CGE CUBA TRIP LEADER’S GUIDE

**[as of May 2015]**

Trip leader responsibilities in Cuba differ from those at other sites because CGE has no permanent staff in-country and because the U.S. government restricts how its citizens can travel to the island. This guide shares information about the responsibilities of a CGE trip leader in Cuba. It is a work in progress, given changes in U.S. law and in the Cuban context. Your help is needed to keep it current. Following your trip, please send ITS/Susan updates and new information to add to it.

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***I. Getting Started***

Thank you for leading a CGE customized program in Cuba!This guide details various aspects of logistics and programming in Cuba. It highlights those that differ from other CGE locations. After you read through this guide, ITS/Susan will orient you about the particulars of your group.

The following list will get you started:

Airfare - Please check with ITS/Susan about flight arrangements for your travel seminar group. You will need to arrive in Havana or Miami the day before the dates listed on the Trip Calendar (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/its/>

* U.S.-based trip leaders travel on the same charter flights to and from Miami to Havana as the travel seminar participants. ITS/Olee will book your charter flights. You will need to fill out a Marazul Charter application and provide ITS/Susan with a copy of the information page of your passport. It is your responsibility to book your own flights to and from Miami and make hotel reservations there before and after the trip. You should plan to arrive in Miami the day before the group departs for Cuba. Located inside the terminal at Concourse E, the Miami International Airport Hotel (<http://www.miami.airporthotel411.com/>), is convenient. Its prices for a single room are comparable to other hotels nearby. Or, it may be possible to stay in the same hotel with your group, if that information is known in a timely way. Making reservations early helps keep costs down, especially during peak periods.
* Non-U.S.-based trip leaders meet the group in Havana. It is your responsibility to book your own flights to and from Havana and arrange for your Cuban visa and the health insurance coverage mandated by the Cuban government for all foreign tourists. Generally, you should arrange to arrive in Havana the day before the travel seminar participants arrive and depart after 5 pm on their date of departure or the following day. Please coordinate with ITS/Susan to arrange for your lodging in Havana for those nights that the group is not in-country. You may need to find your own way to and from the airport.

Participant information – ITS/Fatimah will send you trip leader documents, including participant lists and health information. It is your responsibility to takes copies of these documents with you to Cuba.

Post-trip communication – Within 2 weeks of your return from Cuba, it is your responsibility to compile the group’s actual itinerary, personalize the post-trip sample letter (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/its/>), and use the list of email addresses provided to you by ITS/Fatimah to send both documents to travel seminar participants and ITS/Susan.

Money – ITS/David will give you a trip budget listing expected in-country trip expenses. Although CGE will send a wire transfer of funds through Marazul to cover most group expenses, you will need to carry cash (U.S. dollars or Mexican pesos) to exchange into Cuban currency. If you take cash from one of CGE’s international sites, report this as a transfer to Minneapolis. This cash should not be reported in your site report. The expenses will be submitted in Minneapolis. To that end, by the third business day of the month or within 2 weeks of your return, whichever comes first, you will be required to submit a trip expense form (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge>/) and receipts to ITS/Olee.

1. ***Trip Leader Responsibilities***

Pre-departure:

* Read the CGE Cuba Trip Leader’s Guide (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge>/)
* Participate in a trip leader orientation with ITS/Susan
* Review trip leader documents about the participants in your group, with particular attention to health problems, allergies, dietary preferences/restrictions, and Spanish proficiency
* Print copies of documents listed in Section III of this guide and/or save them on a flash drive to carry with you to Cuba. It is difficult to make photocopies in Cuba, so err on the side of bringing hard copies with you.
* Participate in a Skype meeting with the in-group leaders and ITS/Susan
* If it is an Augsburg group, U.S.-based staff may participate in pre-departure classes/orientations
* Review the trip budget with ITS/David
* Make arrangements to get the cash you will need to carry to Cuba to pay for trip expenses
* Determine which cell phone(s) you will be carrying 24/7 in Cuba and share the number(s) with ITS/Susan and other CGE colleagues as appropriate

While in Cuba:

* Exchange money, pay trip expenses, get receipts for all transactions, and log them on the trip expense form (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge>/)
* Carry cell phone(s) 24/7 so that you can be reached in case of an emergency
* Follow OIP Emergency Management plan and file incident reports if needed
* Work with the in-group leader and the MLKC guide to establish behavior rules and address any issues that arise
* Coordinate medical care for participants who are sick or injured
* Assist with translation in informal settings as needed
* Touch base with the guide every day about the schedule, travel logistics, costs associated with particular activities, opportunities for money exchange, etc.
* Upon arrival in Cuba, collect any donation items the group may have brought and consult with your MLKC guide about how best to distribute them to organizations with whom they will meet.
* Keep a record of the group’s actual itinerary
* Serve as the group’s point person with the MLKC guide to resolve any logistical issues related to food, lodging, and transportation
* Make announcements (or see that the MLKC guide does) about where the group is to meet when, upcoming activities on the daily schedule, opportunities to exchange money, etc., etc.
* Attend to the groups’ creature comforts, coordinating with MLKC staff to make sure there is drinking water, adequate bathroom breaks, etc.
* If changes are requested in the daily itinerary, convene a team of MLKC and group leader(s) to discuss options and arrive at mutually agreeable adjustments.
* As requested, assist with the facilitation of group reflections
* If a briefing is scheduled at the U.S. Interests Section for your group, call 2-3 days before to reconfirm. On the day of the briefing, ensure that all travel seminars have their passport in hand.
* Reconfirm group’s flight departing from Cuba 2-3 days before departure. At times a MLKC staff person may be willing to call to reconfirm for you, or, if need be, you can go to the airport to reconfirm. Telephone numbers for Marazul in Cuba are found on the back of the ticket vouchers for the charter flight. Although it can be very difficult to get a Marazul representative to answer the phone, it is essential to reconfirm because departure times for the charter flights do change. One CGE travel seminar group departed 3 hours earlier than previously scheduled!
* Have travel seminar participants fill out the travel seminar final evaluation form (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/its/>)
* At the end of the trip, encourage participants to leave used clothing, remaining toiletries, etc. as donations for the MLKC to distribute to those in need.

Within 2 weeks of your return (unless otherwise specified):

* By the third business day of the month or within 2 weeks of your return, whichever comes first, submit the trip expense form (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge>/) and copies of all receipts to ITS/Olee
* Submit trip leader report (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/its/>) to ITS/David and Susan
* Submit travel seminar evaluations to ITS/David and Susan
* Write and send an email to travel seminar participants using the post-trip sample letter (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/its/>) and list of email addresses provided to you by ITS/Fatimah, attaching a copy of the group’s actual itinerary and copying ITS/Susan
* Based on your experience, send ITS/Susan information to add to or update this CGE Cuba Trip Leader’s Guide (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/>)
* If you are aware of items in CGE’s plastic bin (in the closet in the Solidarity Office on the second floor of the MLKC) that need to be replenished by the next CGE trip leader, please make ITS/Susan aware of them.
1. ***What to Take***
* Trip leader documents (participant rosters and health/emergency contact info)
* Emergency Contact Form from the sponsor
* Copies of ticket vouchers for charter flights, Cuban visas, and Cuban insurance for all participants
* Passport information page of all participants – in case someone forgets or loses their copy or needs to obtain a new passport from the U.S. Interests Section
* Business-sized cards to give each participant with the address/contact information for the Martin Luther King Center (MLKC), their hotel in Havana (if they are not lodged at the MLKC), and the MLKC guide’s cell phone number (if available)
* Maps of *Marianao* neighborhood (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/>) around the MLKC to give participants
* First aid kit – carry a well-supplied kit with you at all times while in Cuba. One kit and extra medicines/supplies are stored in CGE’s plastic bin in the Solidarity Office closet on the second floor of the MLKC. Since medicines/supplies are difficult to obtain in Cuba, ITS/Susan may ask you to purchase specific items to replenish the supply in the plastic bin. Include any such purchases on your expense report. Review the contents in the kit and in CGE’s plastic bin so that you know what supplies you have. Generally, these include antihistamines, decongestants, aspirin, ibuprofen, cold medicines, Imodium, and other medicines for stomach illnesses.
* Cash – even though U.S. law changed in January 2015 to permit the use of U.S. credit cards in Cuba, this is not yet operational. The trip budget includes the amount of cash that you need to carry.
* Money belt
* Receipt book and trip expense form (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge>/)
* Items to give as donations (see list that follows) to organizations and individuals that your travel seminar group visits in Cuba. Purchase these out of the “School/medical supply purchases” line item of the trip budget and submit receipts with your expense report.
* Large plastic trash bag(s) in which to collect donations to the MLKC at the end of the trip
* Markers/butcher paper/any other photocopies (it’s hard to make them in Cuba) or supplies you may need for reflections. There are some magic markets in the CGE plastic bin.
* British cell phone to use to make international calls while in Cuba
* Letter from CGE/Augsburg College stating the type of license under which your group is travelling to Cuba and listing the participant’s names
* Letter from the group’s college/university/seminary, stating the type of license and verifying that the participants listed fulfill the license requirements
* MLKC address/phone numbers and the MLKC guide’s cell phone number (if available)
* Pocket calculator
* OIP Emergency Management Plan (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/emergency-management/>)
* CGE incident report forms (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/emergency-management/>)
* CGE sign
* Travel seminar final evaluation forms (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/its/>)
* Trip leader report form (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/its/>) to ITS/David
* Thank you notes

At the end of your trip, please leave any remaining items in CGE’s plastic bin in the closet in the Solidarity Office on the second floor of the MLKC. Please make ITS/Susan aware of any items that need to be replenished by the next CGE trip leader.

