



CUBA AT THE CROSSROADS: PHOTO WORKSHOP  
WITH MAGDALENA SOLE & LUIS ALARCON

Crumbling colonial buildings, thatched fishing villages and palm-covered peaks that sweep down to the sea – Cuba is a treat for photographers. And thanks to year-round sunshine, life happens outdoors: stoops fill like grandstands, alleys act as baseball diamonds for children, plazas as musicians' stages and national parks as biological playgrounds. As relations ease with the US, Cuba is on the brink of a shift that will likely see it utterly changed within the next decade. For now, however, the island remains wholly unique: stunted but undoubtedly stunning.

**TRIP DURATION:**

9 days, 8 nights

**DATES:**

Jan 30 - Feb 7, 2016

**PRICE:** \$5,995 USD per person double occupancy. Add \$495 for single supplement

Includes: Accommodations. Round trip from Miami - Santiago and Camaguey - Miami. Meals and breakfasts listed on itinerary, land transportation in Cuba. Entrance fees to cultural and historic sites. Medical insurance while in Cuba (doesn't cover preexisting conditions). US airport departure tax. Cuban visa fee. Gratuities to wait staff at included meals and bellboys in Cuba.

Not included: trip cancellation insurance (highly recommended). Tips for guide and driver. Domestic airfare to Miami. Excess baggage charges.



Yet for all its camera-ready qualities, photographing Cuba isn't without its challenges. Guiding photographers through the technical, practical and artistic processes during this workshop is Magdalena Solé, an award-winning social documentary photographer whose past projects have covered such diverse subjects as the aging day laborers of Kamagasaki, Osaka and the communities of the Mississippi Delta. She is currently working on a new photography book: *Cuba: hasta siempre. (Cuba: Forever)* Joining Solé on the workshop is photographer Luis Alarcon, who specializes in introducing guests to an authentic Cuba away from tourism. Luis manages one of the most important Cuba YouTube channels for the Hispanic market, a product of his long-time experience in this beautiful and unexplored country.

## WORKSHOP ITINERARY

### DAY 1 - MIAMI - SANTIAGO

The adventure begins. Today we meet early at Miami international Airport for our charter flight to Santiago de Cuba. The workshop begins in Cuba's second city. Here, you'll wander the colonial center and visit the 16th-century home of Spanish conqueror Diego Velázquez de Cuéllar. Sip coffee and watch life unfold on a central square, Parque Céspedes, then admire the view over the bay from Balcón de Velázquez lookout.

A mid-day boat ride will bring you out to the speck-sized Granma Island, where you can mingle with the tight-knit island community, who are still recovering from the devastation wrought by Hurricane

Sandy. Back on the mainland, investigate the bullet-scarred Moncada Barracks, where in July, 1953, a young Fidel Castro led his failed coup.

### DAY 2 - SANTIAGO DE CUBA

Head out onto the Santiago streets to further explore the city. Join locals at the farmers' market, stroll through El Tivoli, where peeling houses exude a weathered colonial charm, and point your viewfinder onto the sun-bleached tombstones of Cementerio Santa Ifigenia.

Photograph the deteriorating mansions of the Vista Alegre district, where the wealthy pre-revolutionary elite once lived. You'll also browse the exhibits at the Museo de las Religiones Populares, where you can learn about Santería, an Afro-Cuban religion borne out of the slave trade. During your down time, you may want to experience the city's music scene – unquestionably the best in the country. You'll also have your first group meeting today, during which you can review your photography and set out your objectives for the workshop.

### DAY 3 - SANTIAGO - GUANTANAMO - BARACOA

A scenic morning drive will include a stop-off in Guantánamo to find out about indigenous music at Casa de Changüí. Back on the road, we'll skirt the coast and climb La Farola mountain pass – a mountainous road hewn out of the rock in 1965. Prior to this, Baracoa was only accessible by sea.

Upon arrival in Baracoa, get acquainted with the town and the sparkling bay,

forests and mountains that surround it. Bring your camera and try to capture the fading afternoon light. time to ask questions and when you will improve your vision. Magdalena is going to pick some of the best images and tell you why they are effective. Each day you will also get a special assignment to improve your way of seeing and discuss techniques to become more proficient when photographing people.

### DAY 4 - BARACOA

On Day 4, our journey will take us East along the coast through the Túnel de los Alemanes (German tunnel) natural arch. We'll emerge at Boca de Yumurí where the Yumurí River flows through a deep canyon into the Atlantic. After a boat ride through the canyon, we will continue on to the Playa Manglito beach and the remote village of La Maquina, where you'll have the chance to chat with locals. You may want to bring along gifts – fishing equipment (hooks, lines etc.) will be particularly well-received.

On the way back to Baracoa, we'll stop at a beautiful seaside village to photograph fishermen returning with their fresh catch at sunset.

### DAY 5 - BARACOA - GIBARA

Leaving Baracoa, we'll head to Rio Toa, Cuba's biggest river. Trek along the banks and take to the water in a traditional cayuka boat. We'll visit a cocoa farm and a coconut-processing factory as well as Playa Maguana, a glorious white-sand beach.

The journey continues to Parque Nacional Alejandro de Humboldt. Toxic rocks have forced the plant and animal life in the park to adapt, resulting in unique species that can only be found in the lush rainforest and pristine bay here. You'll also photograph the nearby mining town of Moa, whose harsh industrial cityscape is coated in a layer of red dust. The town is particularly eerie and mesmeric at sundown.

