



have fun. help people.

Cuba

The Curtain Lifted About your Program



“There comes a point in a person’s life when you start asking yourself: what difference am I making in this world? I decided to put my time into something worthwhile.”

- Gayle Harrod

Cuba: The Curtain Lifted Volunteer Vacation

Introduction to Cuba

Cuba, officially the Republic of Cuba is a country in the Caribbean comprising the main island of Cuba, the Isla de la Juventud and several archipelagos. Havana is Cuba's capital and its largest city. The United States is to the north of Cuba 150 km (93 mi) away, the Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands to the northeast, Mexico to the west 210 km (130 mi) away, the Cayman Islands and Jamaica to the south and Haiti to the southeast.



Cuba was inhabited by Amerindian tribes before the landing of explorer Christopher Columbus in 1492, who claimed it for the Kingdom of Spain. Cuba remained a colony of Spain until the Spanish–American War of 1898, after which it gained nominal independence as a de facto U.S. protectorate in 1902. The fragile republic endured increasingly radical politics and social strife, and despite efforts to strengthen its democratic system, Cuba came under the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1952. Growing unrest and instability led to Batista's ousting in January 1959 by the July 26 movement, which afterwards established a government under the leadership of Fidel Castro. Since 1965 the country has been governed by the Communist Party of Cuba.

The United States embargo against Cuba (in Cuba called el bloqueo, "the blockade") is a commercial, economic, and financial embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba. An embargo was first imposed by the United States on Cuba on October 19th, 1960 (almost two years after the Batista regime was deposed by the Cuban Revolution) when the U.S. placed an embargo on exports to Cuba except for food and medicine after Cuba nationalized American-owned Cuban oil refineries without compensation. Cuba nationalized the refineries following Eisenhower's decision to cancel 700,000 tons of sugar imports from Cuba to the U.S. and refused to export oil to the island, leaving it reliant on Russian crude oil. All American oil companies refused to refine Russian oil, leading the Cuban government to nationalize the refineries. On February 7th, 1962, the embargo was extended to include almost all imports.

Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean and, with over 11 million inhabitants, the second-most populous after Hispaniola. It is a multi ethnic country whose people, culture and customs derive from diverse origins, including the aboriginal Taíno and Ciboney peoples, the long period of Spanish colonialism, the introduction of African slaves, and a close relationship with the Soviet Union in the Cold War.


Cuba is ranked very high for human development by the United Nations, and high for health and education. In 2015, it became the first country to eradicate mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis, a milestone hailed by the World Health Organization as "one of the greatest public health achievements possible".



Although home to more than 11 million people, Cuban culture has been shrouded in mystery to most North Americans because of prolonged economic and political strain between the United States and Cuba. The Care for Cuba program pulls back the curtains on this Caribbean culture and gives volunteers a clear look at the beauties, struggles, and determination of the Cuban people. Cubanos are proud, educated, and often quite happy to share opinions. Isolated for years due to the "blockade" (as Cubans refer to the embargo the US imposed against the Communist state), their culture has been influenced by many cultures, none perhaps as heavily as Spain, Africa and the United States. Full of music, derelict buildings, joy and sorrow, the country offers few material pleasures but immense humanitarian rewards.

There has never been a more exciting time to take part in volunteer travel in Cuba! Imagine a culture where everyone is literate and has access to free medical care, no starving people. This is the Cuba of today, though it is in the midst of huge changes. In stark contrast to North America, its southern neighbor has also offered almost no material consumer goods. Experience this now, before long anticipated change comes with the passing of the Fidel Castro generation. Open music in streets everywhere, hardly any car traffic, smiles, most visitors are enchanted with a world unlike any they could imagine. The embargo has meant severely restricted commerce, and access to affordable food, but has also preserved and insulated a culture unique in the world. However with the recent coming of cruise ships and US flight routes, less restricted travel for Cubans to the US, and changing Cuba domestic policy allowing home ownership, home restaurants and home rental to tourists, many changes are well under way. If you walk in Havana Vieja on a day when a cruise ship is docked, be prepared to feel the crowds, trash and even the occasional person asking openly for money. Wi-fi spots are popping up, and you will see Cubans huddled nearby them checking their newly acquired phones. Seemingly every day a new airline begins service into Cuba and a new phone service will function (though at exorbitant rates). Tourist funds have meant long overdue restoration to gorgeous architecture, such as to the Capitol building. They stand in stark contrast to the majority of the island's still crumbling, achingly beautiful colonial buildings.

The line between what visitors think of as restaurants and the traditional home-based "paladar" has virtually vanished as food options have multiplied at an unprecedented rate. What hasn't changed is the fierce pride of the Cuban people in its culture, the love of music, talk, playing baseball, and strolling the malecon to wash away the concerns of everyday life



A historic shift in relations between the two countries are still being delineated.

For a more detailed understanding of the complicated history of the Cuba-U.S. relationship, we HIGHLY recommend this short 5 minute video:

<http://www.vox.com/2016/4/12/11411358/cuba-opening-history-video>

Changes in U.S. - Cuban relations

Globe Aware programs will continue under the newly released regulations.

On June 16, 2017, the Trump administration released new rules related to US citizens traveling to Cuba:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2017/06/16/fact-sheet-cuba-policy>

Here is a list of FAQs related to his announcement:

https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/cuba_faqs_20170616.pdf

How will these affect Globe Aware programs?

- Changes to non-business travelers will not take effect until the new regulations are issued, which is expected to be September 16th, 2017. This means programs prior to this date will not be affected.
- The new regulations will prohibit *individuals* (as opposed to groups) from traveling to Cuba under the people-to-people license; therefore Globe Aware programs are *not* affected by this provision. Globe Aware programs are educational programs that do not involve academic study pursuant to a degree, they *do* take place under the auspices of an organization (Globe Aware) that is subject to US jurisdiction that promotes meaningful people-to-people contact;
- A Globe Aware coordinator has always and will continue to accompany each group on a full-time schedule of educational exchange activities
- The changes do NOT change how US citizens travel to Cuba via airlines or cruise ship as they relate to Globe Aware programs
- As Globe Aware volunteers do not stay in government run hotels, they are not affected by the new provision disallowing government-run hotel stays.
- The biggest anticipated changes will be relating to the licensing process and enforcement of those regulations that are expected to be announced in mid September 2017. What we do not know yet is:
 - Will there be an additional cost to apply, and if so, what is it?
 - What is the lead time and completion time for the application process? (perhaps OFAC will begin processing in January of 2018 or maybe immediately or ? Maybe they will take 24 hours to process or maybe they will take

a year? Who knows?)

- What does the application process entail (1 page, 30 pages, appear in person with passport, etc?)
- In the likely event that additional resources are needed for the application cost and process, this will directly affect the cost per person of the program.

