Student Handbook

Summer in Havana: Your Guide to Studying in Cuba

EEABROAD

Educational Experiences Abroad

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¡Bienvenidos a Cuba!

Congratulations! You are on your way to the experience of a lifetime. A new chapter of Cuban history is being written as Cuban society and economy undergo dramatic transformations, and this program will allow you to experience the challenges and beauty of Cuba first-hand. As you prepare for your experience abroad, read through this handbook carefully and heed the advice provided. Your experiences in the city of Havana and beyond will enrich and sharpen your views of Latin America and your own country. The social and cultural differences are enormous in Cuba and require a unique effort to adapt. This handbook will help you learn more about this fascinating island and get ready for an unforgettable experience!

**Preparing for your Departure**

Take advantage of resources before you go! The more time you spend talking, thinking, and hearing Spanish—especially Cuban Spanish—the better off you will be. A great way to start is to take advantage of all the resources you have at home such as news, movies, YouTube videos, music, and books. Check out some of the suggested readings and viewings at the end of this guide. Meanwhile, consider ways to make your study abroad transition smooth and successful. Cuba does not have all of the resources that you may be accustomed to, like 24/7 internet and plentiful consumer goods, so be prepared.
**Passport**

You must have a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond the return date of your program in Cuba. If you do not currently have a passport or if your passport will expire within six months, you should start the process to get a new passport as soon as possible. The process can take two weeks to a month depending on which procedure you follow. You are now able to download printable passport applications from the internet as well as consult general Passport Services information at: https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports.html

If you are not a U.S. citizen, make sure both your green card and passport are current and valid. To apply for a non-U.S. passport, contact the appropriate government agency or your embassy in Washington, D.C., and allow a few months for processing.

Your passport is the most important document you have when you travel abroad and it should be kept in a safe place at all times. Make several copies of the front pages, leave one copy at home or with your parents, a relative or a friend, and keep the other copies in separate places during your trip. While in Cuba always carry one copy with you and keep one at your lodging. If your passport is lost or stolen having a copy streamlines the process of obtaining a new passport. When you travel to other sites within Cuba where you will be spending the night, you must bring your passport (not just a copy), as you will need it to check into the lodging facilities and in case of an emergency.

**Purchasing Flights and Visas**

Most major U.S. airlines offer flights to Havana, Cuba. All travelers must qualify for a license authorized by OFAC to travel to Cuba. As a student on the EEAbroad Summer in Havana program, you will qualify for the general license under the specific category of Educational Activities. When you book your flight, please check off this category as your reason for travel.

Your Cuban Entry Visa (also referred to as a Tourist Card) will be available for purchase through your airline provider before or on the day of your departure. Cuban Entry Visas cost $50-$100, the amount depending upon the airline. Check with your airline on the Cuban Visa requirements and procedures.

Please note that in accordance with the legal requirements of the U.S. Department of the Treasury, all students must depart on the last day of the program. You may not remain in Cuba as a tourist.
Once you arrive in Cuba and are passing through immigration, the officer will ask you to present this visa. The immigration officer will often detach and keep half of your visa. If they do not detach and retain half of your visa, that is fine. Please remember to keep the visa that is returned to you with your passport at all times because you must submit the visa when leaving Cuba.

Medical Insurance

All visitors traveling to the island must obtain Cuba-specific medical insurance. A temporary policy is typically included in the price of your flight. **Passengers must keep their boarding pass with them at all times during their stay in Cuba.** The boarding pass will serve as evidence of the insurance policy should any emergency medical services be required during the trip.

Please check with the airline provider to assure that you will have coverage. It is the responsibility of each participant to inform EEAbroad if s/he does not have a Cuba-specific medical coverage.

Vaccinations

No vaccines are required for entry to Cuba. For travel purposes, we recommend that you keep all standard immunizations (e.g., typhoid, diphtheria, tetanus) up to date. Make an appointment with your physician or university health center to check on any immunizations you might need. See your doctor at least four to six weeks before your departure to give the immunizations time to take effect.