For a list of personal items to pack, see the Cuba section of the Pre-departure Preparation web page: <http://www.augsburg.edu/global/seminars-join/preparation/>

1. ***The MLKC and Its Staff***

CGE partners with the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Center (MLKC) for short-term customized programs in Cuba. The MLKC is located in the working-class *Marianao* neighborhood of Havana—approximately 30 minutes from downtown Havana and “Old Havana” (*Habana Vieja*) the tourist area. The contact information for the MLKC is:

Centro Memorial “Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.”

Ave. 53 No 9609 e/96 y 98 Marianao

11400 La Habana, Cuba

Tel. 011-53-7-260-3940/9731 (direct dial from the United States)

The MLKC assigns each group a guide, translator, and driver, who accompany the group throughout the travel seminar. Some drivers are full-time MLKC employees. Everyone else is contracted by the MLKC to work with a particular group.

In the past, CGE trip leaders have worked with the following MLKC staff:

Guides:

Sandor Alvarez, cell. 5-807-7657, sandor@gecem.co.cu

Ariel Ramón Arcaute Mollinea, cell. 5-350-8467, hugoluis@cubarte.cult.cu

Reinier Menéndez Hernández, cell. 5-259-7319, reinier@cmlk.co.cu, reinier.menendez@nauta.cu (no large attachments to this email), reinier1983h@gmail.com or reiniermenendez@yahoo.com

Ariel Moriyón Rojas, cell. 5-289-8849, ariel@cmlk.co.cu

Rita María Ojeda, cell. 5-265-9520, home 7-260-2736, rita@cmlk.co.cu orritamariaojeda@gmail.com

Carmen Pérez Diaz, cell. 5-258-7683, home 7-271-8241, carmen-guia@cmlk.co.cu

Translators:

Leopoldo Cabrera, cell. 5-283-3359

Alberto González, cell. 5-274-9838, home 7-262-5509, Alberto@cmlk.co.cu

Betsy González Alvarez de Glezak, betsyglezak@gmail.com [now living in Germany, but sometimes contracted when in Cuba on visits, cell. 5-242-8864]

Eloisa Hernández Janeiro, kareniajoglar@infomed.sld.cu [daughter’s email], home 7-863-8503

Edelso Moret, cell. 5-263-6481 or 6981, home 7-763-2940, edelso@gmail.com

Drivers:

Richard Leyva, cell. 5-254-6777, 10-passenger van with AC

José Luis (“El Chino”) Sanz Rodríguez, cell. 5-370-4280

Hermes

Luis

Ariel Moriyón Rita Carmen Edelso Alberto

Reinier Menendez

Administrators:

Miguel Angel Penalver Herrera, Internal Administrator/Storeroom Chief, Sustainability Program and Organizational Development, cell. 5-295-0704, tel. 7-267-6273, migue@cmlk.co.cu

Daisy Rojas, home 7-262-5960, cell. 5-299-0691, solidaridad@cmlk.co.cu

Joel Suárez, director, joel@cmlk.co.cu

Introduce MLKC staff people (i.e. night watchmen and cooks) to the group. They are very open, friendly, and outgoing and have a wide range of opinions about the situation in Cuba and U.S.-Cuban relations. Many have relatives in the United States. Most are happy to share their opinions when asked, so encourage your group to talk with them as much as possible and help with translation as necessary. MLKC staff usually join the group for meals, so there are opportunities for table conversation. MLKC bus drivers sometimes bring their family members along on excursions, so encourage conversation with them as well.

The co-founder and former director of the MLKC is **Rev. Raul Suárez.** He is also pastor emeritus of Ebenezer Baptist Church, next door to the MLKC, and a member of the National Assembly of the People's Power (Cuba’s Parliament). One of only a handful of church officials elected to the National Assembly, he has served multiple terms. Rev. Suárez often speaks to CGE groups. Groups have also met with current MLKC director **Joel Suárez** (Rev. Suárez’s son) or co-founder and director of U.S. solidarity activities, **Daisy Rojas** (MLKC guide Ariel Moriyón Rojas’ mother). ITS/Susan works closely with Daisy to coordinate travel seminars in Cuba. Please take time to connect with Daisy and tell her how much CGE values our collaboration with the MLKC. Daisy reached legal retirement age in 2013, but continues working.

MLKC staff people are very professional, knowledgeable, dedicated, flexible, and eager to please. **They are an excellent resource for CGE groups.** They'll respond to special requests from you for the group, provide valuable advice, and will try to be respectful of group processes or reflections. MLKC guides are excellent educators and should be seen as such. They are not uncritical apologists for the Cuban government. On the first day of a travel seminar, the MLKC guide and CGE trip leader co-facilitate an orientation session. The guide also may attend reflection/analysis sessions. S/he can provide extremely helpful information about the cost of living, especially in preparation for or in debriefing visits to the CUC store, the farmer’s market, and the ration store (*bodega*).

At the beginning of the travel seminar, talk with your group’s MLKC guide about how the two of you will work together. It’s important to touch base with the guide every day about the schedule, travel logistics, costs associated with particular activities, etc.

The MLKC translator will do all of the formal translation of presentations and meetings. You will only be expected to help with informal conversations for group members—while on the bus, over meals, shopping at the market, and during free time. Most translators speak loudly and clearly. However, if the translator assigned to the group has a soft voice that is difficult to hear, you may need to gently remind him/her to speak up. You may also need to encourage people who have trouble hearing to sit near the front in meetings and on the bus.

The MLKC translator will assist in communication between the guide and the group, if necessary. Some guides speak excellent English and are able to communicate directly with the group. Others, who do not speak as much English, communicate with the group through the translator.

Ask your MLKC guide, translator, and driver to give you their cell phone numbers and promise to reimburse the cost of all calls or buy them an ETECSA card to add minutes (*saldo*). Please note that if you call the guide’s cell phone from another Cuban cell phone, they are not charged to receive the call. However, if their cell phone receives a call from a landline, they will be charged about CUC$.20/minute. It is very expensive for MLKC staff to call or text your British cell phone, so they often are very reluctant to do so, even with the promise of reimbursement.

In addition to the MLKC staff, **Susana Hurlich** serves as **CGE’s part-time consultant in Cuba**. She is most readily reached in the evenings and early morning at home at tel. 7-833-8971 or at delfines@enet.cu. She has no cell phone. Her address is: Calle 27 #953 between Calle 6 and Calle 8 in the *Vedado Plaza* neighborhood. She can be called on to assist with emergencies in Havana.

1. ***Lodging and Logistics***

Most CGE groups stay in modest guest rooms belonging to either the MLKC or Ebenezer Baptist Church, which is right next door. Some CGE groups—in order to have fewer participants sharing a bathroom, no bunk beds, fewer stairs, more reliable air conditioning, etc.—request different accommodations in advance, and are charged more accordingly. These groups stay in a hotel or a *casa particular* (a private home that is licensed by the Cuban government to receive foreign tourists).

Be forewarned that, at times, the MLKC has made last-minute changes in the accommodations for CGE groups, for all or part of their stay. This may happen if the MLKC is hosting multiple groups simultaneously. Too, it is MLKC policy that Cubans, in Havana for an educational event or meeting, are given precedence over foreign delegations. Sometimes, MLKC has divided a CGE group in two, placing participants of one gender in guest rooms and those of another in a nearby *casa particular*. Other times, the MLKC has placed the entire group in a hotel. Understandably, in-group leaders and participants find such changes in accommodations to be frustrating and inconvenient. You, as trip leader, can make MLKC staff aware of group concerns and see what other options there may be. Please note that, if the MLKC decides to move travel seminar participants out of its guest rooms and into a hotel or *casa particular*, it assumes any additional cost (not CGE). **If the MLKC changes the lodging arrangements for your group at any point in the trip, immediately communicate this to whoever is staffing the CGE Emergency Cell Phone (tel. 612-817-2830) in Minneapolis.**

Accommodations for previous CGE groups have included:

**MLKC guest rooms:** Located up an outside stairway on the second and third floors, most contain two bunk beds. Between adjoining rooms there is a shared bathroom with a shower. Theoretically there could be four people per room but the MLKC tries to put no more than two people per room. Couples are usually given their own room. There are a few single rooms. In-group leaders and trip leaders should be assigned to a single room, so be sure to ask if this is not the case. The rooms are simple but quite adequate. Each has a small closet with a few hangers and two small dressers. Rooms have **air conditioners**, which do not run 24 hours/day. Air conditioners cannot be adjusted room-by-room, but are attached to a general switch that turns them on in the evenings and off in the morning. On past trips, use of the air conditioners has caused reactions for some trip participants with allergies to mold/mildew.