Lastly, if you have registered for a program that begins AFTER September 16, 2017; the new regulations say, "Provided that the traveler has already completed at least one travel-related transaction (such as purchasing a flight or reserving accommodation) prior to the President's announcement on June 16, 2017, all additional travel-related transactions for that trip, whether the trip occurs before or after OFAC's new regulations are issued, would also be authorized." Therefore, as long as you have registered for our program BEFORE June 16th, 2017, we have already reserved your accommodation and your program will not be affected.

Most agencies and organizations will need the coming months to iron out and fully comprehend and absorb the changes. The following materials are intended to be a primer for you, but we expect further changes to come and will continue to notify you.

There are plans for US dollars to be accepted, as well as US based financial instruments such as credit cards and ATMs, however no dates have been announced for when these will be ready. In the meantime, and as of "press time" when this document was created in April 2016, US dollars (cash only) are accepted, but comes with a 10% penalty to convert.

One of the quick changes that has already gone into effect is that now American citizens can bring home up to \$400 worth of goods acquired in Cuba for personal use. This includes no more than \$100 worth of alcohol or tobacco products.

US Citizens need to know that the license situation is changing rapidly. As a part of this program, you need to know that your INTENT for traveling is that you are here on a PEOPLE TO PEOPLE License. You are on a fully booked schedule. We have never had a single case in which a volunteer program we organize resulted in criminal prosecution or any other kind of unwanted liabilities for any of our volunteers.

Before you Go, Mandatory items to bring to Cuba

- Passport from any nation. You should have at least 6 months remaining validity on your passport.
- Airline tickets
- Cuban tourist card (you will receive this from your flight attendant while on the plane), more on this below.
- Money
- Personal effects (see packing tips for other considerations)
- Any related paperwork from your airline
- Proof of insurance - this is attached to your email as well, please make sure you PRINT this and bring with you.

Documents

You should bring your passport, a photocopy of your passport, your flight tickets and Cuban tourist card. Depending on which airline you booked your ticket through, they will have emailed you about how to obtain this tourist card in advance. Some Mexican airlines, however, will sell you this card while you are in line checking in for your flight to Cuba, paid in \$US for about \$35. The best thing to do is *ask your airline* about the current appropriate procedure for obtaining your Cuba Tourist card. They will cost between \$35 and \$100 per person. As of summer 2017, American Airlines can still sell you the tourist card upon arrival to check in for your flight, but it comes with a roughly \$25 higher cost.

Below is an example of a Cuban Tourist Visa (sometimes referred to as a Cuban Visitors Card). It is scored vertically in the center. Cuban Immigration retains one half. You keep the other half, together with your passport, during your stay on the island. You return your half to Cuban Immigration when you leave. Don't lose it. You'll have to replace it, resulting in extra costs, delays and the possibility of missing your flight home.

REPÚBLICA DE CUBA
VISA - TARJETA DEL TURISTA
J 145091

APellidos
LAST NAME
NOM
NAME
Last Name

NOMBRE
FIRST NAME
PRENOM
VORNAME
First Name

FECHA DE NACIMIENTO
DATE OF BIRTH
DATE DE NAISSANCE
GEBURTSDATUM
28 11 54 birthdate

VERAL DORSO
SEE BACK
VOIR AU DOS
SIEHERÜCKSEITE

PASAPORTE
PASSPORT
PASSEPORT
REISEPASS
No. Passport No.

Ciudadanía
CITIZENSHIP
NATIONALITÉ
STAATSBÜRGERSCHAFT
United States

USO OFICIAL
ENTRADA

All travelers require this card to enter Cuba, together with a current passport (from any nation). The card is valid for 90 days for Canadians and can be renewed in Cuba for another 90 days. It is valid for Americans for 30 days and can be renewed for an additional 30 days in Cuba.

A Cuban tourist card allows its holder to stay in Cuba for 90 days from the date of entry onto the island, and is valid for one entry into Cuba. For a stay of more than 90 days, one can request an extension for another three months at any tourism office in Cuba, for a maximum stay of six months. Children, regardless of their age, also require a tourist card, even if they are registered on their parents passports.

If you are flying with a Canadian carrier, your Cuban Tourist Card is included in the cost of your air ticket. Your flight steward hands them out on the airplane while en route to Cuba. It is not distributed prior.

If you are flying on Cubana or any other national carrier you'll have to purchase a Cuban Tourist Visa prior to departure to Cuba. Cards are available for purchase at or near your respective airline check-in counter.

If departing from Cancun, the tourist card can typically be purchased at the airline desk opposite the check in area. The cost is \$20 USD and the attendant will most likely fill out the card for you. Some airlines, such as Cubana, do not include Mexico departure tax in the cost of your airline ticket. At the time of writing the cost is \$23 USD.

We have also had reports of different costs for the tourist card when arranging flights through U.S. carriers, sometimes up to \$85 USD. Each airline / country of departure will be different so make sure you are aware of this.

It is important that you print flight itinerary for all flights coming in and out of Cuba. Please also print onward travel out of Mexico if that is your first destination when flying out of Cuba. Travelers have recently been asked to provide this at check-in, specifically when flying Cubana Air.

It is not uncommon to wait at baggage claim for extended amounts of time. Our coordinator is aware of this and will wait for you despite the possible delays. If you are unable to find our coordinator upon passing through customs there is a phone available at the infotur desk in the center of the exit terminal. The cost is typically one CUC to make a call. There are money exchange stations to the left and right when you go through the exit doors of the airport.

IMPORTANT When filling out your Cuban Tourist Card, take care not to make mistakes. If you do make a mistake, don't cross it out! It will result in your card being rejected. Instead enter the correct information next to the appropriate category.

If your card is damaged or has too many corrections you'll likely have purchase a new one prior to departure, or upon arrival in Cuba. For non- U.S. citizens entering and exiting Cuba is no different than any other destination, but for U.S. citizens it can be much more daunting given the changing bilateral political relationship with Cuba.

Some U.S. citizens who travel to Cuba also choose to get to Cuba via a third country, most often Mexico, Canada, or the Bahamas. If you choose to do this it is advisable to secure your airfare directly with an airline or travel agency outside the U.S. If you do make arrangements through a third country travel agency it is best to wire the money via western union rather than use your credit card.

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU FILL OUT YOUR CARD SAYING YOU ARE VISITING AS A TOURIST, NOT A VOLUNTEER. You should have at least 6 months remaining validity on your passport.

