

Cuba Colonial - CCC

15 days: Cuba

What's Included

Salsa Lesson in Trinidad, Group dinner in Trinidad, Entrance and visit to Castillo del Morro.

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and G Adventures. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

VALIDITY: Valid for all trips departing January 1st, 2012 - December 31st, 2012

Trip Style

Classic: The trips we've build our reputation on.

Designed for maximum variety, these trips are geared towards travellers searching for a healthy mix of active exploration, uncommon landscapes, amazing wildlife and local cultures.

Service Level

Standard:

- Great value, reasonable prices, quality experiences
- Comfortable and varied tourist-class accommodations chosen for location and character
- Mix of public and private transport for the best overall experience
- All the top highlights included, plus plenty of time to explore on your own

Physical Grading

2: There'll be some light walking and hiking. Suitable for most fitness levels. Nothing too challenging.

Itinerary



Day 1 Havana

Arrive in Havana at any time. Check into our hotel and enjoy the city.

One of the oldest cities in the western hemisphere, Havana was designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1982. It contains a wealth of colonial architecture, and the old city and streets around the malecon (ocean-side walkway) are best discovered on a walking tour, which will be provided by your Chief Experience Officer (CEO) on Day 2.

The Spaniard Diego Velázquez moved San Cristobal de la Habana in 1519 from its original site to its present location and the city remained a port of relative obscurity, within the empire, until gold and silver began to flow from New World mines back to Spain. Havana became the gathering hub for shipments of treasure from the ports of Cartagena (Colombia) and Veracruz (Mexico).

Soon pirates turned their attention to the port and the city of Havana and its annual treasure trove became the number one target for the Dutch, English and French. Eventually the Spanish began construction of various forts and a protecting wall to repel the invaders. Nevertheless, the city was sacked in 1762 and held by the British under the command of Lord Albermale for nearly a year. Eventually, the Spanish exchanged the Florida territory in trade for the island. The end of the British occupation also signalled the beginning of more economic freedom for the islanders, as they were given the right to trade with cities other than Cadiz in Spain. The ensuing economic boom translated into steady growth in population and material progress.

Day 2 Havana (1B)

The main area of interest to visitors is La Habana Vieja (The Old City), where walking or a taxi tour are the best modes of transportation. Your CEO will take you on an included walking tour of the historical centre. Points of interest in this part of town include La Catedral de San Cristóbal de La Habana, the Palacio de los Marqueses de Aguas Claras (which now houses a restaurant), the Museo de Arte Colonial and the Plaza de Armas, with its statue of Manuel de Céspedes (one of the leaders of the Cuban independence movement). The Palacio de los Capitanes Generales is also located on the Plaza de Armas, which now houses the Museo de La Ciudad. You will find the oldest colonial fortress on the plaza's northeast sector, the Castillo Real de la Fuerza, whose construction began in 1558.

The city is home to various museums, and depending on your area of interest, there is practically a museum for everyone. One of the city's (and the island's) most prominent attractions though, are its music and clubs. Everywhere you go you will hear and feel the music and see people freely dancing in the streets. The island literally pulses with the beat and blend of Afro-Hispanic rhythms and movement.

Please note: the heat of Cuba may affect you upon arrival, with a general sense of lethargy and/or loss of appetite. This is no cause for alarm, it is simply your body's reaction to the heat. Be sure to drink plenty of water and do not attempt too much in any given day.

Day 3 Santa Clara (1B)

Heading east along the island, we come to Santa Clara, a key city in the Revolution. Santa Clara is probably best known as the home of the statue of Ernesto Che Guevara at the Plaza de la Revolución. The remains of Che and his comrades who fell in Bolivia are interred in the mausoleum at this site.

Santa Clara was founded in 1689 by Spaniards hoping to evade the pirate raids on the coastal cities. Today it is a modern, industrial centre and holds a special place in the history of the revolution as the first large city to be liberated by the Revolutionary Forces in December 1958.

About 18 men, under the command of Comandante Ernesto (Ché) Guevara, fought against more than 400 heavily armed Batista

government troops and captured the armoured train. There is a large monument dedicated to the derailing of this train full of armaments that was essential to the triumph of the revolution. Both the monument and the site are referred to as 'Tren Blindado'. The Museo Histórico de la Revolución chronicles the Battle of Santa Clara, and it is here that a gargantuan statue of El Ché was erected to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the revolutionary hero's murder in Bolivia.