**Ebenezer Baptist Church guest rooms**: Remodeled in 2012, these rooms are located on the second floor, directly over the MLKC reception desk at the main street entrance. Bathrooms are down the hall and are not attached to the rooms. Each room has is own air conditioner with temperature/fan controls.

When toilets, faucets, air conditioners, etc. in any of the guest rooms need **repairs**, please communicate this to your guide or to the person designated by the church to attend to the needs of your group.

**Hotel Bella Habana**, Conill between Boyeros and Marino streets in the Nuevo Vedado neighborhood near the Revolution Plaza (*Plaza de la Revolución*), tel. 7-883-2187 to 89. Some rooms have safes. No internet access. Taxis from this hotel cost CUC$5-10 to Old Havana (depending on the time of day) and CUC$20 to the airport.

**Hotel Colina**, 501 Calle L, on the corner of Calle 27, adjoins the main campus of the University of Havana, tel: 7-836-4071.

**Hotel Tulipán**, Calle Tulipán between Factor and Hidalgo streets in the Nuevo Vedado neighborhood near the Revolution Plaza (*Plaza de la Revolución*), tel. 7-884-1700. This hotel was multiple towers of rooms originally built to house athletes who were in Havana either for training or competitions. Participants are in double rooms with air conditioning, a private bathroom, and a television. One key is given out per room. Meals are served buffet-style in a dining room, where there is a large jug of filtered water for drinking. There are usually several main courses (lots of pork), fruit, cheese, bread, etc. There are conference rooms on the first level where class/group reflection can be held. Services on-site include a pizza place and 3 bars (one rooftop and 2 on ground level). Cuban baseball players have been spotted by CGE groups, seated at the bar in the lobby. There are several computers from which participants can access the internet using a card that they purchase for CUC$6/hour. The connection is slow, and some of the computers may not work.

**Casa de Carlos**, Calle 43 No. 10401 between 104 and 106, tel. 7-262-3639: located about a 10-15 minute walk from the MLKC, this *casa particular* is owned by two medical doctors, one of whom is named Carlos. There are two rooms with one double and one single bed and one room with one double bed.

**Casa de Daisy**, 96 No. 6713 between 66 and 69, tel. 7-262-5960: located about a 15-20 minute walk from the MLKC, this *casa particular* is the home of Daisy Rojas from the MLKC. Up a very narrow staircase on the second floor there is a bathroom, an air conditioned room with a double bed, and two rooms with two single beds each that have fans.

**Casa de Grisel**, 90A 4109 between 41 and 43, tel. 7-260-5057: located about a 10-15 minute walk from the MLKC, the owner of this *casa particular* is named Grisel. There are four air conditioned rooms with a capacity of two persons per room.

Unless your group is staying at a hotel, most **meals** will be eaten in the **dining room** on the first floor of the MLKC. Groups staying at a hotel may also have some meals at the MLKC. Care is taken to ensure that all of the food served there is hygienically prepared. When requested, vegetarian and vegan food is available. For the first couple of days, please help the MLKC servers identify participants who prefer this option. Cuban coffee (strong and delicious) is available at no charge throughout the day at the counter across the patio from the cafeteria, although, technically, it is intended for MLKC staff, not groups.

Remind participants not to drink tap water anywhere in Cuba. **Purified water** is available at the MLKC. Water bottles can be filled from the cooler or pitchers in the dining room or from the spigots outside in the patio.

If your group is staying at a hotel, make sure that the MLKC driver and guide regularly bring a large jug (*garafón*) or purified water on the bus so that participants can re-fill their bottles. CGE has donated pumps (*bombas de agua*) for this purpose, but they disappear, so you may have to hunt them down.

The MLKCoccasionally turns off the **water** late in the evening until early morning. There is also the possibility of power outages especially during the rainy season. Since the MLKC water pump relies on electricity, there is no water during outages. Power outages usually don't last more than a couple of hours.

Yamila or another MLKC housekeeper will do **laundry** for participants if they’d like. People who use this service pay for it out-of-pocket. Often, those requesting laundry service are not quoted a set price, but rather are told to pay what they think it should cost. A moderate-sized load costs in the range of CUC$5-8. Laundry generally is returned, clean and pressed, in about a day. Laundry can be left in a plastic bag, clearly labeled with name, room number, and payment, on the chair near the top of the stairs on the second floor.

The MLKC now has its own photocopy machine, which can only be operated during office hours on week days. If you need copies for your group, give the original to your MLKC guide. S/he will submit a request to MLKC administration with the proper codes for your group.

Open until midnight, the *Piropo* is directly across 51 Avenue from the MLKC. It has a small **store** on the left that sells beverages, ice cream, and snacks. It has a small **restaurant** on the right that sells soda, beer, pizza, and French fries. This is a great place to hang out, play cards, and talk with local Cubans from the neighborhood. There is also a **park** across the street from the MLKC, where travel seminar participants can sit and talk with people. In both the *Piropo* and the park, be alert and mindful of what is going on around you, as in both locations there have been incidents where someone grabbed and ran away with the belongings of travel seminar participants.

Encourage them to use free time to walk around the *Marianao* neighborhood in small groups. With recent economic reforms, there are now numerous small businesses nearby, including several pizza places, beauty parlors, and snack shops, where people can go to boost the local economy. Usually, purchases can be made either in CUCs or in Cuban national pesos. MLKC staff can give directions. Visiting these businesses is a great way to engage in conversation with local people.

There are several **transportation options** if people want to explore other parts of Havana during their free time. With prior consultation and coordination, the MLKC driver may be willing to take those group participants who are interested to a drop off point (i.e. Old Havana, *Hotel Nacional*, etc.) and arrange pick-up at the same spot at a set time for CUC$1/person. A pick-up time of no later than 10 pm is suggested since drivers also need their rest! Please designate one person in the group to collect money to give to the driver.

A 2-page handout on “Public Transportation in Havana” and 3 maps of Havana Bus Routes (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/>) are available for your use or for distribution to participants. The handout covers how to use taxis, *máquinas* (a bus-like service in a car), and public buses to get around Havana. Riding public transportation presents many opportunities for interesting conversations.

At times it is possible to make informal arrangements for transportation. Vladimir, a MLKC employee, has a car. When he is not working, if asked, he may be willing to give you or a small group of participants a ride. Always establish a price ahead of time with the driver.

On the second floor of the MLKC guesthouse inside a closet at the top of the stairs 2 small **safes** are available for group use. The combination to one safe is 1-2-3-B. The other combination is: 4 rotations clockwise to 55, 3 rotations counter clockwise to 90, 2 rotations clockwise to 70, and one rotation counter clockwise to 14. If the group stays at a hotel, the trip leader should request a single room with a safe in it.

**Tourists must carry a copy of their passport on their person at all times in Cuba.** Even when travelling outside of Havana, participants no longer need to carry their passport – just a copy. Participants should leave their passports, ticket vouchers for charter flights, and Cuban visa in the safe along with any cash and credit cards. The travel packet can be used for this. Passports are needed to change money and to enter the U.S. Interests Section.

1. ***Program of Activities***

Program set-up in Cuba is different from at other CGE sites. CGE (and the MLKC) have less control of the visits that can be arranged. It is challenging to manage the expectations of travel seminar sponsors and participants, particularly if activities that they consider to be priorities are not ultimately included on the group’s daily schedule.

Presently, the program set-up process in Cuba involves:

* ITS/Susan works with the travel seminar sponsor to develop a list of proposed program activities.
* The month before a group is to arrive in Cuba, ITS forwards this list to the MLKC, along with detailed notes about special requests.
* Between the 10th and 20th of each month, the MLKC does set-up for travel seminars that will be occurring the following month. At that point, written requests are sent to all of the public institutions/government officials on a proposed program. Then the MLKC must wait for a response (positive or negative) from an appropriate high-level government official. For example, the Minister of Education responds to requests for visits to the University of Havana, deciding which students or faculty can meet with a particular group on a particular day, or simply saying no (sometimes at the last minute). When written requests are denied, the MLKC makes a good faith effort to set up substitute activities … but these tend to be arts/cultural events that don’t require a written request for approval. [This has caused dissatisfaction/frustration for some CGE groups.]
* On the 20th of the month before a trip, the MLKC sends a list of travel seminar participants and draft program of activities to the Ministry of Foreign Relations (MINREX, *Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores*) for its approval. It is our understanding that, to date, approval has always been granted, but it’s another step in the process that the MLKC must navigate.

The context in which this set-up process occurs is important. In the past three years, the MLKC has seen a 5- to 6-fold increase in the number of travel seminars it coordinates. There has been another surge in demand since January 2015 when the U.S. government loosened licensing requirements for travel to Cuba. The MLKC is totally stretched and is at or above capacity.