Projects and Expectations

Globe Aware's mission is to promote cultural awareness and sustainability. Cuba itself, due to its low infant mortality, high life expectancy, access to education, medical care, and human resources, generally takes the view that they are not in need of volunteers. The official stance of the Cuban government is that their economic issues stem from the embargo, which they refer to as "the blockade." Hence unlike most Globe Aware programs, while we engage in three work projects throughout the week, we focus more time than usual on the people-to-people cultural awareness part of our mission. You will get fantastic insight into how social issues are being addressed in terms of education, medical care and the like, and get a deep understanding of the real beauties and challenges of the Cuban culture.

What to Expect while in Cuba: Everything is very different: Language, climate, customs and demeanor. Cubans are ultra courteous, effusive, candid and have a great sense of humor. All of the small materials conveniences and services we take for granted are absent at every level on the island. While Cubans are generally punctual, delays are common because of transportation and communications problems. Yet the latter is not typical for our programs. Extreme shortages of everything require great innovation. Cubans have risen to the task. Practical problem solving skills are an asset especially when combined with patience and understanding. We advise going with the flow with eyes wide open until you get a lay of the land.

Words from wise travelers : If you go to Cuba looking for issues you will be all consumed, as they exist in abundance. On the other hand, if you go in the spirit of learning about a wonderful people and unique culture, and are prepared to fully engage and contribute, your rewards will be unequalled. The Cubans are as happy to have you as their guests as you are about getting to know them.

With the ever changing regulations in place in Cuba, projects may change as more options become available to our volunteers. Your coordinator will go over the itinerary with you the first night of your program. Please feel free to ask any and all questions about your itinerary - your coordinator will be happy to clear up any queries.

To understand the world of volunteering in Cuba, it is important to understand how the role of the Cuban government makes this program different from any other. In most nations, we work directly with grassroots, locally organized nonprofits who have identified a need they have. In Cuba, these entities are not allowed, as the government owns and manages everything. Additionally, because of the tricky past the Cuban government has had with the United States, accepting help from others, particularly the United States is particularly repugnant. They point to the fact that once they yoked themselves free of US control, their literacy and healthcare access went dramatically up, and in many cases surpasses that of North Americas. To accept volunteers would be a way of admitting inferiority, in some sense. All their troubles have basically been blamed on the embargo, which we are not here to argue for or against.

Globe Aware participants can expect to volunteer in the three following areas. The time spent at each location can differ from week to week as well as the activities at each project location. Your coordinator will go over the itinerary with you your first night in Havana.

Elderly Center: The elderly in Cuba generally have housing, food and healthcare provided, but otherwise do not have much offered to them. Globe Aware works with one of the government elderly centers to help provide activities that fall into one of these categories: rehabilitation, cultural or general amusement. They are eager to interact with our participants and visiting the center has been the highlight for many program participants.

Club de Madres: There is a group of about 15 mothers of children with Down Syndrome that meet on a regular basis. We meet with them to engage in a variety of activities, from working side by side on our projects to doing recreational and physical activities such as parachute games. Your funds also pay for the group to be able to come to and from wherever we are. On occasion, we may meet with them at the Culture House near their neighborhood, and other times we transport them to the Cristo Project.



Cristo Project: this is a community project that was founded by a villager across the channel from Havana. He brought the entire community together to first stabilize the hillside above their village by planting various trees after a damaging landslide. He noticed how this brought the community together and started to expand the project by planting many medicinal plants, cooking herbs, fruit trees, etc. They now host educational sessions for students and villagers to learn about the benefits of all the different plants and encourage and teach them about urban/backyard gardening. Volunteers join this site and help with a variety of different projects. At the moment, we are working on building up the infrastructure to help the project become self-sustaining. We have built a coconut stand where they can sell coconuts to tourists and volunteers; built pathways to explore the hillside, constructed shaded areas and benches when hosting classes and are currently working on setting up a small kitchen to sell fresh meals. The funds go directly back into the project and helps Mr. Rojas continue to provide classes and community events at the project site. Accessed by a roughly 15-minute ferry ride and a 15-minute walk.

Given the changing nature of their society, please understand that any part of this could expand, change or disappear at any moment. In other words, an open mind, and healthy dose of flexibility is always a good idea.

Leisure Activities

A number of planned cultural activities are already included in the itinerary for your volunteer vacation week. Please review your sample itinerary for a list of the sites that will likely be included and use this as a guide before you plan any additional independent excursions that you may take before or after the program.

Some examples of planned activities :

- Calle Obispo Havana Vieja cultural overview
- Witnessing the Cañonazo colonial ceremony officially closing the Havana port
- Visit the Malecón (Boardwalk)
- Cooking lesson(s)
- Visiting the Afro-Caribbean mural art project at Callejón de Hamel
- Paseo del Prado
- Viñales, a unique landscape of “mogotes” (karst formations), one of Cuba’s most fertile agricultural areas to learn about the role of tobacco in Cuba’s economy.
- Boat tour of river through Viñales caves in Pinar del Río “Cueva del Indio”
- Las Terrazas Orchids Eco project visit, part of Cuban government reforestation project
- Muraleando Community Art Project



Packing Information

Cuba restricts total incoming luggage weight to 30 kilos (66 pounds). If you bring more you could be subject to a 10.00 CUC (Cuban Convertible Peso) surcharge per extra kilo (2.2 pounds). An additional 10-kilo (22 pound) allowance is made for donations of medicines and medical items. The best rule is to pack once, then cut it by

half. Airline weight limits change constantly. Check with your airline prior to packing in order to avoid overweight luggage fees. Consider leaving some space for humanitarian donations.

Please note that the packing list is meant as a guideline. There is no single item that you can't live without for one week. Pack what you think you will need to be comfortable, but do not get preoccupied about items that you didn't bring, weren't on the list, etc. Everyone has different opinions about essential items!


Clothing

Cuba is a wonderfully warm, tropical island, so cotton and other light fabrics are ideal for most activities. Keep in mind, however, that resorts, restaurants, tour buses and other public areas are generally air conditioned. During wintertime, which is slightly cooler, we recommend bringing a light coat or a sweater. For the rainy season (May to October) an umbrella will come in handy.

Casual is the order of the day in Cuba. However, visitors who want to experience elegant dining, theater and other sophisticated entertainment you should come prepared to dress sharp for those occasions. Some volunteers have found helpful bringing work gloves that may get dirty, Make sure to pack enough clothes to be comfortable, considering that you may get dirty doing volunteer work.