An Overview of Cuba

There is no place like Cuba, and there’s no way to experience it except to see it for yourself. Its capital, Havana, is a special city, existing in its own time. When the sun sets, people stroll down the Malecón (the seaside promenade), and Cuban salsa and reggaeton escapes the clubs, cars, and houses to bring the city alive. Outside of Havana, the island boasts swaths of untouched tropical wilderness, filled to the brim with rare and colorful flora and fauna. Colonial fortresses dot the countryside, and centuries-old Spanish architecture dominates most city centers.

But Cuba won’t be like this forever. With welcoming locals, warm weather year-round, and unprecedented access to the island, the time to travel to Cuba is now.

Section I: Preparing for Life in Cuba

Cuba is a relatively poor Latin American country with a complicated political structure. Spaces of socialism, communism, and capitalism overlap in ways that can be unpredictable. Due to this history and to the continuing U.S. economic embargo, Cuba lacks many resources and comforts that you would expect to find in most other countries. Although our student housing has been modernized, lack of access to high quality home products and plumbing systems that date back to the 50s combine to create a hot water shortage in the mornings. And while you’ll find plenty of healthy and delicious food to eat, do not expect the variety of cuisines that are available at home.

Social Etiquette

Cubans are a very informal people, and there are not many strange or complex rules of etiquette. Cubans usually greet strangers with a handshake in a formal environment or a kiss to the cheek in an informal situation, regardless of gender. The word “usted”, instead of “tú”,

is used when talking to someone they have never met, in a formal environment, or to someone that deserves respect like students to a teacher, patients to a doctor, workers to a supervisor, youth to seniors, etc. While Cubans are generally talkative and will not pass an opportunity for a good conversation, they don’t like to discuss politics with strangers or with people who don’t share their views. We highly recommend reading Culture Shock! Cuba by Mark Cramer for more information about the social customs you can expect to encounter.

Dress Code

Cubans dress fairly casually for most events, especially during the daytime. Most of your program activities will not require a special dress code. You can dress casually to most of the events or activities you will be attending. Keep in mind, though, that Cubans do not wear flip-flops, sleeveless T-shirts, nor very short shorts when they go to school or work. They also wear semi-dressy or dressy clothes when they go to theaters, concerts, special events, restaurants, and nightclubs. Theaters, movie theaters, and certain restaurants don’t allow people wearing flip-flops, sneakers, shorts, or sleeveless T-shirts. Be sure to check out the suggested packing list at the end of this guide.

Religion

Cuba was officially an atheist state up to 1992, when the Communist Party allowed believers to become party members. Catholicism has never been a dominant religion. During colonial times, just a few churches were built in towns outside of Havana, and the Catholic Church was on the side of the Spanish against Cuban patriots during the wars of independence. Consequently after independence, the new constitution declared the separation of church and state. After the revolution in 1959, the Church showed concern at the new government’s leftist position and therefore became a focus of opposition. Although religious practices were never banned, the number of religious believers dropped by 40% during the first decades of the revolutionary period.

Today, religion is openly practiced in churches, mosques, synagogues, and animist house temples. Some studies report that 85% of the population is nominally Catholic. “Nominally” is a very important distinction because Cuban religions of African origin have syncretized with Catholicism for centuries. For example, initiates of Regla de Ocha must undergo the
Catholic rite of baptism. Regla de Ocha, pejoratively known as Santería, is a syncretic religion of Catholicism and religious beliefs of the Lucumí, who were taken as slaves from what is now modern-day Nigeria and Benin. Other religions of African origin introduced by slaves include the quasi religious Abakuá society from southern Nigeria and Palo Monte from the Congo basin.

Cuba is one of the safest countries in the Americas for people of the Jewish faith. The first Jews to arrive in Cuba in the 16th century were Sephardic Jews who traveled to the Caribbean and the Americas to escape the Spanish Inquisition. The bulk of Jewish immigration occurred between 1890 and 1940 by Ashkanasi Jews who were denied visas to the U.S. and moved to Cuba instead. After the victory of Fidel’s revolution, the Jewish community of 15,000 diminished drastically. Today, the Jewish community of 1,200 has 3 synagogues and a Jewish cemetery in Havana dating back to 1910.