Finish up for the day at the remote coastal town of Gibara, where'll you have free time to eat dinner, review and edit your pictures.

#### **DAY 6 - GIBARA - CAMAGÜEY**

Spend the morning exploring and photographing Gibara, whose isolated setting has led to a stuck-in-the-past vibe. Early afternoon, our small bus will take us on a cross-country drive to Camagüey. Later in the day, you'll take your camera around the historic inland city of Camagüey, weaving your way through the beautiful plazas and confusing zigzag streets, which were built to thwart marauding invaders. That evening, you'll meet a local artist who creates leather jewelry and art.

#### **DAY 7 - CAMAGÜEY**

Get to know Camagüey during a pedal-powered bici-taxi tour of the town, observe vendors peddling their wares at the Agro Farmers Market. You'll also call into the music school, housed in an old leprosy hospital. You will also visit either the local art school, where you can meet students, or the Casanova potters' studio, where you can check out pottery displays and talk to the ceramicists. That evening, you'll have the option to listen to local musicians perform live.

#### **DAY 8 - CAMAGÜEY - KING RANCH**

Leaving the hotel, we'll move on to the city's peaceful cemetery and the surrounding flower shops, where colorful flowers and bouquets add vibrancy to the scene. Then it's on to King Ranch to see a Cuban take on a Texan-style ranch and

to watch a rodeo. Return to Camagüey for some last-minute photographing. If the time is right, you may even be able to catch a game of baseball, the darling sport of the Cuban nation.

#### **DAY 9 - CAMAGÜEY - MIAMI**

Rise early to photograph a bit more before departure as the sun breaks over the horizon and lights up the sky above the city. Later, transfer to the airport for the flight home.

#### **IMPORTANT NOTE:**

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#### **ABOUT MAGDALENA SOLE**



Magdalena Magdalena Sole is a social documentary photographer. She is best known for her vibrant and complex color work. Visual language has been her life's work. In 1989 she founded TransImage, a graphic design studio, in New York City. In 2002 she graduated with a Masters of Fine Art in Film from Columbia University. Her last film, "Man On Wire", on which

she was the Unit Production Manager, won an Oscar in 2009. She has taught in Europe and the US.

Her projects span the globe. Her current work includes: Kamagasaki — a photo documentary on the shunned elderly day laborers of Japan. Japan — "After the Water Receded", an exploration of the aftermath of the great 2011 Tohoku disaster, which was shown at the Sidney Mishkin Gallery in April 2012 in New York City. Most recently her photographs of the Mississippi Delta have been selected as a PDN Photo Annual 2011 Finalist. Her book "New Delta Rising", published by the University Press of Mississippi, was released in February 2012. It has won the Silver Award in 2011 at PX3 Prix de la Photographie, France. She is also winner of the Silver Prize 2011 at Slow Exposures, Concord, GA. Other shows in 2012 are Voices from Japan at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine in New York City, Dante and the Delta at Doma Gallery in Charlotte, NC, The Delta at WilJax Gallery in Cleveland, MS, and Sous Les Étoiles in New York City. The Mississippi Delta is on view until February 22, 2013 at the Leica Gallery in New York.

Born in Spain, raised in Switzerland, she arrived in New York City in 1984, where she lives with her family. She speaks seven languages.

[www.solepictures.com](http://www.solepictures.com)

#### **ABOUT LUIS ALARCON**



Luis Alarcón (b.1974) is a documentary photographer based in Havana, Cuba. His work focuses on Cuba beyond the stereotypes, reflecting everyday

experience of the Cuban people. He works in color and black and white photography.

During the last five years, he has been leading Photographic Workshops around Cuba. He is in charge of the international account of Cuba on Instagram (IgersCuba).

Luis started one of the most popular Cuba Youtube channels. Every 12 hours, a video of Cuba is uploaded to his channel that has over 3,000,000 visits.

Luis is a member of different photographic associations in Cuba and Spain.

PhotoXpeditions reserves the right of canceling the workshop at any time if the minimum amount of students required for the workshop is not reached. If a workshop needs to be cancelled for this reason, a full refund will be given to all participants.

If you need more information or have questions, give us a call or drop us an email, we will respond promptly.

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## **TERMS & CONDITIONS**

To reserve space in this workshop, a \$500 per person deposit is required at the time of making the reservation. Deposits are due no later than 90 days prior to departure. Final payment is due no later than 60 days prior to departure unless indicated otherwise in the description of the tour or workshop. All payments must be made by credit card or wire transfer to Photo Xpeditions, LLC, and instructions for payments will be mailed upon confirmation of participation.

Photo Xpeditions reserves the right to cancel a reservation if full payment has not been received by 60 days prior to departure. For reservations made within 60 days of the departure date, full payment is required when the reservation is accepted. All cancellation notices must be received in writing and will become effective as of the date of the postmark. If you cancel 90 days or more prior to departure, a refund less an administrative fee equal to 50% of your deposit will be made. Per person charges for cancellations that occur less than 90 days prior to departure are as follows:

60–90 days prior to departure: 100% of your deposit amount;

45–60 days prior to departure: 50% of the expedition cost;

45 or fewer days prior to departure: 100% of the workshop cost.