Before you travel to Cuba, ITS/Susan will share with you the most recent version of your group’s tentative program that has been received from the MLKC. Upon your arrival in Cuba, ask your MLKC guide to see the version of the program that is going to be passed out at the group’s first in-country orientation session and talk it through with him/her. The pace of the schedule should be similar to that of CGE’s other sites. Likely changes have been made since the MLKC sent the earlier version to ITS/Susan. You may need to work with the MLKC guide to:

* Make sure there is time for orientation, group reflections, and a final evaluation. It helps to have these on the schedule and to do some of them during the day (and not just at night).
* Figure out substitutions for activities that may have dropped off the program because permission was not granted for them. It may be possible to use the time in ways that will allow the group to talk informally with Cubans.
* Confirm the date and time of the briefing at the **U.S. Interests Section** **(USINT)** by contacting the **Public Diplomacy Office** at **tel. 839-4100 ext. 4193** or USINTbriefings@state.gov. If needed, you can ask for **Julio César Llópiz Pacheco** (Cultural Affairs Assistant) or **Christina Tribble** (Cultural Affairs Officer). USINT often combines several groups for a briefing. Too, on occasion a briefing is cancelled at the last minute because no U.S. government official is available to give it. The MLKC has absolutely no involvement in the set-up and confirmation of USINT briefings. ITS/Susan makes the request for the briefing, submitting the forms stipulated by USINT. If a USINT briefing has been requested for your group, ITS/Susan will provide you with copies of these forms.

If some group members are sick or tired, bring this to the guide’s attention and talk together about what to do. In most instances, the MLKC will prefer that at least part of the group go on a visit rather than cancelling it entirely. This is particularly true of activities for which the MLKC has invested much time and energy in set-up and for which permission has been granted by an appropriate Cuban government official. Relationship-building is important. Cancellation may make it more difficult for the MLKC to be granted permission for other groups to have seminar visits/presentations in the future.

To fulfill **U.S. licensing requirements**, for all travel seminar activities you need to note the full name and title of individuals and groups with which the group meets. This information is included on the actual daily itinerary sent to participants after the trip is over. To comply with the requirements of a general (“educational activities” or “people-to-people”) license, all participants must take part in a full-time schedule of educational programming. Be sure that participants stick to the group’s structured schedule unless they are sick; their legality and ours depends on it.

It is the MLKC’s policy not to give cash **honoraria** to institutions or organizations—only to individual speakers. If your group has brought donation items with it, the MLKC guide will help you determine how to distribute them. Your MLKC guide will advise you how to handle **tips to guides** at museums and historical sites.

Please remind participants that the perspectives they hear during their travel seminar in Cuba may not be as diverse as those that CGE can provide in other countries. Visits to the U.S. Interests Section, the CUC store, farmer’s markets, and the use of our free time to speak directly with as many Cubans as possible provide insight into “dissident” or critical perspectives within Cuba. It is not possible for the MLKC/CGE to set up a formal talk with dissidents in Cuba. Such perspectives are readily available from readings and the media in the United States. You can also use reflections to draw comparisons between what travel seminar participants have learned or read about Cuba in the United States and what the group is hearing and seeing in Cuba.

Also remind travel seminar participants that they are in Cuba to learn as much as they can during the trip; they are not in Cuba to change opinions or bring their expertise. As it true at all CGE sites, ask them to be respectful and attentive in meetings and in the manner they address questions to Cubans and to officials at the U.S. Interests Section. This is especially important for presentations by Cubans who are strong critiques of U.S. policy, such as at the *Asamblea Nacional de Poder Popular* (the Cuban Parliament). Previous CGE groups in Cuba have included people with strong anti-Communist sentiments, some of whom have been rude and disruptive in meetings. Guard against this happening.

Being in Cuba appears to give participants a great sense of freedom. There is an active nightlife. It is possible for participants to go out on the town after the last event of the day. A pattern can develop whereby participants stay out really late only to come late to or fall asleep during scheduled activities and reflections the next day. Discuss this pattern in advance to get it out in the open and to try to avoid it! If it begins to happen with your group, take it in hand immediately. Work with the in-group leader and convene a group meeting to talk about this issue. Encourage the group to focus on why they have come on this trip—to learn.

1. ***Travel Outside Havana***

Most CGE travel seminars in Cuba include at least one overnight trip outside Havana. During this trip, the lodging may be more modest than at the MLKC or the hotel.

**Before leaving Havana for the countryside:**

* + Brief participants about what to pack—sun protection, snacks, water bottle, extra toilet paper, etc.
	+ Encourage participants to only take a smaller bag since space will be limited on the bus.
	+ If your MLKC guide indicates that participants need to carry their passports with them, get them out of the safe.
	+ Ask your MLKC guide if participants can leave things in their rooms at the MLKC or at the hotel or whether they need to store them somewhere and/or check-out.
	+ Make sure MLKC staff gets a big bottle (*garafón*) of purified water with a pump (*bomba de agua*) for the bus.
	+ Work with your MLKC guide to calculate how many CUCs you will need to carry with you to cover the group’s expenses outside Havana. Clarify which of the anticipated expenses will be included on the MLKC bill and which, if any, you will need to pay in cash.
	+ Coordinate with your MLKC guide which donation items to bring to give to organizations and individuals outside Havana.

The most common destinations for travel seminar groups are listed below, along with the information that CGE has compiled to date on accommodations and specific activities. Please send ITS/Susan information to add to this section!

**Matanzas**: About a 1 1/2-hour drive from Havana to the east. Ask the MLKC guide or translator to explain to the group the origin or the name "Matanzas."

Groups stay at small apartments and double rooms at the seminary on the hill that overlooks the city and Matanzas Bay. Meals are eaten in the seminary dining room, where filtered water is available. There are classrooms and outdoor spaces for group reflections. The seminary is some distance from the center of the city, so there is not much to do in the evenings.

Activities:

*Bacunayagua* – scenic overlook on the highway between Havana and Matanzas. Bathrooms, snacks,piña coladas, and souvenirs.

Caves (*Cuevas de Saturno del Bella Mar*) – A 30-minute drive from Matanzas. Open daily 9:30 am-4:15 pm. CUC$5/person

*Ediciones Vigia* Publishing House – Located in a beautiful building on the port in Matanzas, they make their own handmade books and posters with calligraphy and hand colored designs. The Metropolitan Museum of Art has exhibited some of their materials. There is a documentary about their work.

Kairos Center for Liturgy, Arts and Social Service: Its mission is “to offer liturgical training to Cuban churches and partnerships that encourage a discipleship of service and human solidarity, integrating art and social work in a renewed fashion in keeping with the spirit and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth.” Groups often eat a meal at Kairos. Often there are craft items for sale.

*San Severino* Fort – located near the water. Its museum has an exhibit about African religious practices in Cuba.

**Puerto Esperanza, Pinar del Río**: About a 3-hour drive from Havana to the west. It is about 30 minutes from the city of Viñales. The area is known for unique rock formations called *mogotes* and for its guava rum. On the way to Puerto Esperanza, groups usually stop at an overlook where participants can use bathrooms and buy snacks and souvenirs. Puerto Esperanza is a fishing village. A few cafes overlook the water.

Groups usually stay at a Pentecostal Church camp about 1 km. from Puerto Esperanza in a rural setting. Participants of the same gender are either housed in a large dorm room (long rows of beds with one bathroom) or in guestrooms configured like those at the MLKC (2 rooms with a shared bathroom between them). Anticipate cold water showers, limited water supply, and occasional frogs and mosquitoes in the rooms. Meals are eaten at the camp. There are two nice gazebos for reflections. Thank the pastor and cooks before you leave.

Activities have included visits to a tobacco farm, fishing cooperative, school, medical clinic, and maternity hospital.

**Santa Clara**: Provincial capital about a 4-hour drive east of Havana.

Groups usually stay in private homes (*casas particulares*) that are licensed by the Cuban government to serve as B&Bs. There are 2-4 participants per house. The MLKC bus usually drops the group at a park (*Parque Vidal*)in the center of the downtown. Then the MLKC guide and a local coordinator assign people to different houses. Check with the MLKC guide and local coordinator to ensure that each guest has his or her own separate bed, because, in the past, there have been occasions when participants have been assigned to rooms and expected to sleep together in double beds without prior consultation. The hosts come to the park and either take their guests to their *casa particular* by car or by walking. Before everyone disperses make sure that all hosts and participants have the cell phone number for the CGE Trip Leader, MLKC guide, and MLKC translator. Also make sure that you have the address and telephone number for each *casa particular*, along with the names of the participants who are staying there. You may want to talk around to visit the different houses so that you can find them in case of an emergency.

Most *casas particulares* are within 6 blocks of the park, which is used as a meeting point for the group. The quality of the lodging varies house-to-house. Some are very nice with large rooms and rooftop patios. Others are just a few beds in a room.

Participants usually eat breakfast and dinner in their *casa particular*. Hosts often give menu choices, so they should be able to accommodate special diets.

Activities:

Art School and visit with an artist

Che Guevara Museum and Mausoleum – tour usually lasts 1-1 ½ hours and includes the mausoleum, a small museum, a bookstore, and a monument with a sculpture of Che (good spot for a group photo). No bags, water bottles or cameras are permitted in the mausoleum.

City tour – including hospital zone, university, ration store, agricultural market, grocery stores, etc. This is a good place to do a market survey.

*La Loma de Capiro* – a hill that overlooks the city where a key battle took place during Cuba’s revolution. Groups sometimes eat at a restaurant at its base that is a good site for reflections.

*El Mejunje* – a community cultural center that is intentionally inclusive (across generations and sexual orientations) with concerts, an art gallery, a coffee shop, and films.