Cuban Food

Although many cultures have strongly influenced Cuban cuisine, — including African, Spanish, indigenous, and Chinese — the main spices used by Cubans are garlic, onion, oregano, bay leaf, and cumin. You will find traditional Cuban food (comida criolla) wherever you go on the island, from low-priced Cuban peso eateries to state-run facilities and privately owned restaurants known as paladares.

Cuba’s traditional meal for special occasions or celebrations consists of lechón asado (roast pork), moros y cristianos (black beans and rice) and yuca con mojo (yuca is a tuberous root vegetable also known as manioc or cassava). Other popular Cuban dishes are ropa vieja (stewed shredded beef or lamb in tomato sauce), tostones (fried green plantains), picadillo a la habanera (ground beef in tomato sauce with raisins and olives), among others.

Despite the growing number of restaurants and cafés specializing in different cuisines, travelers may not find all Cuban food to their liking. Pork and beans are the main source of protein for Cubans. Chicken and rice are also important elements in their diet. So expect to be served chicken, pork, rice, and beans very often in your programmed meals!

If there are certain granola bars or every-day snacks that you can’t live without, we suggest you bring enough for your stay. Furthermore, those students who are accustomed to having meals and/or snacks available at all times, we recommend that you bring snacks to Cuba.
(nuts, dried fruits, granola, and chocolate bars, etc.) and carry them with you when you leave your lodging for the day, as you may not go back to your room again until the end of the day.

We strongly recommend that you inform EEAbroad in advance if you have any specific dietary needs or restrictions.

Drinking Water & Sanitary Tips

Although the tap water in Cuba is not as dangerous to drink as in other developing countries, you shouldn’t drink it unless it’s been boiled and filtered. For this reason, we strongly encourage students to drink only bottled water at all times. Bottled water can be purchased at stores for approximately 1 CUC for a 1.5-liter bottle and 0.70 CUC for a 0.5-liter bottle.

Since state-run and privately-owned restaurants have to comply with very strict sanitary rules, it is generally safe to eat fruits and vegetables, but avoid them if they don’t look fresh. Turista, referring to traveler’s diarrhea and related symptoms, is a common illness associated with going abroad. To avoid turista when you travel, wash your hands with soap and water frequently, especially before handling foods. Although very tempting, we strongly discourage purchasing food and drink from street vendors.

Gender Relations & Machismo

Despite the changes in gender policies and attitudes that occurred officially during the Revolution, and the recent campaigns against violence towards women and the efforts to support the LGBT community, the culture of machismo is embedded in the Cuban culture, as centuries of a patriarchal society cannot be erased by policies and decrees. However, this is gradually changing among the younger generation. The empowerment of women and their inclusion in education and labor have helped make both genders more equal in society.

Women, both foreign and Cuban, are likely to be the object of unwelcome advances. These include catcalls, known in Cuba as piropos, although some Cuban women consider certain piropos to be flattering. In the past few decades, younger men have shown a tendency to be less likely than older ones to make such approaches; recent public campaigns in Cuba have drawn attention to street harassment as a social problem. It is important to stress that Havana and Cuban towns in general are very safe and participants should not be concerned that such approaches will go further. Nonetheless, the best strategy when confronted with such attention is simply not to engage the other person.
Section II: Practical Information

For Americans, Cuba is a cash-only country. While it was recently announced that credit cards issued by American banks could be used in Cuba, in fact this measure has yet to be implemented. So even though there are ATMs in Cuba, they still do not accept U.S. issued credit or debit cards.

In Cuba, there are 2 currencies -- the Cuban Peso (CUP or “Moneda Nacional”) and the Peso Convertible (CUC). Students will mainly use CUC and rarely require CUP. Distinguishing between the two types of money can be confusing, as both currencies use the “$” sign and both can be referred to as “pesos”. National salaries are paid in pesos cubanos (CUP) and therefore are used by Cubans for all government subsidized services and products, including their monthly food rations, public transportation, groceries at farmers’ markets, entrance fees to museums, theaters, amusements parks, etc. Pesos convertibles (CUC) are used in non-governmental stores, restaurants, hotels, etc. Some products and services can be paid with either currency at the official exchange rate of 24 pesos cubanos to 1 peso convertible.