Suggested items:

- If you have a cell phone, download the free app MAPS.ME and select Havana maps. Download PRIOR to coming to Cuba. If you turn off your cell data and wifi, it will use GPS satellites for free and is *incredibly* useful for getting around Havana in a very clear, accurate way
- Socks and plenty of underwear
- Shirts and tshirts
- Pants and shorts
- Sweater or light jacket
- Swimsuit and towel
- Comfortable walking shoes (don't break in new shoes on this trip)
- Waterproof sandals
- Skirts or slacks for evening events (if you plan on attending any)
- Cap or sun hat (purchase in Cuba)
- Prescription glasses.
- Belt, watch, alarm clock, fanny pack or money belt
- Umbrella or rain poncho - check the weather before you go



Less is better
when traveling to
Cuba

Medicine and Hygiene

- Face cloth, shampoo, conditioner, hairspray, comb, hairbrush (avoid hair dryers and irons).
- Toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, mouthwash
- Shaver and supplies
- Band Aids or a miniature first aid kit
- One roll of **toilet paper** - **note it may not be available at all in public bathrooms** - sanitary napkins or tampons, condoms
- Earplugs (if trouble sleeping)
- If you are sensitive to foreign food and water bring Kaopectate or Imodium
- If you use prescription drugs, bring enough to cover your stay
- Deodorant, fragrance, moisturizer
- Fingernail clippers, lip balm
- Mosquito repellent

Other handy travel items

- Electricity is 110 and 220 AC. A 220 AC adapter may be helpful.
- Camera, lots of film, memory, batteries, iPod, CDs, batteries

- Rubber bands, plastic bags, super glue, safety pins, sewing kit
- Snacks, dried fruits and nuts, Ziploc bags
- Pocketknife (pack in check-in suitcase), cigarette lighter, candle
- Novel, guide book, Spanish dictionary, phrase book, notebook, pencils, pens.

Blankets, towels or a sleeping bag may help you be more comfortable, as the bedding or linens may not be what you are accustomed to. The vast majority of volunteers find the sheets and blankets completely satisfactory and feel that taking up extra luggage space isn't worth the cost or effort, though this is a personal decision. Others have brought "travel blankets" or "sleep sacks" which are much easier to pack. You may enjoy bringing games or books for free time.

Permitted items: You can take photographic and video cameras, personal DVD, PDA and game device, cell phones, including ones that are GPS enabled (all are costly to use), laptops, MP3 players, hair dryers, electric shavers, binoculars, portable radio receivers, musical instruments, and sound recording devices FOR PERSONAL USE. If you take more than one of the above items, Cuban Customs may ask you if you intend to leave them on the island. If you do, tariffs may apply/ If you take more than the equivalent of \$5,000 USD in cash, you'll need to declare it. Prescription medicines should remain in their original containers with labels intact.

Prohibited items: Narcotics, explosives, pornography, anti-Cuba literature, stand-alone GPS devices, walkie-talkies, and items that might be considered weapons.

Important: When entering Cuba do not declare any items you intend to leave behind as donations as it could result in lengthy delays and possible confiscation of materials. If your luggage is searched and you are questioned as to why you are bringing 100 pencils (for example), say, "they are for friends" and leave it at that. The word **donation** raises concerns because, in the past, people from Miami have used this method to bring harmful things into Cuba. In the unlikely event that your donations are confiscated rest assured they will be distributed to Cubans most in need. Luggage inspections rarely happen unless your bags exceed weight limits.

Donations and Suggested Gifts for your New Cuban Friends

Please understand that no gifts or donations are expected, but as we are often asked this question, we include this information here. All donations should be overseen by your coordinator.

The words "charity" and "donations" are ugly words in Cuba, implying that someone is somehow in a superior or inferior position. For decades the Cuban people have been told that all of their problems are due to the American embargo. They are proud of their exceptionally high access to education and healthcare, and their pride can be hurt. Rather than thinking of the below items as "donations", think and refer to them as **Gifts of Friendship**. Cubans welcome and need these gifts. Small gift giving is an island custom. While on tour, you will make many new friends. Consider small gifts such as aspirin, multiple vitamins, makeup, manicure and sewing kits, perfume, chocolate, watches, wallets, key chains, purses, scarves, jewelry, pen sets and other things that you yourself would like.

Most needed currently:

For Elderly: Shampoo, soap, deodorant, toothpaste, etc. They are provided meals at the center, but not any type of personal health supplies. Great from the travel section at your grocery or convenience store.

For the kids at El Cristo: Toys or stuffed animals for the class. Hair scrunchies, stickers, anything small and fun, it is mostly girls who come to the class though there are a few boys.

El Cristo: Gardening tools and gloves

ANY type of art supplies, markers, crafts etc.

School donations most needed are pens, calculators, pencils, erasers, memory sticks, candles, flashlights, markers, note pads, stuffed animals, games, dolls, toy trucks and cars. Also appreciated is toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, shampoo and good quality used clothing and shoes. Baseball bats, balls and gloves are

also very popular.

We strongly advise against handing out donations or money to individuals you meet on the street. In areas frequented by tourists, professional scammers attempt to fleece foreign guests with scripted sob stories that win them cash or items they then sell on the black market, both resulting in hundreds of dollars every week.

Please do not feel obliged to bring anything additional. We include this section as we are often asked what people can bring.

However, tipping is different. At the end of your stay, you might feel inclined to give something to community hosts who have been particularly helpful or courteous. More on tipping below.

Please be aware that bringing gifts can also be awkward. In some instances, receiving gifts can effect the recipients' pride negatively. This is not always the case. Do try and consider when donating used clothes, particularly those used during the program, if you feel the local community members would actually want them. It is best to discuss donations with the coordinator for these reasons. There are cases that donations are more readily accepted, however there are often still local cultural nuances that can make the act of giving complicated. In order to preserve pride, please discuss how your donations can be presented with the coordinator. **Please note you are not expected to bring anything.**

Should you decide you do want to bring gifts, you may also consider: toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, soap, linens, kitchen utensils, flashlights with batteries, children's books, clothing - shoes, flip flops for kids, underwear, t-shirts, socks- , school supplies like pencils, pens, and educational toys or toys that do not require batteries - UNO, Connect Four, board games, cards, Jenga, Rummikub, dominoes, jump ropes, balls - of any kind especially baseball and soccer. If possible used laptops are always a great donation. You may also want to leave behind the items you used during the week - clothes, towels, linens if you brought them.

We discourage giving any more money than you are already giving to the program and community via your program fee. Globe Aware funds are spent on program expenses, as opposed to giving cash donations -- this helps ensure that the money is being spent in meaningful ways. We understand the good intentions of our volunteers. Giving cash out to community members contradicts the goal of promoting sustainability, promotes expectations that foreigners are 'made of money' and can create an atmosphere that begging may solve a community's challenges.