*Tren Blindado* – site of a famous battle where box cars of a train were blown up, forcing Batista to flee. About a 30-minute visit. There are no bathrooms.

**Varadero**: Beach resort area developed for foreign tourists about a 3-hour drive east of Havana. There are lots of souvenir shops, restaurants, and music.

Lodging:

Center for Social and Educational Services (CESERSE: *Centro de Servicios Sociales y Educativos*), Corner of 51 Calle and 1era Avenida, tel. 45-61-2389(?): A guesthouse right across the street from the beach with good space for meals and group reflections. There are 4 rooms – 2 that accommodate 8 people and 2 that accommodate 6 people – each with its own bathroom. Meals are eaten on the porch. There is a large jug (*garafón*) with purified water from which folks can re-fill their bottles.

Hosting foreign groups generates revenue that allows CESERSE to use the house at other times for Cuban groups of senior citizens, children with disabilities, and people fighting cancer. CESERSE Director Nacyra Gómez Cruz often talks about that work. Active in the Cuban Women's Federation, she also can speak about gender issues. Participants may be given cards made by the children who have participated in CESERSE programs.

The Presbyterian Church in Varadero also runs a guesthouse near the beach. The pastor, Rev. Joel Dopico, is currently the president of the Cuban Council of Churches.

**Activities:**

***Casa de las Americas* (former Dupont House):** Mansion with a formal restaurant, a cafeteria, a small golf club and a bar in its highest floor with probably the most beautiful view of Varadero. It used to belong to the Dupont family and is now operated by the Cuban government. The bar is expensive but you can just see the view or hang out on its terrace. See: <http://eufratesdelvalle.blogspot.mx/2008/01/la-casa-de-dupont-en-varadero.html>

***Parque Ecológico-Varahicacos* (**<http://www.varahicacos.cu/>): Ecological Park with tour guides who explain about the flora and fauna in the region. One of the biggest trees in Cuba, *El Patriarca*, is on the grounds. There is an entrance fee.

1. ***Medical Care, Emergencies, and Water Safety Protocols***

All foreign tourists must purchase Cuban government health insurance, called Asistur. Airline tickets purchased through Marazul Charters include this insurance. Passengers arriving to Cuba from destinations other than the United States may need to purchase it separately upon arrival.

If a travel seminar participant gets sick or injured, it is the CGE trip leader’s responsibility to coordinate medical care. The OIP Emergency Management Plan is available on the CGE Intranet at: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/emergency-management/>. Asistur’s 24-hour Alarm Center at 53-7-866-8527/ 8339/ 8920 or 867-1315 to find out where to take the patient to receive medical care. Cuba has set up a network of hospitals across the island to provide medical treatment to foreigners (separate from Cubans). In Havana, foreigners are treated at the Cida Garcia Hospital in the Vedado neighborhood. In Santa Clara, it is the *Hospital General*. Hospital staff may or may not speak English, so keep this in mind when deciding who will accompany the patient and provide translation.

At the hospital, the patient will need to show the pink paper from Asistur (see Marazul travel packet) as well as their passport or a copy of their passport. The person accompanying them should bring a cell phone and charger, phone card, health bios and emergency contact numbers, cell phone numbers for the MLKC guide and translator, and something to read to pass the time.

Medical appointments are free. The initial intake process and paperwork can be time-consuming. Patients are generally seen by a medical doctor fairly quickly. If a patient is given a prescription, medications are gotten at the pharmacy in the hospital. Inquire about the cost of the medicines that have been prescribed. Often they are inexpensive, and it is faster just to pay cash and avoid the paperwork required to have Asistur cover prescription medications.

If a patient is hospitalized, the rooms tend to be nice with a private bathroom and extra space for an accompanier to sit or lie down. Usually the hospital provides food for the patient and accompanier. If there is a phone in the hospital room, get the direct dial number. You likely will need a phone card (*tarjeta propia*) from ETECSA to make outgoing calls. Information on phone cards is found in a 2-page handout on “Using Phones in Cuba” is available on the CGE Intranet (<http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/>).

If you are outside of Havana and a participant needs to be hospitalized longer than the group is schedule to be in a given location, someone should stay with the patient if s/he cannot be moved with the group. To move a participant at a later time, options include:

* Group circles back to pick them up if it is not too far out of the way.
* Transport in an ambulance or private car. If this option is pursued, ask if Asistur insurance will cover any of the cost. If not, call EIIA to get a case number and ask them about covering the cost. In the past, CGE paid CUC$80 for transportation in a private car from Santa Clara to Havana and CUC$70 from Santa Clara to Varadero.

Water Safety Protocols: Please share the following information with participants if the group goes to the beach.

* Do not go swimming or snorkeling alone
* Swim and snorkel only in waters that you have received information about
* Limit activities to the level of your physical fitness and ability to swim.
* Abstain from alcohol whenever you are in or near the water
* Beware of aquatic life, particularly jelly fish, which sting.
* Swim in designated areas supervised by lifeguards, if possible. Pay attention to any warning flags or signs.
* If you go boating, make sure that the company has a sufficient number of life jackets for all participants.
* Weather conditions can make the natural water environment more dangerous. Stay out of the water during inclement weather. Storms and heavy rains can changed the water depth and cause strong currents. New unseen obstacles may become hazards.
* Ocean waves and currents are always a safety concern. Rip currents are a common cause of drowning. These strong current can form on any shoreline where waves break and can carry a person away from shore. If you are caught unexpectedly in a riptide, you should ride the current and swim to the side, rather than try to swim against the current. Then, after evaluating current direction and strength, you should swim at an angle to the current direction and towards their destination.
1. *Finances*

Before your trip, ITS/David will provide you with a trip budget to help you anticipate cash expenses in Convertible Cuban pesos (CUC) and the amount of the MLKC bill for your group. It will indicate CGE funds on hand at the MLKC—that have been wired or deposited there previously as a cash balance. The trip budget always includes:

* Miscellaneous: US$15/person for extras like bottled water, ice cream, taxis to go to see a doctor, etc.
* Exit tax to depart Cuba: CUC$25/person
* Donations: US$60 to purchase items to donate to organizations or institutions (i.e. clinics and schools) visited by your group.
* Special lodging: When a group requests to stay at a hotel or a *casa particular* instead of the MLKC guesthouse, there is an additional charge of CUC$5/person/day. If the MLKC shifts a group to a hotel or *casa particular* because its guesthouse is full, there is no additional charge.

Change as much money into CUC as possible at the airport in Havana or at another exchange house (CADECA: **Ca**sa **de** **Ca**mbio). The rate that the CADECA gives to exchange U.S. dollars to CUCs is more favorable than that used by the MLKC. If the airport CADECA limits the amount each person can change into CUCs, you may ask the MLKC guide to make an exchange on your behalf as well.

You will need to go to the MLKC Business Office on a week day to pay your group’s bill and deposit any extra cash in the CGE account. Payment can be made in U.S. dollars or CUC. At the latest, you should pay a day or two before departure. Please made sure that you get a detailed copy of the bill and a receipt for any deposit made in the CGE account.

As of June 2013, the MLKC has implemented a new pricing structure for CGE travel seminars. It now charges a **fixed packet price** per participant. The fixed packet includes CUC$65/participant/trip for “collateral activities” (*actividades colaterales*). The MLKC refers to the following as collateral activities: honoraria (usually CUC$20/speaker), dinner out at a private enterprise restaurant (*paladar*) in Havana (about CUC$15/participant), entrance fees at museums/historical sites, and entertainment.

CGE has found that CUC$65/participant/trip is insufficient for the level of programming desired by most travel seminar sponsors. In many cases, additional money is included in the trip budget to supplement this amount. At this juncture, prior to each trip, ITS/Susan requests that the MLKC guide prepare a detailed list of collateral activities and their anticipated cost. When this list is prepared, she will share it with you. You will need to meet with the MLKC guide to determine which collateral activities, totaling CUC$65/participant, s/he will pay as part of the fixed packet. You will be responsible for paying for the remaining collateral activities and obtaining a receipt for them. In most cases, you will need to prepare a receipt and ensure that it is signed by the speaker or an appropriate person.

CGE covers costs associated with activities that are listed on thegroup’s daily itinerary**. Participants pay** **for free time or “optional” activities out-of-pocket.** Too, at state-run restaurants and *paladares*, participants should pay individually for beverages and alcoholic drinks that they consume above and beyond those included with the meal. You may choose to pay for drinks for the guide, translator and driver out of the “Miscellaneous” line item of the trip budget.

The fixed packet price, though significantly higher, does not include **tips** for MLKC employees. Although you as CGE trip leader cannot orchestrate it, if the in-group leader or other participants wish to circulate an envelope for contributions for a tip for your MLKC guide, translator and driver, they may do that. It is optional and voluntary.

CGE and the MLKC are still living into the new pricing structure. Inevitably there will be kinks to work out. Please inform Regina and ITS/David of any variance from the information presented here.