Estimated Travel Time: 5 hours

Approximate Distance: 260 km

Day 4-6 Trinidad (1D)

Enjoy the beautiful scenery as we continue on our journey to the colonial city of Trinidad, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1988 and home to lovely Spanish-style churches and great museums. Upon arrival, your Chief Experience Officer (CEO) will take you on an orientation walk around town to help you get your bearings.

La Villa de la Santísima Trinidad was founded by Velásquez in 1514 and the defender of indigenous rights in the Americas, Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, attended over the settlement's first mass. The future conqueror of Mexico, Hernán Cortés recruited sailors here for his future expedition into that land. It is a charming, small town with the green mountains of the Sierra del Escambray in the background, and the turquoise waters and pure white, sand beaches of the Caribbean Sea just a short distance away. The town and area also saw a lot of action during and following the triumph of the Revolution, as gangs of counter revolutionaries hid out and struck from the safety of the mountains. The Museo Nacional de la Lucha Contra los Bandidos and the Casa de los Mártires de Trinidad chronicles the struggles of this period in the town's history.

Trinidad is the hub of the cultural activity, and you are never out of earshot from a group of musicians playing local salsa or son. The town also has the requisite Casa de la Trova, a mainstay of Cuban musical culture in every town, the Palenque, Las Ruinas, Teatro de Brunet, the Artex, the nightlife, the conga lessons and salsa lessons. Enjoy an included salsa lesson during your time in Trinidad.

Those visitors who wish to pursue outdoor activities will find Trinidad a haven for horseback or bicycle riding (don't expect any modern mountain bikes though!). If an unspoiled, white sand beach sounds like what you're looking for, try snorkelling or diving in nearby Playa Ancón, just 12 km (7.5 miles) from town.

The nearby Valle de los Ingenios (Valley of Sugarmills) is where you will see some remains of the island's vast sugar cane plantations. The beautiful green landscape has attracted visitors from around the world who visit it for enjoying its historical and cultural attributes. Valle de los Ingenios was fairly inactive until the 1800s, when French refugees fleeing a slav revolt in Haiti landed here en masse and brought with them sugar cane cultivation. The new residents settled and farmed in the valley. Wealth flowed into the local economy from sugar cane cultivation and the area produced one third of the country's sugar at one point. The sugar boom was terminated by the two wars of independence, but the wealth generated by the industry remains visible in the town's once grand mansions, colourful public buildings, wrought iron grill work and cobblestone streets.

Indeed, the last three centuries have not only changed the landscape, but have left about 73 architectural and archaeological sites to be explored. There is a landscape of archaeological remains and architectural ruins that exemplify the town's vernacular and industry: the boiler house, the dregs house, the manor house, the slave quarters, warehouses, stables, distilleries, tile factories, bell towers, as well as other masonry works to dam and conduct the water of brooks and cisterns used in the recollection of rain water, among others.

Estimated Travel Time: 4 hours

Approximate Distance: 130 km

Day 7 Camagüey

Your journey will continue east across the Carretera Central to Camagüey, the third largest city on the big island. It retains much of its colonial heritage in its buildings, plazas and its tinajones, large clay pots traditionally used in Spain and in its New World colonies for collecting rain water. Opt for a city tour and explore the narrow winding streets and impressive sites.

Camagüey has a rich tradition of cultural and technological leadership within Cuba. It is the birthplace of poet laureate Nicolás Guillén, whose brilliant *Mis Dos Abuelos* clearly captures and reflects the internal struggle born of Cuba's tumultuous Afro-Hispanic heritage. Camagüey is also home of the Ballet de Camagüey, the second most important dance company in Cuba.

The citizens of Camagüey are also proud of their innovations, for Cuba's first radio and television emissions were broadcast from Camagüey and the country's first airport and commercial flights were planned and executed here. This is also a university town and has a rich cultural tradition. With its large parks and winding cobblestone streets, one will enjoy strolling through the city. That said, getting around can be a little tricky. The city was deliberately set out in an irregular and confusing street pattern, hoping to disorient

any would-be assailants, but with a little patience and time you can explore its colonial treasures on a walking tour. Most noteworthy of its churches, is the Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de la Soledad, with its baroque frescoes. The Museo Casa Natal de Ignacio Agramonte is the birthplace of the leader of the revolt, against Spain, in the late 1860s

Overnight in hotel

Estimated Travel Time: 6 hours

Approximate Distance: 260 km

Day 8-10 Santiago de Cuba (1B)

Continuing east we arrive at Santiago de Cuba, the cradle of the Revolution, and home of traditional son rhythms. There are also museums, colonial churches and buildings of more recent historical importance, such as the Moncada Barracks, which are well worth exploring. Santiago has a very vibrant traditional music scene that will entice even the shyest dancer out to experiment with some salsa moves! Upon arrival, your Chief Experience Officer (CEO) will take you on an orientation walk around town to help you get your bearings.

