However, make the most of it, because there are very few places left in the Caribbean where this is the case. Relax on the aft deck, with a mojito in one hand, a Cohiba in the other, and watch the sunset over a pristine Caribbean seascape.

Day 6: Puerto Esperanza

With time running out, it's time to turn back to Havana. This is a chance to explore the beaches and keys that you bypassed on the way out, but don't dawdle too long because there are still many miles to go. Drop the hook off Puerto Esperanza, or in the shelter of Cay Largo, and take the tender ashore. Puerto Esperanza is a typical sleepy Cuban fishing village, and if you're lucky you may be able to buy some fish from the local fishermen. This is pretty much your last opportunity to dive or snorkel on the reefs, or to relax on the sandy beaches, so make the most of it.



Day 7: Havana

Heading east once again, it's a four or five hour cruise back to the Hemingway International Yacht Club. They may be one last chance to anchor up off a gorgeous sandy beach and take one last dip in the warm Caribbean Sea. But you really shouldn't let your visit to Cuba stop here, because this place deserves more of your time. You really should spend a few days looking around Havana, and maybe take a few excursions to other parts of the island. Some of the south coast is spectacularly beautiful, and largely untouched by any form of tourism. Towns such as Cienfuegos and Trinidad are unbelievably beautiful, and a visit to the Che Guevara Memorial in Santa Clara is also worth an hour or two of your time. Whatever your political views, you cannot help but feel a touch of revolutionary fervour as you explore Cuba. Communism may be a bankrupt ideology, but there is no doubting that the brutal and corrupt Batista regime needed to be swept away, and talking to the Cubans it is clear that despite their hardships and grinding poverty, the revolution was a necessity.



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