You are responsible for making sure that all expenditures are accounted for on a trip expense form and backed up with some kind of receipt. Word and Excel versions of this form are available on the CGE Intranet (<http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/>). Take a receipt book and fill one out for someone to sign if they don’t have some kind of receipt they can give you. The following is an example of how to record trip expenses on the form:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Item | Category | USD | USD Balance | CUC | CUC Balance |
| 6/1/11 | Starting Amount |  | $9000 |  | 1000 | 0 |
| 6/1/11 | Exchange of $100 USD to CUC |  | -$100.00 | 8900.00 | 81.22 | 1081.22 CUC |
| 6/1/11 | Opera de la Calle | Dues |  |  | -200.00 | 881.22 CUC |
| 6/1/11 | *Paladar* dinner – 20 people at 12 CUC ea. | Food |  |  | -240.00 | 641.22 CUC |
| 6/3/11 | MLKC bill | See detail | -6200.00 | 2700.00 |  |  |

Within 2 weeks of your return from Cuba, you should submit your trip expense form and receipts to Regina. She must submit them to the Augsburg Business Office by the end of the month in which your trip is completed (unless your trip occurs in May-June, spanning fiscal years and she informs you otherwise).

US-based trip leaders – report all of your expenses incurred before or after the trip to Cuba (that are not charged on an Augsburg P-card) with your expenses in Cuba.

Non-US based trip leaders – report on your site’s expense report any expenses incurred in your home country before and after your trip to Cuba.

All staff - Any expenses that you paid with an Augsburg’s credit card will be reported as you normally do each month.

***X. Shopping***

As of January 16, 2015, persons authorized by the U.S. government to travel to Cuba may purchase up to US $400 of merchandise in Cuba. Of this, no more than US $100 can be alcohol and tobacco products. If someone is under the legal drinking age in their home state, s/he you cannot bring alcohol and tobacco products back into the United States. Anyone who attempts to bring back unauthorized items may be fined or detained by U.S. government officials upon their return.

Anyone purchasing artwork, artwork, antiquities or other items worth CUC$20 or more that may be construed to be part of Cuba’s cultural heritage, should get a receipt or export certificate that can be shown Cuban customs upon departure from the country.

***XI. Entertainment Options in Havana***

Entertainment included in the group’s program of activities is covered by CGE, although participants will need to buy their own drinks, if they are not included in the cover charge. Here are some ideas for optional (i.e. out-of-pocket) entertainment on free evenings. Please note that music at formal clubs may not start until 11 pm.

Old Havana near the Cathedral Square, on Obispo Street or Calle Mercederes (which intersects Obispo at the *Ambos Mundos* Hotel). Open air restaurants often have live music.

Café Habana: CUC$6 cover (includes one drink). Live entertainment starts early. It is possible to see several groups in a 2-hour period. Full of foreigners and perhaps prostitutes.

*La Bodeguita del Medio*: Old hangout of Earnest Hemingway near the Cathedral. Drinks are about CUC$5 each. Popular for its *mojitos* (popular Cuban rum drink).

*La Floridita*: Touted as Ernest Hemingway’s favorite hangout. Drinks about CUC$6 each. Popular for its daiquiris. More formal than *La Bodequita*.

*La Zorra y Cuervo*: Well-known jazz club. Music starts at 11 pm.

*Club Chan Chan*: On the water in the Ernest Hemingway Marina in Santa Fe. CUC$5 cover includes food/drink up to that amount. Live music starts at 10pm.

*Hotel Nacional*: Old elegant hotel with an outdoor patio, nice grounds, and live entertainment. A *mojito* is about CUC$5. Internet café.

*Casa de Música*: About CUC$5 entrance fee.

*Malecón*: Famous boardwalk on Havana's harbor. Great for sightseeing and people watching. Free! Be aware of pickpockets. Kids may approach tourists to ask for money or pencils.

*El Bosque*: There are a number of places in the municipal park not far from the MLKC (discos, restaurants, etc.).

*La Rampa*: Entertainment district near Vedado with a cafes, movie theaters, etc. Cubans hang out here.

1. ***Other Miscellaneous Details***

Email: Internet access is very limited. There is wireless in MLKC’s Lucius Walker classroom, but most participants have not been able to get it to work. For help in accessing it, talk to Gladys, the IT person at the MLKC.

Username=*c4p1c4rb0n311* and password=*tepescehuite.52* [Accurate info as of March 2013. If there is a change, please tell ITS/Susan.]

To login to a computer in the MLKC Solidarity Office, use Username=*daisy* and password=*tepescehuite.52*; or try Username=RITA and password= tusOjOs.cOm

The MLKC has set up two computer with internet access for travel seminar participants, but service is REALLY slow. To check email, people will have to go to tourist hotels which have internet cafes. Most charge CUC$5-10 per hour for internet access and close by 8 p.m. Lines can be long, and service can be slow. People should NOT count on having internet access during their travel seminar.

The Havana Libre Hotel in Vedado neighborhood near the Coppelia Ice Cream parlor has computers and internet access on the second floor for CUC$10/hour. They give you 2 days to use the hour of access.

Money changing: Exchange houses (CADECA: ***Ca****sa* ***de******Ca****mbio*) are located in the airport, large hotels, and other locations throughout Havana. All give the same rate. Their hours of operation are limited. A passport is required to change money. Small CADECAs do not have much cash and sometimes do not provide receipts (fill out your own and ask them to sign it!) The CADECA located closest to the MLKC is on 51 Avenue (3 blocks beyond the ETECSA store).

There is a 10% exchange fee for transactions from U.S. dollars into CUCs. There is no fee for exchanges of other currencies—Canadian dollars or Euros. CUCs can also be exchanged for Cuban national currency (MN: *moneda nacional*) at CADECAs.

Photo opportunities: In “Old Havana,” you will see Cubans dressed up in clothing from different historical eras who want you to take their pictures. These people are artists who pay a fee to the Cuban government for permission to get their pictures taken by and with foreigners. They should be paid for posing for photos. Ask how much before you snap a photo!

Telephones: A 2-page handout on “Using Phones in Cuba” is available on the CGE Intranet (<http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/>) for your use or for distribution to participants. It covers how to dial, the cost of different kinds of calls, Cuban cell phones, landlines, phone cards, public phones, and communication with the United States. Please note that U.S. cell phones do not work in Cuba.

CGE trip leaders must carry a cell phone(s) 24/7 for communication (calls and texts) in emergencies. Use one of CGE’s British cell phones to make international calls or send texts from Cuba. Calls to the United States cost about US$3/minute. Texts are much less expensive. Cuban cell phones can be used to call the United States for around CUC$1.40-$1.80/minute. It is not possible to text the United States on a Cuban cell phone. During your travel seminar, you can use your cell phone to make US$50 worth of calls to communicate with your family.

Until recently, Cuban law prohibited non-Cubans from buying Cuban cell phones and limited Cubans to one cell phone each. CGE has access to one Cuban cell phone (tel. 5-807-7084) that was purchased and activated under the name of MLKC guide Rita Ojeda’s husband, Miguel Angel Munnet González. The PIN to use to unlock the keyboard on this cell or to add additional money (*saldo*) to its account is 6623. The SIM is 130100369939. The ID Cliente is 9001246974. The # de Identidad is 44092908763.

Time zone: Cuba is on Eastern Standard Time.

Weather: It is VERY HOT and humid in Cuba from May through August, with the hottest temperatures in July and August.

1. ***Travel from Miami to Havana***

U.S.-based CGE trip leaders meet the group in Miami and travel with them to Havana. **If you run into problems in transit, phone or text CGE’s emergency cell at 612-817-2830 or email:** **CGEemergency@gmail.com***.* It is your responsibility to assist the in-group leader(s) with check-in for the charter flight in Miami and the group’s clearing immigration and customs and claiming baggage in Havana. The “Miami and Havana Guide for Sponsors” (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/its/>) describes these processes and associated fees.

1. ***Orientations***
2. **Gateway Briefing**

If you are a U.S.-based CGE trip leader, before departure, contact the in-group leader and arrange to hold an hour long gateway briefing in Miami. Some items may be repeated during the in-country orientation upon arrival in Cuba, but participants need to hear things about three times before they remember!

Welcome: Introduce yourself. Indicate that, upon arrival to Cuba, there will be a more formal orientation with MLK staff and a review of the group’s program of activities. Brief them on the key details about check-in, the flight, arrival in Cuba, lodging, and health and safety. Explain your role with the group and with the MLKC – you are not a Cuba expert, you will be a liaison with the MLKC staff.

Miami Airport Process: The flight from Miami will be about an hour with only a beverage served. All flights are on jet aircraft, chartered by Marazul. Check-in is required 4 hours prior to departure. We will check-in as a group, so stay alert and follow instructions. Describe the various steps in the process and fees described in the “Miami and Havana Guide for Sponsors” (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/its/>).

Havana Airport Process (Jose Martí International): Describe the various steps in the process for entry into Cuba described in the “Miami and Havana Guide for Sponsors” (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/its/>).

Accommodations: Upon arrival at the hotel or MLKC, the group will unload their luggage from the bus and get rooms assignments. Share information on the room, bathroom, meal, water, etc. arrangements in the location where the group is staying.

Safe: Passports, Cuban visas, ticket vouchers, and extra cash will be put in a safe as soon as possible upon arrival in Havana. Keep a copy of your passport with you.

Health: Don’t drink or brush teeth with tap water! You will have opportunities to fill your water bottle with purified water. Toilet paper and feminine products go in the wastebasket, not in the toilet.