The city was one of many founded by Velásquez and one of its first Mayors was the future conquistador of Mexico, Hernán Cortés. For nearly one hundred years the city functioned as the island's capital and seat of power. However, it suffered through various pirate attacks, as well as through natural disasters and the entire region quickly became isolated from the rest of the island.

Santiago and the Oriente (east) have a large Afro-Cuban population. Many Africans were brought in as slaves to replace the dying indigenous people as labour force in the mines and ranches. The same slave rebellion that brought an influx of French refugees to the Trinidad area had the same effect on Santiago, and spurred the area's coffee and sugar cane cultivation. Santiago and the Oriente were the seat of various movements of independence and rebellion. It is the birthplace of General Antonio Maceo, the revered mulato leader in the war for independence from Spain (you will see the massive statue erected in his honour in front of the city's long-distance bus terminal).

Santiago also holds the title of "Hero City of the Republic of Cuba" for its leading role in significant events during the revolution. It was in Moncada Barracks that Fidel Castro struck out against Batista's abusive government in 1953, undergoing the trial that allowed him to expound on the government's excesses during his La Historia Me Absolverá (History Will Absolve Me) speech. The people of Santiago were the first to rise up in arms against government troops in 1956, and it was in Santiago, on January 1st, 1959, that Fidel Castro declared the triumph of the revolution in a broadcast message to the country and the world.

The city's half million residents are also proud of their cultural traditions and you will find many museums and cultural associations and clubs around the city. Santiago is where son and boleros originated, and the richness of the island's strong African heritage is evident through institutions such as the Ballet Folklórico Tumbá, a world renowned Afro-Cuban dance company. The city is also well known for its vibrant and energetic Carnaval celebrations, and its Festival of Caribbean Culture.

Located about 20 minutes drive from Santiago's city centre, beautiful "Castillo del Moro" castle will be visited in the evening to take part in the gun salute ceremony at dusk (weather permitting ofcourse). Declared Humankind's Heritage in 1997, the Castle of San Pedro de la Roca - also known as Santiago de Cuba's Morro Castle - was part of that defensive system in eastern Cuba, although its military impact was minimal due to a delay of several decades in its construction. Its main designer and architect was the famous Italian military engineer Juan Bautista Antonelli, who had been in charge of fortification works in the village of San Cristóbal de La Habana.

Along with La Socapa, La Avanzada and La Estrella, the fortress is part of the defensive system of the Bay of Santiago, and is considered the greatest and most complete example of military engineering of European Renaissance applied to the conditions of the Caribbean. According to history, the idea to build the fortress came from the then governor of that Eastern territory, Pedro de la Roca y Borja, after whom the castle was named. Construction works began in the late 16th century. Santiago de Cuba's Morro Castle, which has undergone reconstruction works on several occasions, is an architectural crown jewel of great esthetic and historic value that attracts thousands of tourists who visit the city every year. On its heavy walls and turrets, visitors can appreciate in all its magnitude the imprint of military architecture developed in Italy, Spain and Cuba from the 16th to the 19th century. Nowadays, the breathtaking fortress incorporates to the traditions of eastern Cuba a salute of artillery to the combatants who fought for the Island's independence, a ceremony that was first held in 2001.

For the ceremony, a group of artillerymen, dressed in uniforms like those worn by soldiers in Spanish-colonial times, uses a piece of artillery called Prince Pío, cast on December 19, 1805, in the Spanish city of Seville, and initially deployed at the Morro-Cabaña historic complex in Havana. The firing of the cannon also pays tribute to James (Santiago) the Apostle and Saint Barbara, the patron

saints of the city of Santiago de Cuba and the artillerymen, respectively. Prince Pío, which was deployed on the platform of Naples at the fortress, takes its new responsibility and marks the moment in which the Cuban national flag is lowered in the castle.

