

*Registration Brochure*  
*Registration Deadline – October 28, 2008*

# CUBA MISSION!

*February 11 – February 18, 2009*

**United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism**  
Southeast Region



## **Havana & Santiago de Cuba**

**Join us** on this insightful trip of cultural discovery and humanitarian effort. We will have experiences offered to few travelers to this tropical island nation. Through your presence you will be connecting with and helping the Jewish Community of Cuba in its growth after years of religious suppression.

You will make a difference in the lives of our brothers and sisters and these contacts will make your trip to this tropical island nation a truly unique experience.

**A GREAT MITZVAH – A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE – A FUN TRIP**

### ***The Jews of Cuba***

A Jewish presence in Cuba dates back 500 years. Historians believe that Luis de Torres, one of Columbus' translators on his discovery of Cuba, was a 'secret' Jew. Organized community life truly traces its beginnings from the late 19th century. In general, the early Jewish immigrants came

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from Turkey and Eastern Europe to escape persecution. Between WWI and WWII, Cuba became the doorstep to immigration to the United States. With strict American immigration quotas in place, many Jews who were unable to enter the USA settled in Cuba.

The pre Revolution Jewish population had grown to 15,000. Jewish community life lay dormant until 1994 when Castro permitted some religious practices and granted rights to government approved groups for public assembly. Today, most of the 2,000 Jews in Cuba live in Havana. Of the five synagogues which once operated in Havana, three still function. Jews have not experienced, and do not now, experience anti-Semitism but daily life is difficult for all Cubans.

### ***And you will experience Cuba!***

It has been said of Cuba that you experience it with all your senses. With a mix of black, white and Indian races, 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 smell of cooking food, to the rhythm in the way people move, to the sound of music in the air.

### **Program includes:**

- Round Trip Air - Miami - Santiago de Cuba; Havana - Miami
- Flight between Santiago and Havana.
- **Eight days**; seven nights in Cuba.
- Accommodations:
  - **Melia Santiago de Cuba** - 5 star hotel - 2 nights

### **Frommer's Review**

This unique, postmodern high-rise, a mass of blue, red, and gray steel girders and glass, is the largest hotel in Santiago and easily its most luxurious. It's in a peaceful area about 2km (1 1/4 miles) from the historic core, which is perfect for guests who need a little bit more tranquility and space. It has facilities and services in spades, including the best outdoor pool in the city -- the cost of the hotel is nearly worth it for the pool alone. Rooms are attractive and large, with huge windows offering up excellent views, particularly from the higher floors. The hotel has an excellent nightly cabaret show in its atmospheric **Santiago Café**, which is an indoor reconstruction of a miniature colonial city.

- **Hotel Melia Cohiba** - Havana - 5-Star hotel
  - Located along the sea close to the sights of Havana and its fascinating nightlife. Four great restaurants and two wonderful pools. Best salsa nightclub in Havana. Walking distance to the 2 main Conservative synagogues in Havana - 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

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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 club 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.

- **15 Meals: all breakfasts/ 4 lunches/ 4 dinners** at some of the better restaurants in Cuba with time to try the paladares (private restaurants) of Havana & Santiago. We hope to share three meals with the Jewish Community.
- There are no kosher restaurants in Cuba. All included meals will comply with the dietary requirements approved by the USCJ.
  - no meat, or meat and/or chicken stock in food preparation.
  - no shell fish or stock containing shell fish
  - options offered will include vegetarian, fish, and/or pasta
  - cheeses allowed

For meals on your own you can rely on your guide's advice.

- **Personal meetings & discussions** with the Jewish Community.
- Professional **English speaking guide** well versed in the history and culture of the island and the Jewish Community.
- A **safe** experienced driver.
- Our guide will assist you with your exploration of the many **cultural events** in Havana and its exciting nightlife, and will offer optional group **evening activities** from the delightful glitz of the Tropicana to a ballet performance at the Gran Teatro... and more.
- **Erev Shabbat services** at the main Conservative synagogue of Havana.
- **Shabbat services** at the Sephardic synagogue.
- **Guided visits to the best** cultural and historic sites. - To better understand the cultural environment of Cuba's Jewish community.
- Tour and discussion with Professor Maritza Corrales, the **historian of the Jewish Community**.
- **Gratuities** to your driver and guide - additionally a token thank you gratuity is usual to your guide and driver
- **Tips** at included meals.
- Bottled **water** while on the bus - 2 bottles per days on bus.
- **Porterage** at hotels in Cuba.
- **Land transportation** by modern A/C motor coach with lavatory.
- **Cuban Visa**.
- **Practical travel** guide for travel to Cuba.

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- A Welcome to Cuba packet listing **the best private restaurants, art galleries, and sites.**
  - **Health insurance** in Cuba including Medevac to USA.
- A balance of free time and group activities for learning and leisure.**

**Not included:**

- **Trip cancellation insurance -- strongly recommended.** Select the insurer of your choice. For your convenience you may go to our mission organizer's website to purchase a policy from Access America. [www.worldpassageltd.com](http://www.worldpassageltd.com)
- **Cash Tzedakah** - we recommend a contribution of between \$50 - \$100 per person to be distributed to the synagogues we will visit. Please see registration form.
- **Cuban Airport departure tax** (\$30) paid on your departure from Cuba.
- **Donations to Assist the Jewish Community of Cuba\***  
Religious, medical & humanitarian items: as part of our participation the mission we each must bring at least **15 lbs. of supplies.**  
**Upon registration a "needs" list of donations will be provided to you.**

**Please note: mission participants are required to be members of an affiliated USCJ congregation.**

**Mission cost per person from MIAMI airport:**

Double occupancy: \$ 2970

Single occupancy: \$ 3275

**Registration/Deposit Deadline is  
October 28, 2008**

The Registration Forms and passport copies must be received along with a **\$500 per person deposit by the close of business 10/28/2008.**

The deposit is refundable if a written cancellation notice is received by USCJ by the close of business 10/28/08. The Deposit is non refundable after that date.