Exchange Rates & Converting Money

Since CUC and CUP are the only currencies used in Cuba, students must change money as soon as they arrive to pay for services and goods. U.S. dollars can be changed into CUC (convertible pesos) at airports, banks, money exchange houses and hotels. Students can also change their CUC back to U.S. dollars when departing Cuba. The exchange rate is the same across the country so don’t bother to go around looking for a better rate. For money exchange, Casas de Cambio (CADECA) can be found throughout Havana and other towns, but please remember that you must bring your passport when you wish to exchange money in a bank or a CADECA. While it is unusual for a student to require Cuban pesos (CUP), they can only be obtained by first exchanging U.S. dollars for convertible pesos (CUC) and then CUC for CUP.

The best way to take money to Cuba for personal expenses is in cash that can then be changed into CUC (convertible pesos). Remember, CUC can only be used in Cuba and therefore you will want to exchange them for U.S. dollars before you leave Cuba. Ripped or
torn foreign bills are often not accepted for exchange at CADECAs or banks in Cuba. To avoid any such inconvenience, we recommend you bring new, crisp $50 or $100 U.S. dollar bills to Cuba.

Telephones & Cell Phones

Cuban cell phone lines can be purchased with your passport at ETECSA (Cuba’s national telecommunications company) offices for $40 CUC; this includes $10 CUC of cell phone credit. If you are going to use the cell phone you utilize in the U.S., it is essential that you confirm your cell phone is unlocked, before inserting a Cuban cell phone line. Locked US cell phones are NOT compatible with Cuban cell phone lines. As of December 2018, Cuban cell phone lines have 3G data network capabilities.

American cell phones utilizing their roaming capabilities may be able to use phone and data service at surge pricing. Cubacel (Cuba’s cell phone service provider) is also fairly expensive, which is why we recommend that participants use the internet to communicate with their families and friends at home. Applications such as Skype and FaceTime do not function optimally in Cuba; WhatsApp is your best option for communicating with people outside of Cuba.

Phone calls from the U.S. can be received by a Cuban cell phone. As of March 2019, outgoing calls to the U.S. cost 1.10 CUC per minute. Calls within Cuba were charged at 35 cents/minute from 7:00 AM to 10:59 PM, and at 10 cents/minute from 11:00 PM to 6:59 AM. Outgoing domestic text messages within Cuba were 9 cents and outgoing international text messages, 60 cents. 3G data plans are available in the following increments: 600 MB for $7 CUC, 1 GB for $10 CUC, and 2.5 GB for $20 CUC.

Telephone cards, known as tarjetas Propia, are available in increments of $5, $10 and $20 in both CUC and CUP, but only the Propias sold in CUC can be used for international calls. An international calling card call from Havana to the U.S. is $2.45 per minute. Generally speaking, it’s cheaper to have someone from home call you on your Cuban line or via Whatsapp when connected to the internet.
Tips for making calls in Cuba

To check your cell phone credit, call *222#

To check your cell phone data credit, call *222*328#

To call a Cuban cell phone from the U.S., dial “011 - 53 - 5 - XXX - XXXX”

To call the U.S. from a Cuban cell phone, dial “119 - 1 - XXX - XXX - XXXX” When you call someone on your cell phone, you are charged; not the person you are calling.

To call a Cuban cell phone from Cuba, dial: “5 - XXX - XXXX”

To call a Cuban landline from Cuba, dial the provincial code plus the local number. Note: Havana landlines are 7 digits; all other provinces are 6 digits. Havana: “7 - XXX - XXXX” Pinar del Rio: “48 - XXX - XXX”

The 411 (operator) in Cuba is 113; to ask for a number, you must have the approximate address as well as the name of the business.

To call the police, dial 106; to call an ambulance, dial 104.