The new attraction of San Pedro de la Roca for visitors, both nationals and foreigners, has its antecedent in the shots fired centuries ago from the Punta Blanca battery to welcome the ships arriving at the port. Despite its minimum military value, due to the delay in its construction, Santiago de Cuba's Morro Castle treasures nowadays the main exponents of the Museum of Piracy, an exhibit of an activity that the fortress was intended to fight.

Estimated Travel Time: 8 hours

Approximate Distance: 330 km

Day 11-13 Baracoa

Situated on a beautiful bay with the mountains of the Sierra del Purial in the background, Baracoa was the first settlement founded by the Spanish in Cuba, and was only accessible by sea until the 1960s. It is now a quaint colonial city with a population of approximately 50,000. There are numerous options for outdoor activities in the nearby mountains and bays. Upon arrival, your Chief Experience Officer (CEO) will take you on an orientation walk around town to help you get your bearings.

The name Baracoa is of Arawak origin for the word meaning "elevated land." The town functioned as the island's first capital for a few years, until that title and honour went to Santiago. The town remained fairly isolated from the rest of the country though, as the only link to other outposts was the ocean. The first paved road linking Baracoa to Guantánamó was finished in the 1960s, but the settlement maintains a small town, colonial feel, with its beautiful malecón, various forts built to withstand pirate attacks and colourful buildings dating back to the Spanish colonial period.

The best way to get around town is on foot and you will want to take time to visit places like the Catedral de Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, with the impressive bust of the Indigenous leader Hatuey (burned at the stake for his refusal to accept either the Spanish, or their Catholic religion). El Castillo de Seboruco, Fuerte de la Punta and Fuerte Matachín are Baracoa's 3 remaining constructions attesting to the town's beleaguered past as a magnet for privateers in the Caribbean.

Outside of town the mountains and black sand beaches beckon to outdoor enthusiasts, with optional hiking excursions near El Yunque, the famous table land sighted and described by Columbus during his first voyage to the island and along the Río Toa. Playa Maguana and the smaller Playa Nava are both nearby and are accessible by bike or taxi. Parque Nacional Alejandro de Humboldt is approximately 40 km outside of town and well worth a visit.

Guantánamo Bay Naval Base is located at the southeastern end of Cuba (19°54'N 75°9'W). This base has been used by the United States Navy for more than a century. The United States controls the land on both sides of the southern part of Guantánamo Bay (Bahía de Guantánamo in Spanish) under a lease set up in the wake of the 1898 Spanish-American War. The Cuban government denounces the lease on grounds that article 52 of the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties voids treaties procured by force or its threatened use.

Estimated Travel Time: 5 hours

Approximate Distance: 200 km

Day 14 Havana

We transfer to Santiago de Cuba for our flight to Havana, one of the oldest cities in the western hemisphere. Once we are back in Havana, enjoy a walking tour of the city centre with your Chief Experience Officer (CEO).

Estimated Travel Time: 8 hours

Approximate Distance: 1100 km

Day 15 Havana (1B)

Depart at any time.

What's Included

Salsa Lesson in Trinidad, Group dinner in Trinidad, Entrance and visit to Castillo del Morro.

Highlights

Salsa dancing with the locals, walking in Che Guevara's footsteps, bonding with your host family in a homestay, exploring breathtaking beaches.

Dossier Disclaimer

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Itinerary Disclaimer

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

Important Notes

From 01 May 2010 all tourists entering Cuba will require "Medical Travel Insurance" that is on a Government approved list. We urge you to check with your insurance provider to ensure your policy is on the list of approved providers. If it is not, tourists will be forced to purchase a Government approved policy on arrival in Cuba. The cost of buying this insurance in Cuba will be in addition to any insurance already purchased, and it is likely the rates for these policies will be inflated compared to what you may purchase in advance from home.

G Adventures issues insurance policies at competitive rates, and our insurance provider has been confirmed as recognized by Cuban officials.

If you would like peace-of-mind and to purchase insurance from G Adventures, please contact our reservations team on 1800 465 5600 (from North America), or 08444 101030 (from the UK) or 39413 5820 (from Australia) or travel@gadventures.com

Group Leader Description

All G Adventures group trips are accompanied by one of our group leaders, a G Adventures representative, or an expedition team. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting- we think it's the best of both worlds.