Daily Program of Activities: U.S. government restrictions on travel to Cuba require that all participants take part in a full-time schedule of educational activities. The MLKC goes through a process to set up our program and must request government permission for visits to public institutions. The daily program will be extremely busy and intense, with several activities every day. There will be time for “informal exploration,” but not “free time.” Pace yourself. Get enough rest.

We will be travelling as a group, which is different than travelling alone. Be punctual. Be patient with others in the group. Remember that it can sometimes be difficult to meet individual needs in the midst of a group

Cuba programming is somewhat different from what CGE provides in other countries. We are working within a society that has some controls, and with an organization, the MLKC, that takes precautions so as not to be perceived by the Cuban government as “counter-revolutionary” or beholden to groups outside their country. There is a lot to learn in Cuba even within this context and with these restraints. The MLKC provides excellent programs that present an overview of Cuban history and key issues in Cuban society today, as well as the specific interests of each group.

In contrast with CGE programs in other countries, the daily program in Cuba will not include formal meetings with so-called “dissident” voices like you hear in Miami and read in the mass media in the United States with regularity. Nonetheless, the MLKC intentionally facilitates situations where you can talk with local people about their views. Please take advantage of these times to speak with Cubans in the market, on city streets, in taxis, etc. If you need help with interpretation, just let your trip leader, guide, and translator know!

Mention if the group has a briefing scheduled with U.S. officials at the U.S. Interests Section (because the United States and Cuba have no formal diplomatic relations, there is no the U.S. Embassy) to hear their perspective on U.S.-Cuban relations and the Cuban reality.

There likely be changes to the daily schedule. A speaker may not be able to get transportation or have another appointment that comes up and the meeting may have to be rescheduled. We may have to change our schedule in order to pick someone up and then return them to their home or office. A power or water outage may disrupt the schedule for a meeting. Expect change and be flexible.

During your time in Cuba, be courteous and respectful in your words and manner. Make an effort to listen carefully, phrase probing questions with care, and be sensitive to our Cuban hosts, their reality, and the political perspectives. This applies for people of all perspectives, whether you agree with them or not. You are here to learn, not to convince others of your viewpoint.

Evening activities that are printed on the group’s itinerary are covered by program fees. If the group goes to a restaurant you will need to pay out-of-pocket for drinks beyond those included with the meal.

Costs associated with activities that are designated as “optional” on the group’s itinerary or those that occur during blocks of “free time” are each person’s own responsibility.

Tips: At the end of the trip, your group may opt to pass around an envelope to collect a tip to give to MLKC staff people.

Donations: Shortly before departure, we will set out a box or bag to collect leftover toiletries, clothing, and other items. Such donations are greatly appreciated. MLKC staff will distribute them to those in need.

Participant Responsibilities: Review the list later in this section.

1. **Orientation in Cuba**

As soon as possible after arrival, hold an orientation with MLKC staff. This normally takes 1-2 hours. The MLKC guide will facilitate this session with your input. Make certain that the following topics are covered.

Introductions: In addition to everyone just saying their name, all might be asked a generative question. What did you bring with you to Cuba? (doesn’t need to be materials things) What did you leave behind in the US? (ditto; could be emotions, fears, etc.) What is your “wild card”? (i.e. something no one in the group knows about you)

Roles of group leaders: Clarify the responsibilities of the various people travelling with the group.

 *CGE Trip Leader* (***can do during Gateway Briefing instead***):

* + Liaison to the MLKC, our hosts in Cuba
	+ NOT an expert on Cuba
	+ Address programmatic issues/concerns with MLKC
	+ Work with in-group leader/professor(s) on group reflection sessions
	+ Ensure things go smoothly (logistics)
	+ Pay the bills – keep records of expenses and receipts
	+ Handle issues, concerns or illnesses (give your room number)
	+ Keep a detailed record of the actual daily schedule – names, titles, etc.

 *In-group leader* (***can do during Gateway Briefing instead***):

* Liaison to the group
* Monitor the pulse of the group
* If a professor, s/he is responsible for academic content

 *MLKC guide:*

* + Responsible for program set-up and follow-through
	+ Liaison with Cuban resource people
	+ Cuba information

 MLKC *Interprete*r:

* Responsible for all language interpretation in all meetings
	+ Cuba information

Health: Weather will likely be more hot and humid than what we are accustomed to. Wear sunscreen and drink lots of water. Drink only purified water and use it to brush teeth.

Get enough rest! Experience the Cuban nightlife, but don’t wear yourself out.

Wash hands or use hand sanitizer at every opportunity! When traveling in a group, it’s easy for colds/flu to spread quickly, so please follow best health practices – cough into elbow rather than hand.

Use insect repellent when mosquitoes are present (i.e. in rural areas, agricultural market, and organic gardens).

Food at the MLKC dining room and at all selected restaurants will be safe and healthy.

If you become ill, let the CGE Trip Leader know right away. The Cuban government requires that foreign tourists have health insurance. In Cuba, tourists can go to a clinic or hospital for free.

Please used toilet paper in the wastebasket in the bathroom, NOT in the tank.

Safety and Security: Feel free to walk around and talk to Cubans, but take the same precautions you would take in any large city. Violent crime is rare in Cuba compared to most countries in the world, but due to the poverty of Havana, petty theft is common.

Don’t go out alone - go out only in groups of at least 2 or 3 people. As in any large city, watch for pickpockets on the streets, in crowded markets, and at the baseball stadium. Don’t wear expensive jewelry. Keep your money in your bra, a front pocket, or in a travel pouch around your neck or waist. Don’t take all your money out of your wallet when making purchases. Havana is relatively safe, day and night, but incidents can happen anywhere, so be careful.

The MLKC is guarded 24-hours per day. The outer door is locked at night. There’s a doorbell, and it’s ok to come in late. Some of the halls with sleeping rooms may be locked when the group is out and about.

Participant Responsibilities: Review the list later in this section.

Money Matters: Explanation of Cuba’s dual currency and the differences between CUC and Cuban national pesos. U.S. traveller can now make purchases of up to US$400 in Cuba, of which US$100 can be alcohol and tobacco products (if you are of the age that you can legally buy these back home). If you purchase artwork, antiquities or other items worth about $20 or more that may be construed to be part of Cuba’s cultural heritage, get a receipt or export certificate that can be shown Cuban customs upon departure from the country. Extra money can be put in a safe, but will not be accessible every day.

Passport: Carry a copy of your passport and the MLKC address card with you at all times. Unless instructed otherwise, leave the original in the safe with ticket vouchers and Cuban visas

Miscellaneous: Phone cards can be purchased and used to make local and international calls. There are 2 computers at the MLKC that have REALLY slow internet connections. Internet cafes downtown charge about CUC$5-10/hour. Places to go nearby to get snacks. Options for laundry.

1. **Participant Responsibilities**

CGE works to establish mutual relationships with the communities in which we do programs and is committed to providing a transformative educational experience. Participants in CGE programs in Cuba are expected to:

* Attend all activities included on the printed schedule unless you are ill. This is a requirement (i.e. full-time educational program) of the general license under which your group is authorized to travel to Cuba. Please be on time. Be attentive and do not fall asleep during program activities.
* Listen and ask questions respectfully of all speakers, no matter whether or not you agree with them. All questions are okay - it’s more important how they are asked and in what tone. Try to use your questions to flush out the speaker's views rather than trying to change their mind. Don’t reference other meetings or resource people.
* Participate in scheduled classes/group reflections and arrive on time. These sessions are an important part of the learning experience.
* Always ask permission first if you want to take pictures or make a recording.
* Treat other participants respectfully.
* In meetings, ask one question (one follow-up question is okay). Then let other group members ask questions. Expect LONG answers from our Cuban hosts. Cubans find it important to give the historical context. This may be repeated multiple times. Be patient.
* If you ask a question in Spanish, either translate it or wait for the translator to do so
* Don't abuse alcohol. The free and easy nightlife is fun, but do not engage in activity that will endanger your health and safety.
* Follow the MLKC guide’s suggestions on how to dress for various activities. In general, Havana is very casual, and during the summer months, you will see many Cubans wearing very short-shorts and short-skirts. However, professional attire may be suggested for visits to the Cuban Congress (*Asamblea Nacional de Poder Popular*) and the U.S. Interests Section. Do not wear military clothes or clothing with U.S. patriotic symbols or anti-Cuban slogans.
* If you get sick or have an injury, don’t wait until it has gotten severe to tell your trip leader. The sooner you get treatment, the better in many cases. You are covered by the health insurance that the Cuban government requires all foreign tourists to buy.
* Let the CGE Trip Leader know if you need to deviate from the schedule due to illness.
* At the beginning of each presentation or meeting someone in the group should make a short introduction – give the name of the group, where you are from, your interests/focus, how long you have been in Cuba, etc. Rotate responsibility for this.
* At the end of each formal presentation or meeting, someone in the group should stand up and give a formal “THANK YOU,” commenting on something specific that has made an impression on you and why. This is a cultural custom that is important to follow. Try to say thank you in at least 3 different ways and make specific reference to at least one thing the speaker(s) said.
* At schools, the children may sing for you. If there are singers in your group, it may be nice to prepare a song to sing back to them. Try to make your visits a two-way street rather than just being educational consumers.