Because of the nature of our frequent contributions to the community, it has come to our attention that occasionally locals, even staff, will solicit personal contact information to solicit donations after your return home. We strongly discourage giving personal contact information/social media for this reason. When given outside the context of a US based nonprofit, there is no accountability needed or required on the end of the recipient, nor is there any special tax deduction for your donation. We are eager to keep you abreast of goings on with this project, which we post on our facebook page and in newsletters and are happy to keep in contact with you through our official channels and our home office.

However, if you feel like giving a gratuity to your coordinator this will be very appreciated though not necessary.

Tipping

None is expected or required, but if you feel inclined, feel good about tipping – everyone benefits. Cuban tourist staff share tips with their co-workers who don't have access to them, and they all donate a portion of their tips to the national health and education systems. It's common to tip taxis 10%, and others \$1-\$2 per day of service.

Feel good about tipping. Please do not tip your guide, chambermaids or restaurant staff with leftovers, national pesos or gifts in place of the Cuban Convertible Peso - CUCs are the preferred currency. Hint: Tip your guide and bus driver at the end of the tour.



We discourage cash donations and distributing money in all of our communities.

Note that some restrooms have an attendant who expects a tip (about \$0.25 CUC is fine) for use of facilities.

Accommodations

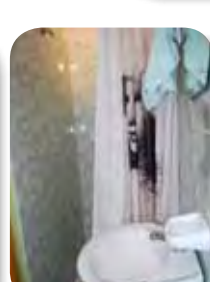
Volunteers will stay in one of several houses, otherwise known as “casa particular”. They are located in the same area, near the historic center of Old Havana. A few minutes’ walk from the capitol and 10 minutes from Plaza Vieja. All rooms are equipped with air conditioning. Breakfast is served every morning at the Casa Particular that you are staying in. This typically includes fruit, bread, eggs, and coffee. Please bring your map with you so that our coordinator will be able to show you exactly where and how to get to vital meet-up locations, recommended restaurants, and interesting parts of the city to explore in your free time.



If you need an address to fill out forms or give out to friends and family, use the following address which is our MAIN accommodations: Monserrate No 483 entre Muralla y Brasil (Teniente Rey, Ave de las Misiones). but note this may not be the actual place where you stay, as spots are assigned on a first come first served basis. If you registered after those spots were filled, you

will be housed at a nearby casa particular with very similar standards. The usual practice is for all to meet at El Floridita, a nearby spot made famous by Hemingway, steps from a well-known pedestrian street.

Some photos of the accommodations so you know what to expect:



Transportation

For personal transportation, take an official taxi such as Pana Taxi (855-5555). Private cabs are simply not worth the hassle, nor are they cheaper!

Electricity

Cuba's electricity standard is 110 volts (60 Hz) - same as USA. However, we strongly discourage bringing items that require high electrical use such as blow dryers.

Time

Eastern time is observed across Cuba, as in Toronto, New York and Miami.

Laundry

You should not need to do laundry on a week long trip but if necessary, there is a housekeeper at your accommodations who can do your laundry for a modest fee.

Food

The most common foods found in Cuban cuisine include pork, chicken, rice, beans, tomatoes, and lettuce. Yuca (also known as tapioca or cassava), is a native root vegetable that is also commonly available, as is malanga, a large-leafed root vegetable like taro. Hot spices and chili peppers are not used in Cuban cooking. Dishes are most commonly seasoned with a bit of garlic and onions. If you like spicy or really seasoned foods, it is not a bad idea to bring your own. You are not likely to ever find more than ketchup. Its not a bad idea to bring some granola bars or Doritos, etc, as you will not come across these types of snacks. Keep in mind in this Communist run country, for many reasons, there is no access to commercial items.

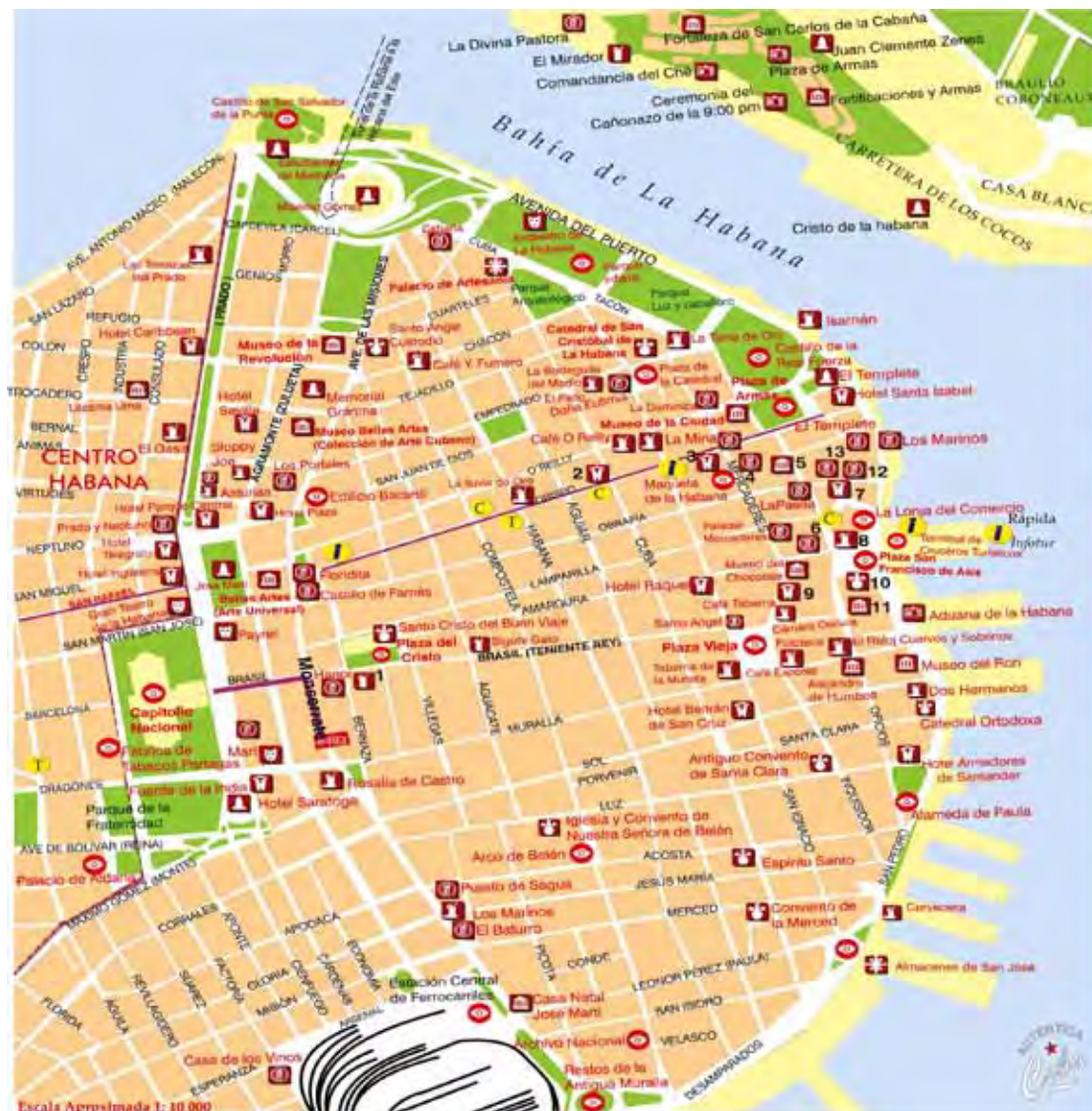


Fresh vegetables tend to be scarce, and although Cuba is an island most tourists will be disappointed to find so few fish dishes, as Cubans tend to be avid meat eaters. In addition, vegetarians should be warned that due to a shortage of vegetable oil that most food is cooked with lard, or animal fat.