Group Size Notes

Max 15, avg 10

Your Fellow Travellers

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. Your fellow travellers will probably come from all corners of the world and are likely to be of a variety of ages too. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part.

Meals Included

4 breakfasts.

Meals

Eating is a big part of traveling. Travelling with G Adventures you experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available out in the world. Generally meals are not included in the trip price when there is a choice of eating options, to give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat. It also gives you more budgeting flexibility, though generally food is cheap. Our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. Your group leader will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. Please refer to the meals included and budget information for included meals and meal budgets.

Meal Budget

Allow CUC380-600 for meals not included.

Transport

Private van, taxis, plane, walking.

Local Flights

If required all local flights are included in the cost of your tours unless otherwise noted. It is important that we have your passport information at the time of booking in order to process these tickets. Internal flight tickets are issued locally and will be given to you prior to the flight departure.

Single Travellers

We believe single travellers should not have to pay more to travel so our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers joining group trips are paired in twin or multi-share accommodation with someone of the same sex for the duration of the trip. Some of our Independent trips are designed differently and single travellers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price.

Accommodation

Hotels (4 nts), homestays (10 nts).

My Own Room

Please note that if you have booked the "My Own Room" option for this tour, you will receive your own single room for all night stops on tour.

About Accommodation

Accommodation on this trip is a mix of simple hotels and Cuban homestays. The homestays allow you to participate in a typical Cuban living experience by staying with a family of approximately 5 people in their home, or 'casa particular'. This family rents a room and in most cases a private bath to 1 or 2 people. Homestays will be the main accommodation while visiting the cities of Santa Clara, Trinidad, Santiago and Baracoa.

Joining Hotel

Hotel Plaza
Ignacio Agramonte # 267
Habana Vieja
Havana, Cuba
Tel.: +53 7 860-8583
Fax: +53 7 860-8869

Joining Instructions

The best way to get to the arrival point hotel is via taxi from the airport. There are fixed (official) rates from the airport (CUC25 at time of writing). It is a 25-30 minute drive (depending on traffic) into the city.

If you have booked an arrival transfer with G Adventures: After claiming your luggage, please proceed into the arrivals hall, please look for a representative from our local operator "Cuba Artex Paradiso" who should meet you with a sign stating either your name or G Adventures. If you have pre-booked an airport transfer and have not made contact with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, we recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel. Please apply to your travel agent on your return for a refund of the transfer cost if this occurs.

Please note that Day 1 is an arrival day and no activities have been planned, so you may arrive at any time. Similarly the last day is a departure day in which no activities are planned.

Your Tour Leader will organize a short meeting soon after arrival, during which you will meet other tour participants and receive information about general and specific aspects of the trip. Your leader will contact you at the hotel on Day 1 and make sure you are settled comfortably. If you arrive late, s/he will leave you a message detailing what time and where you should meet the next morning.

Arrival Complications

We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, as soon as possible please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your trip leader (if you are not on a group tour please refer to the emergency contact details provided in this dossier). If you are unable to get in touch with your leader, please refer to our emergency contact details.

Emergency Contact

Should you need to contact G Adventures during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call our local contact in Havana, Cuba, as mentioned below, or our local office in San José, Costa Rica. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so that we may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

G Adventures local Operator (Cuba) - Artex Paradiso
24 Hour Customer Service: (53-5) 285-2570 (Javier Pena)
Paradiso Customer Service Phone (8am to 8pm): (53-5) 831-7444

G Adventures San José, Costa Rica,
Open Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm local time (GMT -6).
Tel: Int. Dialing Code +506 2224-5560.

Costa Rica Emergency Cell Phone: +506 8322 9140 (after office hours).

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office in Costa Rica, we have a toll-free line within North America (or our regular direct line), which will connect you directly with our Toronto office.

Toll-free, North America only: 1 888 800 4100
Calls from UK: 0844 272 0000
Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618
Outside North America, Australia and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

What to Take

We recommend the use of a duffel bag or backpack (whatever you find easiest to carry). A good size daypack is also essential.