**Balance** is due not later than **December 3, 2008.** Final payment is refundable if cancellation is received by written notice to USCJ by the close of business 12/3/08. It is not refundable after that date.

**Space is limited.**

**Participation is determined by the date of receipt of deposit and completed forms.**

**Please print out Registration Forms USCJ (4 pages)  
One set per person – Originals only please.**

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Please mail your completed registration forms, passport copies along with your check made payable to: **United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism** and mail to:

United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism  
7100 W. Camino Real  
Suite 216  
Boca Raton, FL 33433

**Questions? Please contact**

**Harry Silverman**

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**(561) 372-0424 (fax)**

### **IMPORTANT PASSPORT INFORMATION**

**To participate in this mission your passport must be valid for at least SIX MONTHS to the day after our return from Cuba.**

**SORRY BUT WE CAN NOT ACCEPT YOUR REGISTRATION IF YOUR CURRENT PASSPORT EXPIRES PRIOR TO THAT DATE.**

**Passport renewal information is available by calling the US Passport Information Office 1-877-487-2778.**

**FLIGHT TIMES: Our government approves flights to Cuba only one or two months prior to departure. The flight times indicated in the itinerary are current times. We do not expect a change. However final flight times will be sent to you when available.**

### **ITINERARY OUTLINE**

Because of the nature of travel in Cuba - this itinerary is subject to modification.

Travel to Cuba is very restricted. Few Americans can go. We are traveling to Cuba under a religious license for the purpose of assisting the Jews of Cuba. Our itinerary cannot offer activities which do not meet the limitations of our license.

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Throughout our stay, our guide will offer optional evening activities not on the mission's itinerary: the Tropicana, the Parisien, the ballet & more. We have one of the best guides in Cuba -his goal is to help you enjoy your stay.

**Day 1 -February 11- Wednesday (included meals: D)**

- Miami -Santiago de Cuba - **current schedule:** 12:40 pm departure - 2:45 pm arrival.
- Meet and greet at airport by our English-speaking guide.
- *Santiago de Cuba* is the island's second largest city and the third oldest. It sways to its own rhythm and even the local Spanish has its own musical lilt. Started in 1511 it was the first capital of Cuba. It is a city noted for its hospitality and the warmth of its people and has a relaxed, village feel. It is set in the beautiful Sierra Maestra Mountains where Fidel started his revolution. Also the location of T. Roosevelt's San Juan Hill.
- Check in to our hotel - Melia Santiago.
- Meet the Jewish Community - one of four synagogues in Cuba and the second largest Jewish Community after Havana. An evening together of food, dance and conversation.

**Day 2 -February 12- Thursday (B,L)**

- 7:30AM - Minyan
- Tour of Santiago including El Morro fort which played a significant role in the Spanish American war.
  - We lunch at Restaurante El Morro together near the fort and its craft market at a restaurant overlooking the water.
  - We continue our touring of Santiago with some free time to explore on your own.
  - Dinner tonight at leisure - guide will offer choices. Good night to go to Casa de la Trova - the best in Cuba.

**Day 3 - February 13 - Friday (B, D) Santiago - Havana**

- 7:30 am Minyan
  - Depart for Havana - current time: Dep. 9:35am, Arr. 11:10 am.
  - Check in Melia Cohiba Hotel in Vedado.
  - We will meet with Adela Dworin - President of the Patronato - presentation of donations.
  - Erev Shabbat services (approximately 6 PM) at El Patronato. The Community members lead this warm and lovely service.
  - After services, dinner with the Community.....a wonderful opportunity to meet with community members.

**Day 4 - February 14 - Saturday (B, L)**

- Services at Sephardic center.
- Lunch with Sephardic community

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- Afternoon - No scheduled activities
- Dinner at your leisure to enjoy the many privately owned restaurants in Havana.

Your guide will offer optional group evening activities such as the Tropicana - the glitzy review; OR optional performance at National Theatre. Your guide will discuss all optional activities the day we arrive.

**Day 5 – February 15 – Sunday (B, L)**

- 7:30 am Minyan
- Walking tour of Old Havana; visit to Palace of the Captain's General (Royal Spanish governors of Cuba); visit to some of Havana's historic sites.
- Lunch at La Dominica (included meal)
- City tour of Havana continues - A farmers market - where the Cubans buy! And some surprises.
- Visit to local artist's studio and gallery to see some of Cuba's younger artists' works.

**Day 6 – February 16 – Monday (B, L)**

- 7:30 AM Minyan
- Guanabacoa, a suburb of Havana, tour by Professor Corrales of the Jewish cemetery. She is a marvelous speaker and strangely makes the Jewish community's history come alive on this visit. She will be with us all day to answer your questions.
- Visit the first Holocaust Memorial in Western hemisphere.
- Hemmingway's home.
- Lunch together at La Ferminia.( vegetarian)
- Visit the home and studio of Jose Rodriguez Fuster the Caribbean Picasso. His home and his neighborhood is his art - very special.
- Return to hotel

**Day 7 – February 17 – Tuesday (B, D)**

- 7:30 AM Minyan
- Upman Cigar Factory.
- Visit to the University to meet with Professor Delio Carreras
- Continued touring of the city and its many sites
- Free time to explore Havana on your own.
- Craft Market is open.
- Farewell Dinner at El Floridita

**Day 8 – February 18 – Wednesday (B)**

- Miami – Havana – current schedule – Depart: 10:30am – Arrive: Noon