The most common dish is considered to be carne asada (roasted meat). Other notable native dishes include fritura de maiz (corn fritters snacks), fufu (boiled green bananas mashed into a paste and seasoned with salt), and ajiaco (a Cuban meat, garlic, and vegetable stew). Some have suggested having kool-aid type packets, or Crystal light, to flavor the water to make their beverages more interesting.

Most of your meals will be taken as planned and included in the itinerary. However, there are several meals that will be taken independently. Please refer to your itinerary for details. Our coordinators can help with suggestions. Government owned eateries cost \$20 to \$30 per meal and are generally one of about 4 options. Paladares are private homes turned into restaurants, many of which do not look like homes and more like traditional restaurants, often with patio tables and umbrellas. If you would like to experience those which feel less commercial tell your coordinator who can make some recommendations. Meals at Paladares should cost between \$5 and \$12; it is quite safe, interesting. As you will be traveling in a group, you may well decide to team up with a few travelers as you embark on this traditional, fun, and well known pastime of venturing out to see where your meal will come from. It is always more generous and more inventive than almost all other options.

Many volunteers ask about recommended paladares / private home restaurants. We have included a list of our coordinator's favorites. We have also include a local map of the area. A hard copy will be sent to you - please make sure you **BRING IT WITH YOU**. This list is NOT exhaustive nor is it essential. as you will see many others everywhere you look.



LA HABANA VIEJA

- Lugares de interés
- Hotel
- Monumentos
- Restaurantes
- Artesanía
- Iglesias
- Cafeterías y Bares
- Información al Turismo
- Casas de Cambio
- Telepunto

Con números se representan en el mapa:

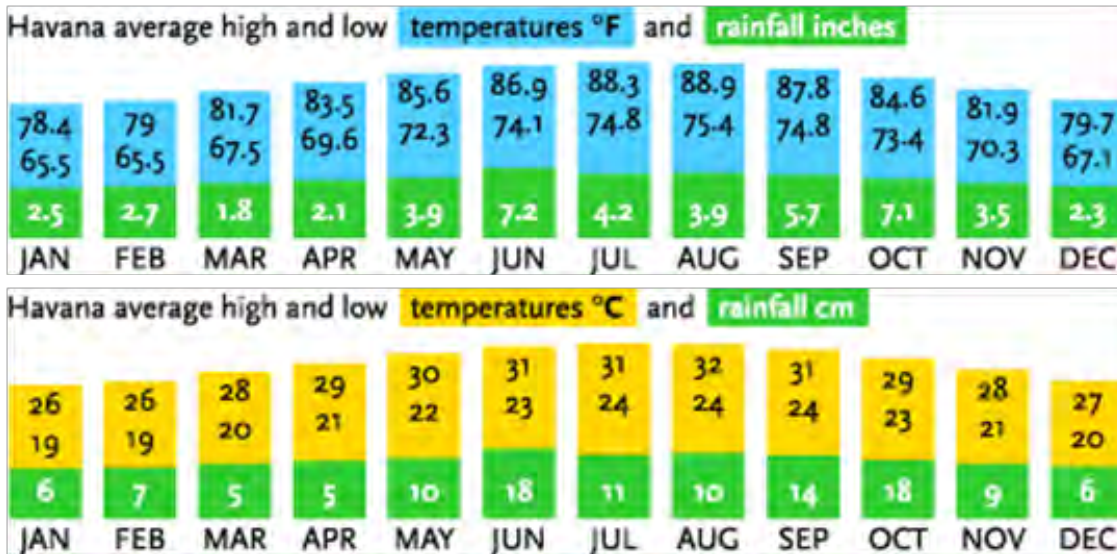
1. Bar Chanchullero
2. Hotel Florida
3. Hotel Ambos Mundos
4. La Torre de Marfil
5. Museo del Automóvil
6. Café el Oriente
7. Hostal Valencia y Comendador
8. El Mercurio
9. Mesón de la Flota
10. Basílica Menor
11. Museo de Arte religioso
12. El Bodegón de Honda
13. Mamainé

- Cafe Paris - Calle Obispo esquina a Mercaderes. Habana Vieja
- El Figaro - Aguilar 18 y Ave de las Misiones. Habana Vieja
- Km 0 - Calle Monserrate esquina a Teniente Rey. Habana Vieja
- Jardin del Oriente - Calle Amargura entre Mercaderes y Oficios. Habana Vieja
- Paladar Doña Eutimia - Plaza de la Catedral, Callejón de la Gráfica. Habana Vieja
- Café el Escorial - Plaza Vieja Calle Teniente Rey esquina Mercaderes. Habana Vieja
- Restaurant Los Marinos - Ave Del Puerto y Justiz
- Paladar los Mercaderes - Mercaderes #207 entre Lamparilla y Amargura
- Complejo Turistico 1830 - Malecón y Calle 22, Vedado, Plaza de la Revolución
- Bar-Restaurante La Torre - Calle 17 esquina A M, Edif. Fosca, piso 33, Vedado, Plaza de la Revolución

Weather

Caribbean Weather! Be prepared for warm weather and a chance of brief, but intense rain in the late afternoons during summer season when temperature peaks just after midday. Relative humidity reaches highest during the first hours of the morning and late afternoon. Fall, winter and spring are just great!

Global warming has made conditions less predictable - it is always a good idea to double check the weather online before you go.



Photography and Film

Photos and videos can be taken freely, except in restricted areas, such as military zones. Some museums may also have restrictions or request a fee. Be considerate and avoid embarrassment, ask first.

Money Matters in Cuba



No credit card, debit card, or Travelers Cheques issued by a bank that has any connection with the United States is accepted in Cuba. Therefore, cash or funds brought in any form NOT from a US based institution is essential. US based cash is accepted and convertible to the local CUC, however Euros are preferred.