Checklist

- Cash and travellers cheques (see money exchange section for details)
- Credit or debit card (see personal spending money)
- G Adventures vouchers and dossier
- Passport (with photocopies)
- Travel insurance (with photocopies)
- Airline tickets (with photocopies)
- Any entry visas or vaccination certificates required
- Camera and film
- Reading/writing material
- Binoculars

- Cover for backpacks
- Pocketknife
- Flash light
- Moneybelt
- Windproof/waterproof jacket
- Small towel and swim wear
- 4 shirts/t-shirts
- hand sanitizers/ antibacterial wipes
- Sun hat
- 2 pair of shorts
- 1 pairs of long trousers
- 1 pair hiking pants/track pants
- sturdy walking shoes
- Sunblock
- Sunglasses
- Toiletries (biodegradable)
- Watch or alarm clock
- Water bottle
- Flashlight
- First-aid kit (should contain lip salve, Aspirin, Band Aids, anti-histamine, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, re-hydration powder, extra prescription drugs you may be taking).
- Pair of closed shoes if you plan on taking in the Tropicana show, accompanied by semi formal attire (dresses/skirts/long pants/dress shirts). No sandals or shorts are permitted into the theatre.

Laundry

Laundry facilities are offered by the homestays and some of our hotels for a charge. Prices vary, so be sure to ask how much it will cost beforehand. There will be times when you may want to or have to do your own laundry so we suggest you bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap.

Visas

All countries require a valid passport (with a minimum 6 months validity). Contact your local embassy, or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent. IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO HAVE THE CORRECT TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION.

A "Tourist Card" is required for most nationalities to travel to Cuba. Many airlines to Cuba include the cost of this card in the flight cost and distribute the card during the flight. Some airlines do not provide this card, so it is best to call your airline and ask about it prior to travel. Tourist cards are also available from a Cuban consulate or embassy and cost approximately \$20-\$25CUC.

Upon arrival to Cuba, keep your Tourist Card in a safe place, as it is necessary to show at all homestays and also upon departure from the country.

Destination Guide

For practical information on weather, typical costs, visa information, special events and much more, our Destination Travel Guide is the place to visit! This handy guide will tell you everything you need to know about everywhere we go! Head to <http://www.gadventures.com/travel-guide> for detailed information on the countries and cities we visit.

Spending Money

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

Money Exchange

Due to measures taken by the Cuban government regarding their national currency and exchange, if you need to pay a local payment it will be collected in Cuban Convertible Pesos (CUC) until further notice. Please bring enough cash (in other currencies - see below for more info) to convert into CUC to pay your local payment if applicable.

As of November 8, 2004 the US Dollar is no longer being used as official currency. The Cuban Convertible Peso is at a similar value to the US Dollar, and can be acquired at any change house or bank. Please note that any transaction involving the US Dollar in Cuba automatically incurs a 18% fee.

People traveling in Cuba with US Dollar credit cards can still use them for cash advances, however as explained above transactions will be subject to an 18% fee. Bank cards from US banks do not work in Cuba and cards using the Cirrus or Maestro systems are also very difficult to use. The best credit cards to bring are Visa Plus. Please note that ATMs are not wide spread and generally speaking debit cards do not work in Cuba from any foreign banks.

If you plan to use a bank card, it would be advisable to check with your bank directly prior to your departure as to whether the card should work in Cuba. It is also important to remember that in order to change travelers cheques you will need to show the receipt from where they were purchased.

Please also note that until further notice AUD and NZD are not accepted in Cuba. Because of these difficulties we recommend that you arrive in Cuba with CAD, EUR, or GBP, which can be easily converted into Cuban Convertible Pesos (CUC) at the 8% conversion fee.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE TIP: Please be advised that slightly torn notes, notes that have been heavily marked or are faded may be difficult to exchange. It is best to bring notes in fairly good condition, in denominations lower than 100USD (or equivalent).

You are advised NOT to change money on the street outside the airport or your hotel. Reliable money exchange may only be done at Cadecas (change houses), Banks, or Hotel Reception.

As currency exchange rates can fluctuate often we ask that you refer to the following website for daily exchange rates: www.xe.com

Emergency Fund

Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD \$200 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

Departure Tax

CUC25

Tipping

It is customary in Latin America to tip service providers such as waiters, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. Tipping is an expected - though not compulsory - component of your tour program and an expression of satisfaction with the persons who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use. Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from \$5-10 USD per day depending on the quality and length of the service; ask your tour leader for specific recommendations based on the circumstances and culture.

Also at the end of each trip if you felt your G Adventures Tour Leader did an outstanding job, tipping is appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline \$20-25 USD per person, per week can be used.

