

The Programs

What is “People to People” travel?

People to People travel is a unique program, and currently one of the only legal ways to visit Cuba. This program was implemented by President Obama and it allows tour operators to receive a license, issued by the Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control to run programs to Cuba. All People to People programs must include a full schedule of educational activities that allow Americans to meet and interact with local Cubans. It is designed as a unique educational experience, rather than being tourist-oriented. You will see a range of arts organizations, schools, and projects on this program which will both allow you to interact with ordinary Cubans and gain a wider experience of Cuba’s culture, seeing things many tourists never do.

Is this a group experience? Can I travel to Cuba without a group?

Yes, currently all travel to Cuba is done in groups. We are not currently able to offer individual travel to Cuba.

What is OFAC?

OFAC is the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control. It oversees the issuance of licenses for travel to Cuba and enforces sanctions passed by Congress that are a part of American foreign policy and national security. Because these are economic and trade restrictions, all Cuba-related travel is handled by OFAC. OFAC has given us a license to operate People-to-People educational exchange programs to Cuba.

Rules and Regulations

Is it legal for me to travel to Cuba?

Our programs to Cuba are completely legal and we operate under a license issued by the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). We have a People to People license to run these special programs. At the meeting in Miami before your flight to Havana, we will provide you with a copy of our license and an authorization, which allows you to travel on a program operated under our license.

Can I travel to Cuba with my children under 15?

We are only accepting children at least 15 years old on these programs.

Travel Documents

Do I need a visa to travel to Cuba?

You are required to travel on a visa, also known as a Tourist Card. Insight Cruises will arrange a visa for you after booking your trip to Cuba. We will provide you with your Visa and other travel documents during our briefing in Miami.

What documents do I need to travel to Cuba?

You will need a passport that is valid for at least six months after your return date. In addition, we will issue you plane tickets, your Cuban visa, a copy of our people-to-people license issued by OFAC and a Letter of Authorization permitting you to travel to Cuba.

Will Cuban immigration stamp my passport?

The policy of the Cuban government is to not stamp the passport of Americans entering Cuba. If you want your passport stamped as a souvenir, you may request it from the immigration officer.

When I return to the U.S., what do I write on my immigration form?

You can write that you traveled to Cuba on your customs declaration form, just like you would when returning from any other country.

Money

What is Cuba's currency?

Cuba has two currencies. The Moneda Nacional is used only by locals and is not convertible to other currencies. Visitors and many Cuban locals use the Cuban convertible peso (known as the CUC), and many products are only sold in CUC.

Can I spend U.S. Dollars in Cuba?

U.S. dollars cannot currently be used in Cuba.

Can I exchange money before I go to Cuba?

Because CUC are not on currency exchanges, you will have to exchange all money in Cuba at the airport, hotels, exchange kiosks or a bank in Cuba. Hotels are generally the most convenient option, and you will have to show your passport.

What is the exchange rate for Cuban convertible pesos (CUC)?

One CUC is equal to one U.S. dollar, though the exchange rate is subject to change. Please check with our Destination Experts for the latest rate information. It will generally cost you about 13% to exchange currency after the change fee and commissions, so expect to receive about 87 CUC for every \$100 U.S. you exchange.

Can I make purchases in U.S. Dollars in Cuba?

No. All purchases must be made in CUC.

Can I use my credit/debit card in Cuba?

American issued credit and debit cards can't be used in Cuba. U.S. restrictions do not allow the use of credit or debit cards by U.S. citizens visiting Cuba and Cuban banks do not recognize U.S. issued debit and credit cards because of the official embargo. You will need to bring enough cash to cover your needs for your entire stay in Cuba.

Can I wire money to Cuba if I run out of cash?

It is very difficult and we do not recommend travelers do so. Please bring enough cash to cover your needs for the entire Cuba trip, as your hotel and most meals are already included in the program price.

How much money should I bring to Cuba?

Since it is impossible to use American credit/debit cards and traveler's checks, you must bring sufficient funds to cover all your expenses while in Cuba. We generally recommend you bring as much as you would spend on any vacation, as prices are similar to in the United States. We generally recommend people bring about \$75-100 per person, per day of the trip.

Before You Leave

Will my cell phone work in Cuba?

Your American cell phone will not have any network signal while it is in Cuba. Cell phone rentals are available in Cuba.

Can I get internet access in Cuba?

As a rule, internet service is very slow in Cuba, but your hotel in Havana has a business center with internet. Limited WIFI is also available.

Do I need to bring electrical adaptors to Cuba?