***XV. Departure***

Brief the participants on re-entry into the United States the day before departure for home.

When leaving Cuba you may be asked to short an export certificate/receipt for artwork and items (generally valued at more than $20) that you are carrying. If you do not have this paperwork, these items may be confiscated or you may need to pay CUC$3 per item at the airport.

Participants will claim their checked luggage and go through U.S. Customs at their first landing point in the United States. Then they will re-check their bags to their final destination.

Participants need to be prepared to show documentation of the type of U.S. government license under which they travelled to Cuba. Letters from CGE/Augsburg College and their home institution included in their travel packet verify compliance with requirements for a general license.

U.S. Customs agents are very alert to travelers who have been to Cuba. DO NOT lie or try to hide that you have been in Cuba. You traveled there legally.

**Logistics for the day of departure:**

\* Confirm return charter flights a couple days before departure by calling the telephone number for Marazul on the back of the ticket voucher. Double check the departure time of your return charter, because at times there are last-minute changes.

\* Clothing, extra toiletries, over-the-counter medication, etc. can be donated to the MLKC.

\* Announce when breakfast will be (arrange this ahead of time) and what time the group will load luggage on the bus.

\* Arrive at the airport 3 hours before departure. Your travel packet will identify when. Participants may have to show their travel packet before being permitted to enter the check-in area.

\* Tell participants that there is money exchange at the airport where they can change Cuban currency back to U.S. dollars.

\* Announce that there are duty-free shops and a restaurant are located in the departure area. They may not open for early morning flights.

**Havana Airport Departure**:

The trip leader facilitates check-in. Ask for group check-in to avoid weight overages, though the airline agent may request that it be done individually. Weight restrictions on charter flights are strictly enforced.

**Exit tax is CUC$25/person, which you will need to pay for each participant.** After travel seminar participants check in at the ticket counter, collect their boarding passes, and go to the window nearby to pay the exit tax for everyone in the group. The official will affix an exit tax sticker to each boarding pass. To facilitate getting a receipt for this transaction, prepare one ahead of time and have the official sign it.

Have the group spread out among the various lines to go through Cuban immigration. The agent will take a photo of the traveler again and take his or her Cuban visa. They stamp U.S. passports only if the traveler asks because of the history of restrictions on travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens.

Next the group will go a security check point with a metal detector and baggage screen. They may not be able to take full water bottles through security.

If participants purchased items, especially art work, they will have to show the export certificate or purchase one for CUC$3 per item. They may need to do that even if the art is in their checked luggage, so they have all receipts handy.

**U.S. Immigration and Customs**:

\* Complete the U.S. immigration form distributed by the crew on the charter flight: the flight originated in Cuba; educational trip (NOT tourism)

\* Have documentation of the type of license under which your group travelled to Cuba

\* Immigration form asks if you have been on a farm; if you answer “yes” they will have you wash your shoes. It also asks if you are bringing back foodstuffs or soil.

\* Have an itemized list of purchases available, with receipts where possible. When U.S. customs agents learn you have been in Cuba, you may be questioned carefully and your luggage may be hand checked. Relax, you have done nothing illegal!

Within 2 weeks of the group’s return to the United States, the CGE trip leader will send each participant a post-trip email with the group’s actual schedule.

* + - 1. ***Information on Program Activities in Havana***

Please assist in providing helpful, accurate information to future CGE trip leaders, but sending edits/additions to the list below to ITS/Susan.

**Callejon Hamel – Hamel Alley**

Located in the *Cayo Hueso* neighborhood in Havana Centro. A rumba takes place on this street every Sunday around noon. The murals and sculptures along the street where done by Salvador González. Be careful of pickpockets and scams, such as being sold music CD’s that do not work. One of González’s assistants, anthropologist Elias Assef, hamel@emailground.com, gives a walking tour of the neighborhood, visiting a *palero* and a *babalawo*’s households and other sites to learn about African religious practices in Cuba. See: <http://www.radiorebelde.cu/de-cuba-y-de-los-cubanos/el-callejon-hamel-20100414/>

**Cannon-firing ceremony at the La Cabaña Fortress**

CUC$6-8/person, depending on what time you arrive.

CUC$8/person

**ELAM – Latin American School of Medicine**

A medical school which trains “doctors read to work where they are needed in the farthest places worldwide where nobody is ready to go.” Students from marginalized communities in Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States.

**Fuster**

Mosaics, sculptures, and paintings by a Cuban artist, named Fuster, in his neighborhood. Participants can look around his house, studio, and the neighborhood. There are items for sale. The group probably won’t spend much time with the artist.

**Hemingway Museum**

CUC$10/person

**MINREX (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores)**

This is Cuba’s State Department. Groups usually meet with someone who works with North American relations.

**Museum of the Revolution**

Bags and cameras must be checked at the museum entrance. There is an additional fee of CUC$2 to carry a camera into the museum, which each participant must pay should they choose to do so. It has a cafeteria, bookstore and souvenir shop. The MLKC guide or someone else should give a guided tour for the group to get more out of the experience. It is hard to keep the group together so the CGE trip leader should follow to make sure that everyone moves onto the next room. CUC$6/person (although guide may be able to get a group discount).

**Okantomi**

About a 1 ½ hour performance of Afro-Cuban and traditional Cuban dance. This group teaches dance to Cuban youth as a way to keep them out of trouble. CUC$80/group

**Opera de la Calle**

No longer operating, this was a musical review (a little like a Broadway musical) of Cuban, U.S., and European traditional, classical and popular music. At times, a few of the performers come to the MLKC.

**Organopónico Vivero Alamar**

A cooperative that operates an extensive organic garden and nursery in the *Alamar* neighborhood. Groups usually hear a presentation on the history and organization of the coop, followed by a walking tour and lunch prepared from fruits and vegetables grown on site.

**Patio Comunitario**

Part of the green roof garden project in Havana. The presentation takes place in a covered patio in someone’s home with posters on the wall that explain environmental issues in Havana. If the weather allows, the group can climb to the roof to visit the garden. There is a small winery down the street but the wine may not be safe to drink. There is also a pizza maker in the neighborhood.

**U.S. Interests Section**

Most groups will have a briefing scheduled at the U.S. Interests Section (USINT) on the Malecón in downtown Havana. ITS/Susan requests the briefing and provides USINT with names and passport numbers for the group. The trip leader must reconfirm the briefing upon arrival in Havana.

Arrive at least 30 minutes before the appointment time to allow sufficient time for the entry and security. Cameras, bags, water and purses must be checked and cannot be taken into the briefing. It is best to leave them on the MLKC bus. They must be checked if participants bring them with them. Participants should only take a notebook and their passport. At the guard station on the sidewalk outside of the USINT, each person must show their passport. The guard will check to ensure that each person is on the clearance list, then wave them on to the security checkpoint at the main entrance. Once inside the building, participants

exchange their passports for a name badge.

Briefings generally last about an hour. They are off-the-record. Before the briefing, you are encouraged to have the group brainstorm issues and questions they want USINT to address. Your group will often be combined with other groups so time for questions may be limited.

**Voces de Ebano - Ebony Voices**

About an 18-person choral group of music teachers accompanied by a guitar. They perform in a MLKC classroom for about an hour. You can let your guide know if your group wants to do questions and answers after the performance. CUC$80/group

* + - 1. ***Group Reflection***

If time for class/reflection/discussion sessions is not scheduled into the MLKC daily program of activities, we encourage you to consult with the in-group leader and the MLKC guide to add them. CGE recommends that group reflection be held approximately every other day, spaced throughout the trip, plus one longer final reflection the day before departure. If they are not on the printed schedule, participants can write them in.

In groups where there is no professor or in-group leader, it is your responsibility to facilitate reflection sessions. You may want to brainstorm ideas with your MLKC guide.

In groups with a professor or strong in-group leader who is facilitating their own class sessions, you should remain involved in the planning of the reflection process. You may want to lead and/or co-facilitate some of the group reflection. Some professors and in-group leaders are very experienced and capable of leading CGE-style analysis sessions and won’t need or want your assistance. Others will rely heavily, or even entirely, on you. Be sure to talk with the professor or in-group leader *before* the trip and again at the beginning of the trip regarding her or his expectations regarding your role in reflection sessions and her/his plans for the types of sessions that will be held.

Most reflections will be in the classroom or on the rooftop terrace at the MLKC. As weather and other factors permit, it may be desirable to look for alternative locations, perhaps in a park or another outdoor space. If your trip budget has sufficient funds for collateral activities, the group could go to: *La Chorrera* – a patio on the water near Miramar, *Unión Francesa* – a 3rd floor café across from John Lennon Park, or *La Torre* – the bar of the tallest café/restaurant in Havana.

A handout on “Cuba Reflection Session Ideas” is available on the CGE Intranet (<http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/>) for your use. This handout includes ideas for initial, mid-trip and final reflections; Cuba Beach and Farmers Market Quests; and a Market Survey. Ann Lutterman-Aguilar has developed handouts to give to participants for some of these exercises. These will be posted on the CGE Intranet when they are shared with ITS. In the meantime, if you are interested in using this material, please contact Ann directly.