Optional Activities

All prices are per person, estimates in either CUC amounts or USD. Please see the Money Exchange section above regarding the currency situation in Cuba.

And are subject to change as services are provided by third party operators.

Havana:

City tour \$15-25

Las Terrazas \$38

Tropicana show \$60-\$100 (prices depend on seat location)

Museum entrances 3-7CUC

Dance lesson \$12-\$15/hour

Trinidad:

Bicycle rental 5CUC full day
Horseback riding 20 CUC
Snorkelling (rental) \$5
Diving \$60 (2-tank dive)
Museum entrances \$2-\$3
Topes de Collantes Park \$30 (price per taxi, round trip) \$6.50 (entry)
Conga Lessons 10\$
Tour to Cienfuegos 48 CUC
Sunset cruise (minimum 10 people) 15 CUC per person
Music House entrances: \$1-\$3

Trinidad:

Bicycle rental \$5 full day
Horseback riding 15 CUC
Day trip \$30 (Valle de los Ingenios)
Snorkelling (rental) \$5
Diving \$60 (2-tank dive)
Museum entrances \$2-\$3
Topes de Collantes Park \$30 (price per taxi, round trip) \$6.50 (entry)
Conga Lessons 10\$
Tour to Cienfuegos 48 CUC
Sunset cruise (minimum 10 people) 15 CUC per person
Music House entrances: \$1-\$3

Camaguey:

City Tour by bici-taxi 5 CUC

Santiago:

Museum entrance(s) \$2-\$3
Casa de La Trova \$3
City tour \$11-23 (w/ and w/out lunch)
La Gran Piedra \$1 (entry)
Van day-trip \$20
Cemetery 3\$

Baracoa:

Museum entrance \$2-\$3
Finca Duaba \$20
Bicycle rental \$5 (per day)
Yumuri river tour \$12
El Yunque hike \$18
Maguana Beach \$20 (price per taxi, round trip) or 5 CUC by bus

Health

Please note inoculations may be required for the country visited. It is your responsibility to consult with your travel doctor for up to date medical travel information well before departure.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information well before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit and hand sanitizers / antibacterial wipes as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that quite often we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities, and for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc. When selecting your trip please carefully read the brochure and itinerary and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please refer to the Physical and Culture Shock ratings for trip specific information. G Adventures reserves the right to exclude any traveller from all or part of a trip without refund if in the reasonable opinion of our group leader they are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group.

Safety and Security

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage. When travelling on a group trip, please note that your CEO has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Your CEO will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your CEO will assist you with options available in a given location please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

Protests and Demonstrations- Protests and demonstrations, even those that are well intended, have the potential to turn violent with no warning. Counter protests can also turn violent. Action by security forces to disperse demonstrators and protesters may occur at any time. If you are in an area where demonstrators or protesters are gathering, avoid the temptation of staying for a good photo opportunity and leave the area immediately.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards) have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).

Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk.

We take all prudent measures in relation to your safety. For ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling, please visit:

www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/

Trip Specific Safety

MAKING FRIENDS WITH LOCALS

Sexuality is very open in Cuba and that can shock some travellers, especially women. There are many Cuban men and women (known as Jineteros), who make a living escorting foreigners. Offers of this service are very common in Havana. Be aware of this practice and keep in mind that some locals who approach you may do so to take advantage of your presence.

NB. We advise traveling around the streets of Havana City in small groups, rather than individually (especially for women travelers). In addition, we suggest not carrying any easy targets for potential troublemakers like cameras, purses, or anything that is easy to snatch or grab. We advise this not expecting trouble, but rather erring on the side of caution.

Medical Form

Our small group adventures bring together people of all ages. It is very important you are aware that, as a minimum, an average level of fitness and mobility' is required to undertake our easiest programs. Travellers must be able to walk without the aid of another person, climb 3-4 flights of stairs, step on and off small boats, and carry their own luggage at a minimum. Travellers with a pre-existing medical condition are required to complete a short medical questionnaire, which must be signed by their physician. This is to ensure that travellers have the necessary fitness and mobility to comfortably complete their chosen trip. While our CEOs work hard to ensure that all our travellers are catered for equally, it is not their responsibility to help individuals who cannot complete the day's activities unaided. Please refer to the physical ratings in this Trip Details document for more information. Please note that all passengers traveling to Antarctica are required to fill out this questionnaire.