You may find both 110V and 220V electrical currents in Cuba, as well as standard (U.S. style) flat pronged plugs and European style round pronged plugs. We recommend you bring a multi-adapter and voltage converter, just in case.

Can I bring gifts or donations with me to Cuba?

Anything you bring will be appreciated. In particular, toys, toiletries, school supplies and over the counter medications are very desirable. You can donate them at organizations you visit during the program or to other locals you meet. Please note that donations may be taken at customs and re-distributed by the government.

Can I bring my camera to Cuba?

You are welcome to bring your camera with you to Cuba.

What should I pack for my trip to Cuba?

Cuba is very warm throughout the year, veering towards very hot in the summer, and you should pack accordingly. You may want to bring a sweater for when you are in air conditioned spaces and an umbrella for surprise downpours. Toiletries and over the counter medications are extremely expensive and in very short supply, so we recommend you bring your own, including a basic first aid kit.

What is the weather like in Cuba?

Cuba is very warm throughout the year.

Health and Travel Insurance

Do I need health insurance in Cuba?

All visitors to Cuba are required to have medical insurance from an approved plan. We include this Cuban Health insurance in the cost of our program and will provide you information about the plan.

Can I get travel insurance for this trip?

We are offering travel insurance for this trip and it is not included in the tour price. Please contact one of our destination specialists for more information.

The Program

Can I bring back souvenirs from Cuba?

Because of the embargo, there are limits on what you can bring back from Cuba into the United States. You may purchase a cigar in Cuba, but it must be enjoyed in Cuba before your return to the United States. Customs routinely confiscates items from Cuba. The only exceptions are educational materials like books, CDs, photographs and artwork. You cannot bring back purchased items, including food, alcohol and cigars.

Do I need to tip in Cuba?

As in the United States, tipping is part of how service workers make their living, and it helps supplement their income. Your tipping, will be pre-paid and we will issues these tips, on your behalf: 2 CUC per meal for waiters, 8 CUC per day for the guide, and 5 CUC per day for your driver. Please also consider tipping your hotel maid, at 1 CUC per day.

Will I be able to explore Cuba on my own?

During the day, you are required to attend all activities, meals and events relating to the program. You can explore in the evenings on your own.

Can I take photographs of everything in Cuba?

Please refrain from taking photographs of the military, the airport, or any schools we visit and the children in them. You are otherwise free to photograph, though it is courteous to ask before taking someone's picture. Sometimes you will see people dressed in historic attire or costumes, and it is customary to tip them after taking their photographs, as this is how they make their living.

Can I talk to local Cubans freely?

Yes, you can. Cubans are very friendly.

Who are your guides in Cuba?

We use prescreened, hand-picked, licensed English speaking guides in Cuba.

Are the hotels air-conditioned?

Yes, the hotels are air-conditioned.

Can you accommodate special dietary needs?

Within certain limitations, special dietary needs can be met. Let us know what they are when you sign up for one of our programs.

Are there any precautions I should take when traveling?

No, other than normal safety precautions taken when traveling anywhere.

Safety

How are Americans received in Cuba?

Americans are generally well liked in Cuba. Many Cubans have American relatives and they are generally well-liked in the country. Most Cubans are friendly and happy to converse with visitors and they are thrilled to meet you.

Is Cuba a safe destination?

In general Cuba is a very safe country, particularly during daylight in the areas we will be traveling. There is little reason to worry about your safety, and Cuba has the lowest crime rate of any Latin American country. However, visitors should be on the lookout for pickpockets and purse snatchers in tourist-heavy areas.

Is Cuba a friendly destination for LGBT people?

Popular opinion toward LGBT people is changing rapidly in Cuba and the country has a vibrant LGBT community.

Is Cuba a safe destination for women?

Cuba is extremely safe for female travelers and women can generally come and go as they please without being worried. We do recommend our travelers exercise their good judgment and travel with a friend if you will be out very late at night.

The Flights

Why are we staying in Miami at the beginning of the trip?

You will fly from Miami to Havana on a morning charter flight. In order to ensure the entire group departs together and to allow time for an informational meeting the night before, the group gathers in Miami for an overnight stay prior to departure.

How do I fly to Cuba?

When you book your program with us, we will reserve your seat on a charter flight. Flights to Cuba cannot be booked through airlines or their websites.

Can I pay for my flights with frequent flyer miles?

Due to the unique nature of Cuba flights, they cannot be booked using miles, points or any other rewards system. Also, your flight from Miami to Havana will not accrue miles, points or any other rewards.