Internet & Wi-Fi

Wi-fi internet use is offered at several hotspots in Havana for the general public. ETECSA sells wi-fi cards at a rate of $1.00 CUC per hour. However, it is important to understand that the wi-fi connection in Cuba is not as fast as we are accustomed to. It can be very slow at certain spots and/or times of the day, and access to certain websites and .edu URLs is restricted or blocked (See Section IV; Resources; Apps; Tunnelbear VPN). It is typically difficult or impossible to open and download large files, videos, music, or software updates. Internet service to the public is not widely offered in towns outside of Havana, but wi-fi connection is available in at least one plaza in most main towns and at some hotels.

Cell phones from international carriers may not have mobile service or signal in Cuba, but travelers should still bring them to access their address books or contact lists, and for email and text messaging when connected to wi-fi.

For a list of all wi-fi hotspots in Havana, you can visit this website: http://www.etecsa.cu/internet_conectividad/areas_wifi/
Safety & Security in Cuba

Havana is one of the safest world capitals, and there are strict sentences on crimes committed against tourists. However, as in other major cities, there is always the risk of petty crimes such as pickpocketing and purse-snatching. We advise against bringing any expensive or irreplaceable jewelry to Cuba. Do not leave valuable possessions unattended in public, including on the beach while swimming.

Students should also carry photocopies of their passports with them at all times. It is extremely complicated, time consuming, and expensive to replace a U.S. passport in Cuba. This is especially true if you are not in Havana, as this is the only city on the island where you can obtain a new passport. That said, as long as you take normal precautions to safeguard your possessions, you should feel at ease in Cuba.

Foreign travelers may encounter men and women, pejoratively known as jineteros/as, who make a living off of relationships with foreigners. These encounters often arise as a “chance” meeting outside of hotels or tourist locations. When dealing with Cuban hustlers, simply shake your head, convey a firm “no”, and walk away. Please understand that Cubans are very warm and friendly and enjoy making conversation with visitors in their country. Therefore, we strongly encourage you not to shy away from all conversations or dismiss every stranger who approaches you.

Cuba is also one of the safest countries in the world for women travelers. Sexual assault is rare, and women typically travel wherever and whenever, without worry. Nonetheless, always use good judgment and take standard precautions, such as having a friend with you if you’ll be out very late. Occasionally, women will receive unwanted attention when passing a group of local men. In these situations, we suggest that you just continue walking without engaging with them or making eye contact.

Transportation around Havana

You will not need transportation to get from your homestay to your classes. However, you will have a good amount of free time during the program to explore your new city. Below are some options to get around in Havana.

The bus (guagua) is incredibly inexpensive, a one-way ride costing only 1 Cuban peso. However, the number of public buses is quite inadequate and using the buses can involve
waiting an hour or two at crowded stops and riding in overcrowded buses, especially at rush hour. Also, beware of pickpockets when riding in a guagua!

Some students take shared taxis. Shared taxis, also known as máquinas, are old American cars that run a regular route and stop for anyone who hails them along their route. Each driver sets their own price but máquinas generally charge 10 Cuban pesos to traverse one neighborhood and 20 pesos to 25 pesos for two neighborhoods. Drivers charge in CUP and oftentimes will accept the equivalent in CUC.

Yellow taxis are very comfortable but considerably more expensive. Only a few yellow taxis use their meters so always negotiate the fare before you enter the car. Generally, it is hard to find taxis in most areas of Havana, but it is easier to find them near tourist sites.

Your Neighborhood in Havana: Vedado

You will be staying in Havana, in the neighborhood of Vedado. Located between Centro Habana on the east and the Almendares River to the west, Vedado’s northern edge is where you will find the oceanfront avenue known as the Malecón, known as “Havana’s sofa,” a focal point for many Cuban festivals and social events, a seaside promenade, and a place where all Havana goes to meet, relax, and hang out. The Malecón in Vedado stretches about 4 miles to Old Havana and is ideal for a wonderful stroll. Calle 23, or La Rampa, is the principal avenue defining Vedado, and it's where you'll find many important plazas and buildings. The broad Plaza de la Revolución sits on high ground on the southern edge of Vedado and houses several government agencies, in addition to the towering José Martí Memorial, the National Theater, and the National Library. This former middle-class neighborhood is part of Plaza de la Revolución municipality and considered the commercial core of Havana with many government buildings, cultural institutions, hotels, department stores, restaurants and nightclubs. Some of the landmarks in Vedado are the hotels Nacional and Habana Libre, the University of Havana main campus and the Colon Cemetery.
Housing