Keep in mind that accommodations, some of the meals, bottled water, in country transport, medical insurance, leisure activities are all provided. Most people find they only need incidental funds to cover the cost of souvenirs, sunscreen, alcohol, usually less than \$400 per week, however because getting more currency is so difficult, we suggest you bring about double what you think you might need. Most of our accommodations now feature safety lock boxes where you can store cash. You will need approximately \$50-\$100 of this for the 5 dinners taken independently. Make sure you save any exchange receipts to exchange whatever remaining CUC's you might have at the end of the trip, you will often need to show that you converted the first time in order to convert back, however there will be a fee for this.

The Cuban convertible peso (CUC) is the only currency used by island visitors. All goods and services are priced and paid for in the CUC, including meals, gratuities, etc. The CUC is pegged to the value of the \$m but those converting dollars are punished with a roughly 15% "penalty" meaning the purchasing power of the CUC in Cuba is similar to about %85 of value of the US dollar. This penalty could be eased at any time, though much depends on the current diplomatic relations. Given the Trump administration's stances on Cuba, this penalty is unlikely to go away under this administration. **Again, U.S. based credit cards and ATMs will NOT work in Cuba.**



The CUC benchmarked to the US dollar at one-to-one: One CUC = One US dollar. However, changing US dollars into CUCs carries a fee. You should know that the extra percentage you are paying is nominal in the overall value of seeing this country at such a unique time in history. Your coordinator will take you buy to CADECA to exchange funds. Note that in January 2015 Mastercard said the card would be taken in Cuba. As of June 2017, the card is still not working on the island. This could

change at any moment.

If you take Canadian dollars, Euros, GBP sterling or Swiss francs there is no additional fee to convert them. In doing so, you'll increase your purchasing power by about eight percent (8%) overall.

Warning: Change your money into CUC at a bank, at your hotel, or at a CADECA (Casas de Cambio SA - exchange bureau). Never exchange your money on the street or through an individual Cuban (including your guide).

We suggest a BARE minimum of \$50-\$75 a day to cover meals and entertainment not included in your package, gratuities, gifts, long distance calls and internet. In the event of an emergency, you can have a friend in the US send you about \$2000 via Western Union. If you needed more than that, you would have to get several friends or family to each send you funds. It is an expensive option costing around \$150 for each transmission, and each person can only exercise this option once every 90 days.

Cigars in Cuba

Most visitors to Cuba that spend significant time off of a tourist bus will be approached several times by individuals selling fake Cohibas. This is a long-standing tradition. Please try not to think of the sellers as evil or criminals. Try not to hold any bad feelings toward them. Remember they have gone decades without access to majority of basic goods you may take for granted. Cubans never know when the government might fail them again, as they did in the 90s when even access to basic food was incredibly scarce. Cubans see this as a mechanism for getting by in life with few avenues open to them. Usually the person says they have a friend in a factory, or that they have ties to the government. Many visitors buy them anyway, as their own sort of unique souvenir. If you want to be certain they are genuine, you must buy them in a shop clearly owned by the government. There are many videos out there explaining how you can spot a fake. Starting October 17th, 2016, travelers can purchase unlimited quantities of Cuban rum and cigars in any country where they are sold so long as they are for personal consumption.

Phone and Internet

Please do not plan to spend a lot of time on the phone or internet during your short volunteer week. You may make calls and check email during your free time, though you may find it is not all that convenient. Some US phones have started to work in Cuba (such as AT&T and Verizon) but are incredibly costly to operate, but the island has incredibly unreliable cell towers. Signals are spotty at best. We suggest purchasing a phone card on the island and using local services if you must make phone calls while in Cuba. There are old fashioned payphones everywhere, but in the event of an emergency, we recommend going to the closest hotel and using their business center to make calls. The Sarasota hotel is within two blocks of where most our volunteers will stay and it has a business center. Also your coordinator can help you get credit for a wi-fi scratch off card to use at ETESCA sights around town, which is cheaper than hotel business centers. Hotel Inglaterra is about 3 blocks away and allows for you to sit outdoors on the patio and have a beverage while checking using the internet. Be warned that these connections go out frequently. That said, as of summer 2017, there seems to be promise that fiber optic cables will be running to many homes in Havana Vieja by the end of 2017.

Internet access is generally available at hotels near the capital building. In order to use WiFi you will need to purchase a WiFi card at the hotel reception. The cost is approximately 5 CUC an hour if you bring your own laptop or 7 CUC an hour to use theirs. This is also expected to change in the future, but there is no reliable way to predict when this will change significantly

Health

Travelers to Cuba are under no health restrictions and require no special vaccinations or inoculations. All hotels have a doctor or a nurse in residence or on call who guarantee primary care. Every major city has an international medical clinic that handles more complex medical conditions. Visitors might consider purchasing interruption and extended medical insurance before traveling.

Insurance

Medical Insurance and Emergency Evacuation Insurance are included as part of your Globe Aware program.

You will be required to bring proof of insurance into Cuba that covers your entire stay. Globe Aware will send you your individual insurance cards within your Ready Set Go email which is normally sent out 3-4 weeks before the program.

Important considerations:

- You **MUST** bring a printout of your card with you as you enter Cuba. We will provide the document for you to print out or you can print it out directly from the insurance website. If you do not have it you will have to purchase insurance that covers the length of your stay on the island.
- If you are arriving **BEFORE** or staying **AFTER** the program, you will need to extend your insurance coverage with our insurance provider or secure outside insurance. Globe Aware will only cover the program dates. Some airlines are now providing insurance that covers the entire length of your stay – make sure you verify with your airline in case you are already covered so that you do not extend if you do not need to.
- Please make sure you clearly understand the coverage and limitations of the insurance.

To review the coverage and extension/upgrading options please go to the insurance website at www.coretravelinsurance.com and click log in.

You will be required to enter your first and last name as well as date of birth. Please make sure you enter it **exactly as you provided it** when you registered with Globe Aware. Under Organization enter Globe Aware. Please contact our office if you have any issues logging in or have any questions.

It has come to our attention that certain Cuban officials may claim that American issued insurance does not work in Cuba. This is not the case. Your policy is a TRAVEL insurance and is completely valid in Cuba. They seem to be targeting families. If you are pulled aside and asked about your insurance, please be assured that you have the necessary paperwork and that your insurance is completely valid. You have two providers, Europ and Core. Europ is based in France.

Water

While most foreigners and Cubans have no problems with the water, it is a good idea to drink bottled water at all times. Markets may run out of bottled water from time to time. We suggest buying a few large bottles to keep in your room to guarantee access to drinking water during the night. Your coordinator, Andres, lives on the top floor of the central casa particular, where he keeps the bottled water stored. If you run out, don't hesitate to ask him for more.