The medical questionnaire can be found online at:

www.gadventures.com/medical-form.

A Couple of Rules

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your CEO, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy please bear in mind that all clients must have medical coverage and that we require a minimum coverage of USD 200,000 for repatriation and emergency rescue. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. If you have credit card insurance we require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

Trip Specific Responsible Travel

Threatened species advisory - Polimita snail

In Baracoa, please do not buy any product involving snail shells. The highly attractive *Polimita picta*, with its vividly-streaked shell, is indigenous to this corner of Cuba and found nowhere else in the world -- but it is now under serious threat, largely because of its use in tourist souvenirs. Help responsible Cubans protect their flora and fauna; refuse all snail-shell souvenirs.

Responsible Travel

Being a responsible tour operator is at the heart of what G Adventures is all about. From the start, G Adventures has been committed to offering low-impact tours that benefit traveler and host alike. While our sustainable tourism policies are constantly evolving, our commitment to socially conscious, grassroots style travel has never changed. We work with local communities, businesses and individuals to develop sustainable tourism opportunities that help local economies while minimizing negative environmental and cultural impacts.

We would like to give you a couple of tips to start you thinking about traveling sustainably.

-Please bring rechargeable batteries, a battery charger (and plug adapter if necessary). Batteries are incredibly toxic and many places that we travel do not have proper disposal facilities. Rechargeables are best but if this is not possible we recommend that you bring any used batteries back home with you for proper disposal.

-Please ask before taking pictures. Just as you would not like to have a stranger come up to you and take a picture of you while sitting on your front porch either do the locals of the places that we visit. As you can imagine pictures of their children are also not appreciated.

For more information about our commitment to responsible travel, please visit the Sustainable Tourism section of the G Adventures website: www.gadventures.com

Planeterra-The G Adventures Foundation

Through our commitment to responsible tourism we have developed the Planeterra Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of people and communities around the world through support of international charities, local organizations and community projects in the places that we visit on our tours. G Adventures matches all individual donations and pays all administration costs, which means that 100% of each donation is doubled and goes directly to support our projects. For more information about Planeterra and the projects we support, or to make a donation, please visit www.planeterra.org

Planeterra Dollar-A-Day Program

Our Dollar-A-Day Program provides travellers with the opportunity to help us give back to the people and places visited on our tours by donating one dollar per day for the duration of their tour. 100% of these proceeds will go directly to support our Planeterra projects.

To participate in this program please indicate at the time of booking that you would like to participate in G Adventures' Dollar-A-Day program, either by clicking the check box online, or by advising your G Adventures specialist or travel agent. (Note: Donation will be charged in the currency of your booking)

Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us that you'll receive a special discount code for free online prints and we'll give you 5% off the price of your next G Adventures trip if your feedback is completed on-line within 30 days of finishing your trip. Please visit <http://www.gadventures.com/evaluations>

Newsletter

Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from G Adventures, subscribe at www.gadventures.com/newsletter_signup

Stay current on how our company invests in our global community through our foundation – Planeterra. Sign up for [Planeterra's monthly news](#) to learn more about how to give back and support the people and places we love to visit.

Travel Forum - The Watering Hole

Be sure to stop by [The Watering Hole](#), our adventure travel forum. If you're interested in meeting others booked on your upcoming trip, check out the [Departure Lounge](#) section of our forum and introduce yourself. Otherwise, just drop in at anytime to share some travel tips, ask questions, meet other travellers and quench your thirst for travel. Our forum is located at wateringhole.gadventures.com.

Keeping in Touch

If you need to be contacted while travelling we recommend that you set up an email address that can be accessed on the road, rather than relying on postal mail. Email cafes are becoming increasingly commonplace and cheap throughout the regions we visit, and have quickly become the preferred way for our CEOs and travellers to stay in touch. If someone wishes to contact you in an emergency while you are on one of our trips we recommend that they contact your local booking agent, or refer to our Emergency Contact. We recommend that family and friends don't try to contact you through phoning hotels en route, as our hotels are subject to change, and our hotel receptions often don't have English speaking staff.

Departs

DEPARTS SAT WEEKLY NOV-MAR AND TWICE MONTHLY APR-OCT

Recommendation

For the full Cuban experience combine this trip with Cuba Libre - see code [CCL](#).