During your time in Havana you will get an authentic living experience staying in a local casa particular in the residential neighborhood of Vedado, just a 25 minute walk from the University of Havana. Students will share bedrooms in double occupancy with modern toilets and showers. Breakfast and dinner is included in the program, but you will be responsible for providing your own lunches. You will be provided with bed linens and towels and will coordinate your laundry needs with your respective Cuban hosts.

Your rooms will be equipped with electrical outlets, but the type and number will vary. Generally, there are fewer outlets than in American rooms, so if you are bringing any equipment with you (chargers, hair dryers, etc.), it’s a good idea to bring an adapter (especially one for a two-pronged outlet that lets you use three-pronged plugs). A surge protector is a necessity (expect power failures and fluctuations periodically). Keep in mind that your roommate will also have electronic devices that s/he will want to use, so please be accommodating, and consider bringing a hub that will let you charge devices at the same time.

While EEAbroad encourages friendships with Cubans as a way of deepening your learning and experience in Cuba it is strictly forbidden to have anyone outside of the EEAbroad program in your room. However, if the family you are living with permits guests in the common area of their homes, please note that they are required, by Cuban authorities, to ask your guests for identification.

Where You Will Study

Your housing will be within walking distance to UH, so be prepared for morning and afternoon walks between each site. Please consider bringing a bag to carry a notepad and pen or whatever else you may need for your class time in Cuba.
The University of Havana (UH)

All Spanish language and culture classes are taught at the Universidad de la Habana (UH) which was founded in 1728, and was the first university to be founded in the Américas. As the largest university in Cuba, and one of the most well-respected in the Caribbean, it attracts students from around the world. UH offers courses across all levels of language proficiency, making it an ideal place to learn whether you're fluent or just starting your language studies.

Departing Cuba

As you prepare for your departure back to the U.S. there are a few things you should be aware of. Be sure to have your tourist card, travel affidavit, and itinerary on hand or in your carry-on bag. Be aware that some airlines charge baggage fees and these will need to be paid (in USD or CUC, depending on the airline) upon airport check-in in Havana. Since you cannot use your credit cards, you will need to have cash ready. Also, please note that there are limits to the amount of alcohol and cigars you can bring back to the U.S.

As you go through U.S. customs you can expect to be asked the purpose of your trip which you can respond as “an educational study abroad program”.

Section III. What to Pack

Cuba has a tropical climate. Average temperature in the summer is 81°F°. Factor in 80-100% humidity, an intense Caribbean sun, and you have climate to be reckoned with.

Suggested Packing List

Cuban students normally wear casual and comfortable clothes. Feel free to adapt the following list to your personal preferences and keep in mind that it is a suggested packing list.

Clothes

- Short-sleeved dress shirts and/or tops
- Dress pants or skirts
- Casual pants (you’ll likely find it too hot for jeans in the summer)
- Short-sleeve casual shirts
- Shorts
- T-shirts
- One light sweater
- A swimsuit
- Undergarments
- Pajamas
- A pair of sturdy walking shoes (and/or hiking boots if necessary)
- A pair of sandals or flip flops
- Waterproof, outdoor clothes for hiking
Health and Safety

- Hygiene kit, comb, toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, shaving gear, and washcloth.
- Sunscreen and insect repellent
- Prescription medicine in labeled containers and a written copy of the prescription (this includes birth control pills)
- A small first-aid kit (include band-aids, antibiotic cream, aspirin, cold and flu medication, cough drops, Pepto-Bismol, Immodium AD, laxatives, and anti-itching lotion)
- Tampons and sanitary napkins for the duration of your stay in Cuba. They are difficult to find in Havana and what you can find is low quality

Miscellaneous

- Chargers for cameras, cell phones, laptops, etc.
- Beach towel
- Small flashlight
- Umbrella and rain gear
- Phone numbers of family and friends
- Download the EEAbroad Recommended apps
- USB flash drive (more useful than you might think!)
- Guidebook for Cuba
- Money belt or pouch to hold passport, money, etc
- Sunglasses
- Hat/Baseball Cap
- Snacks, peanut butter, jam and/or sauces you cannot live without. They will be difficult and/or expensive to find when in Cuba.

