

CELEBRATE THE ARTS IN CUBA! APRIL 14-20, 2018



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

[Is it Legal to Travel to Cuba?](#) Yes. In early 2011 – and again in late 2015 – President Obama significantly relaxed restrictions on US citizens' travel to Cuba. Our group will visit under the US Treasury Department's "People to People" license, which permits travel to Cuba for the purpose of educational and cultural exchange.

[What Kind of Documentation Will I Need to Enter Cuba?](#) Citizens of the USA require a tourist visa to visit Cuba. You will **NOT** need to secure this visa independently. Alterra Global Initiatives will take care of this for you. If you are a citizen of another country, please let us know your nationality so that we may determine which type of visa to secure for you.

[What Type Of Clothing Will I Need, and What Is the Weather Like in Cuba?](#) The weather is likely to be comfortable during the days, even hot. Definitely pack for the tropics. Casual clothing will go most everywhere. Definitely bring very light cotton clothing. Specific clothing suggestions are as follows:

- T-shirts, old jeans & shorts.
- At least one set of "smart casual" wear (e.g., for our school visits and some other meetings).
- Hat, for protection from the sun.
- Sunscreen and sunglasses.
- Umbrella.
- Sturdy shoes and sandals.
- Light jacket for cool early mornings and evenings.

[How Much Luggage May I Bring?](#) Most Cuba-bound flights allow 44 lbs. of checked luggage.

[Is Tap Water Safe To Drink?](#) We recommend that you consume bottled water. This is readily available, and we will make sure that a supply is on hand in the coach.

[What Type Of Food Will I Be Eating?](#) Cuban food is not particularly spicy, but it is very flavourful. It features lots of meat and poultry, rice, beans, plantains, and root veggies. Breakfast at the hotel will consist of assorted fresh fruit, cereals, yogurts, home-made jams with preserves, tea, coffee, fruit juices, and sausage or bacon with eggs to order. Lunches will consist of typical Cuban fare. Dinners will be variable – always typical, hot, healthy local cuisine.

[What Medical Precautions Should I Take, and What Can I Expect if I Get Sick?](#) Simply double-check that you received your routine vaccines as a child, and that these are up-to-date. Nearly all Cuban hotels, including ours, will have a nurse or doctor on call to attend to minor illnesses and injuries. And know that the cost of your trip includes insurance for medical care in Cuba. Cuba's health care system, as you likely know, is world-class.

[Will I Have Access to the Internet?](#) Our hotel will feature wireless access. So if you have a laptop, iPad, or mobile phone, you may open your browser in your room or in the hotel's public areas. You may also use the hotel's business center; limited desktops are available exclusively for guests' use. Please be aware that internet speeds in Cuba are somewhat slower than the speeds to which you are likely accustomed – though this continues to improve!

[How Safe Are the Cities for the Overseas Visitor?](#) Crime – even petty theft – is exceedingly rare in Havana and elsewhere. For the overseas visitor, Havana and Pinar del Rio are safe and comfortable destinations. You should feel free at all times to interact with local residents and to participate fully in this unique experience - in the knowledge that that you and your belongings are secure. You will be guests of local communities, institutions, and activists; they are happy to have you among them and will embrace you as family. This said, in Cuba as elsewhere, common sense should prevail. Do not carry large sums of cash, and don't leave valuables unsecured in your hotel room. Make photocopies of your passport and air ticket, and keep them separate from the originals. Cuba is very safe; these are commonsensical precautions.

[What Should I Know About Money?](#) Your US dollar will convert to 90 cents locally – in other words, as of this writing in October 2016, one "CUC" (Cuban Convertible Peso) = \$0.90. Alterra will watch for any changes in this conversion rate – and, in any case, will articulate new guidelines should circumstances be different closer to the February 2017 travel date. It's important to keep in mind that US debit and credit cards are **NOT** accepted in Cuba, neither for point-of-sale transactions nor for ATM cash withdrawals. US-issued travelers' checks are also not accepted. For spending money, you'll want to bring cash in US dollars, which we will take time to convert to Cuban "CUCs" immediately on arriving at Havana's José Martí International Airport February 18. In terms of how much you might budget each day, keep in mind that nearly all of your costs are covered in the \$3800 price. This said, you might put aside \$25 for daily incidentals, and an additional amount at your discretion for gifts, artwork, and other special purchases. Remember: All purchases, including artwork, must be made in cash – and do retain your receipts.

[What Is the Most Economical Way to Make a Phone Call?](#) Direct calls to and from the States can be made at almost any hotel – and this will definitely be your most affordable and hassle-free way to reach friends and family Stateside by voice. Please know, too, that Alterra's local representative will have a Cuban cellphone on hand to make and receive international calls in case of an emergency. US cell carriers do not yet maintain roaming deals with the Cuban cell

provider, though some AT&T and T-mobile subscribers have begun to report success getting calls through stateside. WhatsApp works wonderfully in Cuba, by the way – though Skype does not yet work.

[May Our Group Use the Hotel's Public Areas for An Informal Meeting?](#) Alterra will work with our hotel in Havana to arrange reasonable accommodation for periodic informal group reflections.

[What about Electricity?](#) Cuba uses both 110 volts and 220 volts. Newer infrastructure, including international-class hotels, is likely to use 220 volts; you may wish to bring an inexpensive transformer just in case. Also, with respect to the wall plugs, most but not all are US-standard. You may want to bring an adaptor cube – again, just in case. Rolling blackouts can happen, though these are increasingly infrequent – and rare in February. Do charge overnight so you're ready to roll the following day.

[What May I Bring Back Legally?](#) Starting October 17, 2016, the United States imposes no limits to what you may bring back from Cuba. President Obama has now lifted all dollar-limits on cigars, rum, and other purchased items. Be sure to save receipts for all artwork purchases, as you will need these to take the art out of Cuba on February 18.

[Are there Items I should bring that I Just Can't Do Without?](#) Absolutely ... Bring chocolate, peanut butter, Nutella, energy bars, nuts, and raisins – in other words, your favorite snacks!
