



Capital: Havana
Dialing code: 53
Language: Spanish
Population: 11.2 million
Drives on the: Right
Currency: Cuban peso



Cuba Information

Travel documents

U.S. citizens traveling to Cuba must have a passport that is valid for six months after their expected return date. Please check travel.state.gov to confirm passport validity requirements prior to your tour. Citizens of all other countries should contact their appropriate embassies to find out what specific documentation is required for them to travel.

All U.S. passport holders must also obtain a visa, known as a "Tourist Card," to enter Cuba. We recommend obtaining your visa pre-departure through cubatravelservices.com. The process is very simple. The visa costs approximately \$112 USD (including shipping) and is processed within 48 hours. The visa form asks you to select an "OFAC CATEGORY." You'll be traveling to Cuba under the reason "Educational Activities." Under "Cuba Province," you should select "Havana." You'll also need your flight

information, which can be accessed via your EF online account or mobile app. Once your application has been completed and your payment has been received, your visa will be shipped to you in the mail. Please begin applying for your visa as soon as you have your flight details to ensure there's enough time for your visa to be processed and mailed to you.

In addition to your passport and Tourist Card, you'll also need your return ticket, medical insurance that's valid for Cuba (see "Health precautions"), and a pre-filled customs form for entry. You can access the form at dvijeros.mitrans.gob.cu/datosMigratorios a maximum of 48 hours before departing for Cuba. After you've completed the form, you'll receive a QR code via email. You must show an electronic or printed version of the form to authorities when you arrive.

Health precautions

Cuba has a mandatory health insurance requirement that includes COVID-19 coverage. The airline tickets purchased for EF travelers include this required insurance. Your boarding pass serves as proof of insurance, so you should keep your boarding pass with you throughout your tour in the unlikely event you'll need to use it. You should also carry a photocopy of your passport. Please note: This required coverage is only for medical-related incidents while in Cuba and does not serve as broader travel insurance covering trip cancellation, baggage loss, airline delays, etc. EF's Global Travel Protection and Global Travel Protection Plus plans are available for purchase if you're interested in additional coverage.

Cuba is considered to be malaria-free, but some cases of dengue fever and Zika virus have been reported here. Plan to protect yourself from its numerous mosquitoes, especially in swampy areas. Annoying sand fleas can also sometimes be found on local beaches. Mosquito repellent cannot be purchased in Cuba, so be sure to bring some with you.

It's also important to note that most common over-the-counter medications are not available for purchase in Cuba. Please bring all prescribed and over-the-counter medications with you in their original containers, and pack extra just in case. In case of emergency, you can purchase select medicines at the international pharmacy; your Tour Director will be able to assist you.

Finally, there are no vaccinations required for travel to Cuba, but it is recommended to be vaccinated against hepatitis A, dysentery, tetanus, and hepatitis B and to seek medical advice from a tropical diseases specialist or health institute.

Tour Director and bus driver

You will have the same Cuban Tour Director during your entire tour, and they may also act as a local guide throughout the tour. You will have the same bus driver throughout the entire tour. In addition to your Cuban Tour Director and bus driver, you will have an EF Tour Director.

Transportation

All transportation on EF tours in Cuba is by modern, private motorcoach. Travel time between destinations will take between two and four hours, pending road conditions and stops made along the way. Travelers prone to motion sickness should consider bringing medication.

Tipping

It's customary to tip on tour as a token of appreciation at the end of the tour. We recommend:

- \$6–8 per person per day for your Tour Director
- \$3 per person per day for your bus driver
- \$1 per person per lunch and dinner

We encourage Group Leaders to try to collect all tip money from their travelers before departing for tour. To keep tips organized, we recommend using the envelopes from your Departure Kit. For larger groups, feel free to divvy up the money between chaperones. It is preferable for tips to be given in the local currency of your destination; you can exchange the money into local currency when you arrive in Cuba. If you have any questions on tipping, please reach out to your EF Travel Team.

Currency

Credit cards, debit cards, and ATM cards issued by U.S. banks are currently unusable in Cuba; most U.S. travelers use only cash while in Cuba. You should plan to bring enough cash in USD (small bills, like \$10 and \$20) for snacks and anything else you may wish to buy, though shopping time is limited and meals and activities on tour are included.

Once in Cuba, you do have the option to exchange USD for CUP (Cuban peso). (The Peso Convertible, CUC, was abolished in January 2021.) You can exchange money at the Havana Airport, hotels, or exchange counters. Your passport will be required at the time of transaction. The Cuban peso is a closed currency, so you won't be able to exchange USD for CUP before your trip. You'll be charged a surcharge fee for exchanging USD to CUP, and most places won't accept torn or marked bills when converting currency. If you choose to pay for something in USD during your trip, change will be given in CUP. You're unable to leave Cuba with CUP, so you should plan to spend the money you've exchanged before the end of your trip.

Visit xe.com for more currency information.