Your Carry-on Bag

- Passport -- check your passport to ensure it is valid 6 months beyond the time you’re scheduled to return. Also, make 3 photocopies of your passport (i.e., the page with your photo and passport number). Leave the 1 copy with your family and/or emergency contact.
- Plane tickets or e-ticket confirmations
- Travel-size toiletries
- Medication, including a written copy of any prescriptions and the generic names of those prescriptions
- Credit cards and cash
- Something to read
- Something to listen to
- This handbook
- Your journal and a pen
- A change of clothes, in case your luggage is lost
- Spare glasses or contact lenses and solution
- Water
- A snack
Medication

Prescription medication should be properly labeled and left in its original packaging. **Bring enough for your entire time in Cuba.** You may need the written prescription to show at Customs, so don’t forget to include it in your carry-on bag. Also bring a full supply of your regularly used over-the-counter preparations, vitamins, and cosmetics from the U.S.

Items to Leave at Home

Please do not bring expensive jewelry, sentimental objects, designer luggage, or trunks. If you can’t decide whether or not to take something sentimental, ask yourself how you would feel if it were lost or stolen.

Linens

Sheets and towels will be provided by your housing.

Extra Expenses to Budget

Students are responsible for covering the cost of transportation, lunch, reading materials, and personal expenses. Below are estimates for consideration.

- Meals not included in program fee = $300
- Local Transportation around Havana = $200 (does not include domestic airfare)
- Personal expenses = $400
- Books & Supplies = $50 (Keep in mind that students need to plan to bring pencils, binders, etc from the U.S. where they are much cheaper and more readily available)
- Optional Weekend Trips outside of Havana = $200 USD per trip
Section IV. Resources

There are a variety of ways in which you can begin to prepare for your trip. Below we have a list of different news and culture outlets, films, apps, and books to help you prepare for your travels in Cuba. You may also want to consider learning more about the history of U.S.-Cuba relations and how things have changed in the last few years. It is a truly historic and exciting time to be in Cuba. Make sure you make the most of it and brush up on your history and Spanish!

Apps

Below is a list of recommended apps specifically for Cuba. Keep in mind that there is limited access to internet and slow connection speeds, when connected. All these apps are free and available from Play Store or AppStore, when you are in the US. Once you are in Cuba you will not be able to download these apps! Remember to download these apps and test them out before you arrive to Cuba.

- [maps.me](#) - Offline map with GPS functionality. **Download the Cuba map before arrival!**
- Spanishdict - Our favorite Spanish-English dictionary.
- A La Mesa - Directory of restaurants in Cuba. Photos, menus, and contact information. Made in Cuba.
- Whatsapp - Best video chat for low bandwidth connections. Make sure your family downloads it too!
- Tunnelbear - Free VPN. The use of some U.S. applications are restricted in Cuba such as the (Apple) App Store and Spotify. A VPN can work around this.

Current Events

The following websites are a good place to start for Cuban news:


Bohemia: [www.bohemia.cu](http://www.bohemia.cu) - Prominent Cuban magazine (Spanish only).

El Toque: [www.eltoque.com](http://www.eltoque.com)/category/english - Multimedia platform by Cuban millennials.

Culture

Havana Insider: www.havanainsider.com - Website and brochure outlining Havana’s newest and best restaurants.

Vistar Magazine: www.vistarmagazine.com - Independent Cuban online magazine on Cuban music and culture (Spanish only).

Films

**Comandante** (2003): Political documentary, by American director Oliver Stone, that gives an up close and personal interview with Cuban leader Fidel Castro on a diverse range of topics.

**Fresa y Chocolate** (1993): This Oscar nominated film follows the unlikely connection between two very different men.

**Buena Vista Social Club** (1999): This documentary follows guitarist Ry Cooder as he assembles stars from a by-gone era to create one of the island’s most recognized ensembles.