Your Fellow Volunteers

If there are other volunteers on your program, you will receive a Fellow Volunteer Report attached to our "Ready, Set, Go!" email about 3 weeks before the program starts. It will include information on your fellow travelers, as well as their email so that you can start to get acquainted with them before you leave.

Your Host and Main Coordinator: Andres Gonzalez

Volunteer Globe Aware representative based in Havana who is essentially your “Home Base Captain”. He is an architect by training and comes from Camaguey. He is NOT a fan of the local “Industrials” baseball team! He lives one floor above from your accommodations with his wife Lizette and is available to help you throughout the week. Andres will meet you along with the guide upon arrival to introduce himself, answer any questions about Globe Aware, and again on the final day to collect feedback and ideas for what to change, add or delete on future Cuba programs.



He is not a licensed guide so he will not be officially with you for activities outside of your home base. You will see a lot of him, though. He helped create the itinerary and projects.

We love your coordinator! He tends to be shy. Volunteers love it when he eats with them, but we have noticed that sometimes he worries that he is imposing. Please make your voice heard on this matter and invite him to eat with you, most especially when eating our provided meals.

Likewise, remember that Cuba is a culture operated by a strict structure and hierarchy. We have noticed that when there is a change in plan, our coordinator's tendency is to let one person know, expecting that this person will tell the group. Do not hesitate to remind him that it would be good to share with the whole group at once. Also know that there is a tendency for Cubans to showcase what they are most proud of, rather than the areas of greatest need. If you feel that your coordinator is shying away from the challenges Cuba faces, just gently remind him of your genuine interest in knowing as much as possible about **all** aspects of Cuba. Lastly, remember that criticism of their government is something that Cubans can be jailed for.

Your Licensed Cuban guide for Globe Aware: Miriel Garcia Aguila

The Cuban government requires that we provide a licensed guide to accompany you to and from official stops. The person registered to us is assigned a couple of weeks before.



Miriel Garcia Aguila graduated from La Habana University with a degree in English in 2002. After graduating he immediately started working in the tourism sector. He has over a decade of experience, although he started working as a tour guide at the end of 2006. He can speak Spanish, English and French. He likes serious and professional work as well as altruistic work. As a guide and a citizen he knows his country very well and he enjoys what he does. He is sociable and responsible at work and loves sharing Cuba with the world!

Arranging your airfare

We do not recommend arriving before the program begins. Remember you are required to be on a fully scheduled program. The schedule will include things that you would likely do on your own for the first day or two, so you will likely be duplicating activities, as we cannot change the schedule for those few that decide to come a couple of days early.

With the recent approval of direct flights into Cuba, there are more options than ever to get to the country conveniently. Beginning in winter of 2016 direct flights will be available into Havana from the US on multiple airlines. You will need to obtain a Tourist Card/Travel Visa for your trip to Cuba prior to departure. At the time of writing, each airline seems to have its own unique way of handling this. For example, American Airlines partners with Cuba Travel Services to pre-arrange your visa after booking your ticket, and will be contacted by a Cuba Travel Services representative at prior to departure to arrange. Delta typically sells them prior to check-in at your departure airport. We strongly suggest contacting their airline you are traveling with to get the most up to date information on the tourist card.

Some people may prefer to travel through Mexico or another gateway country before entering Cuba. This option is available, and tourist cards can be purchased prior to check-in near the airline specific desks. You can search for these flights on a variety of search engines. To see available flights in and out of Havana from a variety of destinations you can use the Cuba Travel Network http://www.cubatravelnetwork.com/en/flights/cuba_flights.asp Roundtrip flights originating in the United States and arriving in Cuba via a layover in Mexico have also started showing up on websites such as kayak.com. Cuban tourist Visas purchased in Mexico should cost around \$20 USD. More than likely the person selling the tourist cards will ask for your passport and fill out the form for you. Double check the information before heading to check in.

When booking a ticket, you will more than likely be asked to select a reason for traveling. You are traveling under a "General License" which meets 3 of the listed acceptable reasons to travel in Cuba.

Other volunteers have had success in using Cuba Travel Services which you can check online at www.cubatravelservices.com

Entering and Leaving Cuba

All visitors must have a passport that is valid for six months after their departure from Cuba, as well as a tourist card (issued by the airlines prior to departure either at check in or on the plane).

A tourist card allows its holder to stay in Cuba for 90 days from the date of entry onto the island, and is valid for one entry into Cuba. For a stay of more than 90 days, one can request an extension for another three months at any tourism office in Cuba, for a maximum stay of six months. Children, regardless of their age, also require a tourist card, even if they are registered on their parents' passports.

Andres will meet you at the airport on arrival in Havana if you are arriving on the the day the program begins. He will also arrange for you a taxi to take you back to the airport for your departure. Depending on the terminal of arrival, your exact meet-up location will vary. Terminal 1: Behind the information desk at the center of the airport hall Terminal 2: At the exit in front of the café (everyone is forced to exit this airport terminal so once you exit there will be a café where sell refreshments) Terminal 3: Near the large clock in the arrivals hall before you exit the airport.

Visitors leaving Cuba can take out unlimited boxes of cigars as long as they've been purchased at state stores and you have a receipt. Visitors can only take out 23 cigars with no receipt or those that were purchased from street vendors. You can take out unlimited amounts of liquor, but remember your home entry limitations. Currently American citizens can bring home up to \$400 worth of goods acquired in Cuba for personal use. Starting October 17th, 2016, travelers can purchase unlimited quantities of Cuban rum and cigars in any country where they are sold so long as they are for personal consumption. To export other items, such as art and antiques, obtain a permit from the National Registry of Cultural Objects (legitimate artists issue such permits and official stamps). Animal and plant exports: Strict rules apply to taking plants out of Cuba. The Convention on International Trading in Endangered Species (CITES) prohibits taking the following out of the country: indigenous flora and fauna; live or preserved specimens and articles made from parts of endangered species. However, articles made from species approved by the CITES Administrative Authority in Cuba may be taken out of the country.

Safety and Security

Cuba is considered amongst the safest countries in the world with a very low crime rate. Yet we advise visitors to exercise the same precautions as anywhere else - do not leave personal belongings unattended and securing your valuables.

Never take photos of people at close proximity without their permission.

In Case of Emergency

Globe Aware's 24 hour phone line Please note our email is not attended all day every day so if you have an emergency please use this phone number : +1 (214) 824 4562

Andres Gonzalez : +53 7861 0458 or +53 5355 9237

Miriel Garcia Aguila +53 5294 2005

U.S. Embassy, Havana

Calzada Esquina L y M, Vedado

Havana, Cuba

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