Accommodations

Cuba has recently reopened to visitors and tour operators, so some vendors in the country are still adjusting to the new state of travel. While in Cuba, you will stay in hotels that are basic, clean, and comfortable. All rooms are double or twin rooms that accommodate two travelers. Adults will share twin rooms with other adults of the same gender, and they may share rooms with adults in the tour group who are not from their own school. Groups may not all be roomed next to each other and may be on different floors. Hotels can be located outside of the city center. All hotels will have safes available, whether in the rooms or at reception. Non-smoking rooms do not exist in Cuba.

Bathrooms

Public bathroom facilities are generally not available in Cuba, and where they are, there is often a fee (which may include toilet paper from an attendant before you enter). It is often permissible to use facilities in a café or restaurant as long as a purchase is made. It's also common practice in hotel and public bathrooms, many of which have old plumbing, to dispose of toilet paper in wastebaskets rather than flushing.

Water pressure in Cuba is often lower than the U.S., and the amount of hot water can be limited, so be prepared for short, cool showers.

Phones and internet

If you plan to use your personal cell phone on tour, contact your wireless provider to see what fees you may incur for calling, texting, or using data abroad. Data roaming charges in Cuba can be expensive, so travelers often choose to turn data services off. If necessary, you should be able to use the hotel's phone at a cost. Please note that placing calls to the U.S. can be expensive.

Cuba is an offline island, and that is only slowly changing. Internet is not available everywhere in Cuba and if it is, it's very slow. In many hotels, it is possible to buy an internet card at reception. The Wi-Fi connection in hotels is typically not strong across the whole property; it's typically limited to the lobby. Wi-Fi hotspots are also now available in almost every town and village. Wi-Fi cards can be purchased at any local ETECSA store, but you only get three cards per person per day (this rule also applies for tourists). You'll need to show an ID card or a copy of your passport to purchase a Wi-Fi card. If you buy Wi-Fi cards through a third party, you can expect to pay double or triple the cost, but they're an option if there is no ETECSA branch nearby.

Local food

Cuba's cuisine tends to be comprised of chicken or pork, rice, and beans. Though the food is delicious, there may not be a lot of variety offered at restaurants. Fruit and vegetable options are limited as well. Travelers with special dietary requirements can reach out to EF's Traveler Support Team at 800-665-5364. You might also want to pack some of your favorite snacks from home to ensure you're always feeling fueled and ready for each day's activities.

Tap water is not drinkable. It is always recommended to drink bottled water that you can purchase at the stores. Always pay attention to local warnings.

Safety

In general, Cuba is a very safe place as compared to other Latin America countries. Locals are very helpful towards tourists, and you will have a Cuban Tour Director with you throughout the tour who is expertly equipped to navigate Cuba's evolving tourism landscape and give you the best experience possible each and every day. The nature of the tour may be a little different than tours you've participated in previously. With a number of included activities, there will be little to no free time, and travelers will not be permitted to miss activities or break away from the group at any point.

Travelers should store all valuables in hotel safes and refrain from carrying large sums of money or wearing valuable jewelry. As when traveling anywhere, travelers should be vigilant and aware of their surroundings and personal belongings when exploring an unfamiliar place.

Weather

Cuba has a semi-subtropical climate with warm temperatures year-round. The wet season generally lasts from May through October, with cyclones or tropical storms more likely to hit the island from August through November. Summer temperatures range from 75–90°F but can reach highs of 100°F with high humidity. Winter temperatures, November through March, range from 70–75°F. Dry season lasts from November through April. No matter what time of year you are traveling, though, be prepared for rain as you'd expect in a typical Caribbean climate. Please check [weather.com](https://www.weather.com) for your destinations and travel periods.

Luggage

Many airlines charge fees for the first checked bag to Cuba, so be sure to confirm any restrictions with your airline before you depart. To ensure your suitcase doesn't exceed the allowances for carry-on luggage, we suggest travelers pack as light as possible. Please contact your airline for baggage restrictions and regulations.

Packing

Cubans attach great importance to good clothes! Light clothing and athleticwear are recommended due to warm and humid weather. The best fabrics to wear are cotton and linen. We recommend bringing the following items: a light jacket or windbreaker, rain gear (like a jacket and umbrella), comfortable walking shoes, sunscreen, a sun hat, insect repellent, toilet paper, antibacterial hand sanitizer, and hand wipes. You may also want to bring a small backpack you can carry during the day to hold extra clothes in case the weather changes or you get caught in the rain.

Some venues do not allow men to wear shorts. During winter (November through March), it can get cooler at night, so it can be helpful to pack a light sweater or scarf. (They can be useful in summer, too, since air conditioning is usually very cold in most places!)

You will also need an adapter for American plugs—they're not easy to find in local Cuban shops, so be sure to bring one with you. Normally Cuba uses 110 volts, but most hotels use 220 volts. You should also carry an LED flashlight plus extra batteries in your luggage, as power outages are not uncommon in Cuba.