**Habanastation** (2011): This drama addresses inequalities in Cuba through the game console, Playstation, and the relationship of two boys of different social strata.

**Cuba and the Cameraman** (2017): Life in Cuba over the course of 45 years, from the cautious optimism of the early 70s to the harrowing 90s after the fall of the USSR and the 2016 death of Fidel Castro.
Books

Moon Handbooks: Cuba
Christopher Baker

The Other Side of Paradise: Life in the new Cuba
Julia Cooke

Havana: A Subtropical Delirium
Mark Kurlansky

Havana Real: One Woman Fights to Tell the Truth about Cuba Today
Yoani Sánchez

Section V: EEAbroad Contact Information

In the U.S.

Educational Experiences Abroad | Tel: 1-800-208-2114

In Cuba

Cuba Program Manager, Alejandro Murillo | Tel: +53-5559-8837
Section VI: Program Calendar

**May 31**
Arrival to Jose Martí Airport. Transfer to homestays in Havana. Orientation around the neighborhood. Orientation session. Welcome dinner.

**June 1**
Visit Revolution square and Jose Martí Memorial. Guided walking tour of Old Havana. Lunch included in Old Havana. Salsa class. Dinner at homestay.

**June 2**
Visit and exercise at local farmers markets. Guided visit of the Museo de la Revolución. Lunch included. Tour of Modern Havana. Dinner at homestay.

**June 3**
Spanish sufficiency test and course registration at University of Havana (UH). Orientation around the university (9am-12pm). Lunch on own. Dinner at homestay.

**June 4**
Morning Spanish class at UH (9am - 12pm). Lunch on own. Dinner at homestay.

**June 5**
Morning Spanish class at UH (9am - 12pm). Lunch on own. Dinner at homestay.

**June 6**
Morning Spanish class at UH (9am - 12pm). Lunch on own. Dinner at homestay.

**June 7**
Morning Spanish class at UH (9am - 12pm). Lunch on own. Dinner at homestay.

**June 8-9**
FREE WEEKEND (*Optional excursion offered)

**June 10**
Morning Spanish class at UH. Lunch on own. Dinner at homestay.

**June 11**
Morning Spanish class at UH (9am - 12pm). Lunch on own. Dinner at homestay.

**June 12**
Morning Spanish class at UH (9am - 12pm). Lunch on own. Dinner at homestay.

**June 13**
Morning Spanish class at UH (9am - 12pm). Lunch on own. Dinner at homestay.

**June 14**
Morning Spanish class at UH (9am - 12pm). Lunch on own. Dinner at homestay.

**June 15-16**
FREE WEEKEND (*Optional excursion offered)

**June 17**
Morning Spanish class at UH (9am - 12pm). Lunch on own. Dinner at homestay.

**June 18**
Morning Spanish class at UH (9am-12pm). Lunch on own. Dinner at homestay.

**June 19**
Morning Spanish class at UH (9am - 12pm). Lunch on own. Dinner at homestay.

**June 20**
Morning Spanish class at UH (9am - 12pm). Lunch on own. Dinner at homestay.

**June 21**
Morning Spanish class at UH (9am - 12pm). Lunch on own. Dinner at homestay.

**June 22-23**
FREE WEEKEND (*Optional excursion offered)

**June 24**
Morning Spanish class at UH (9am - 12pm). Lunch on own. Dinner at homestay.

**June 25**
Morning Spanish class at UH (9am - 12pm). Lunch on own. Dinner at homestay.

**June 26**
Morning Spanish class at UH (9am - 12pm). Lunch on own. Dinner at homestay.
June 27  Morning Spanish class at UH (9am-12pm). Lunch on own. Dinner at homestay.
June 28  Morning Spanish class at UH (9am-12pm). Lunch on own. Farewell dinner.
June 29  End of program. Departure from Jose Martí International Airport.

Optional Excursions (Approx. $200 per student)
A minimum of 5 students required per trip.

PINAR DEL RÍO & VIÑALES
MATANZAS & VARADERO
BAY OF PIGS & CIENFUEGOS