CGE CUBA TRIP LEADER’S GUIDE

**[as of January 2014]**

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 is intended to make your task clearer and more enjoyable. We hope you find it useful. … This guide is a work in progress. 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 trip to Cuba!This guide details various aspects of your trip, highlighting those that are different from other CGE locations. After you read through this guide, ITS/Susan will schedule an orientation with 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 the group’s gateway city (Miami or Mexico City) the day before the dates listed on the Trip Calendar (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/its/>

* US-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 Marazul Charter forms and provide ITS/Susan with a copy of the information page of your passport. As soon as possible you will also need to book your own flights to and from Miami and make reservations at a hotel there before and after the trip. The flight to Miami should be non-stop on the day before the group departs for Cuba. The Miami International Hotel (<http://www.miami.airporthotel411.com/>), located inside the airport, is convenient. Its prices for a single room are generally 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-US based trip leaders meet the group in Havana or Mexico City. You will need 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. ITS/Susan will advise you of the group’s itinerary so that you can plan accordingly. If you are meeting the group in Havana, you will need to arrive the same day or the day the travel seminar participants arrive. Please coordinate with ITS/Susan to arrange for your lodging in Havana. You may need to find your own way from the airport to the place you are staying. If the group stays overnight in Mexico City before catching its flight to Havana, you may need to meet participants there the day before departure, do a gateway orientation, and stay in a hotel with them.

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 - It is also 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 within 2 weeks of your return from Cuba.

Money – Over the years, CGE has tried out different arrangements for paying expenses in Cuba. Currently, money is wire transferred through Marazul for most group expenses. In addition, you will carry U.S. dollars to exchange into Cuban currency. ITS/David will give you a trip budget listing expected in-country trip expenses. You will be required to submit a trip expense form (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge>/) and receipts to Regina within 2 weeks of your return. 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.

1. ***Trip Leader Responsibilities***

Responsibilities prior to the trip:

* 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 the next section 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, US-based staff may participate in pre-departure classes/orientations
* Review the trip budget with ITS/David
* Make arrangements to get the U.S. dollars needed to pay for trip expenses
* Determine which cell phone you will be carrying 24/7 in Cuba and share the number with ITS/Susan and other CGE colleagues as appropriate

Responsibilities 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>/)
* Keep a record of the group’s actual itinerary
* Assist with the facilitation of group reflections
* Carry a cell phone 24/7 so that you can be reached in case of an emergency
* Follow OIP Emergency Management plan and file incident reports if needed
* Reconfirm group’s return charter flight to the United States 2-3 days before departure. Telephone numbers for Marazul in Cuba are found on the back of the ticket vouchers. Tel. 7-830-9669 worked in May 2013. It can be very difficult to get a Marazul representative to answer the phone. Nonetheless, it is important to reconfirm because departure times do change. One CGE travel seminar group departed 3 hours earlier than previously scheduled! 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.
* Have travel seminar participants fill out the travel seminar final evaluation form (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/its/>)

Responsibilities within 2 weeks of your return:

* Submit the trip expense form (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge>/) and copies of all receipts to Regina
* Submit trip leader report (see CGE Intranet: <http://inside.augsburg.edu/cge/its/>) to ITS/David
* Submit travel seminar evaluations to ITS/David
* 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
* Email the group’s actual itinerary to 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/>)

1. ***What to Take***

* Trip leader documents (participant rosters and health/emergency contact info)
* Passport information page of all participants – participants should have a copy of their own passport information page with them at all times. These are extras in case they forget or lose their copy or need 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), the place where they will be lodged in Havana, 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 – While you are in Cuba, you will need to carry a well-supplied kit with you at all times. 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 purchases for this kit on your expense report. Please review the contents in the kit and in CGE’s plastic bin so that you know what supplies you have. [Note: several participants have suffered from bad allergies related to dust/mold in the MLKC, so there is a supply of antihistamines and decongestants, as well as aspirin, ibuprofen, cold medicines, imodium, and other medicines for stomach illnesses.]
* CASH – U.S. law prohibits U.S. banks and affiliated institutions from operating in Cuba. U.S. credit and debit cards cannot be used in Cuba. ITS/David will prepare a trip budget that includes an estimate of the U.S. dollars that you will need. The budget for a typical 7-10 day trip is US$10,000-14,000.
* 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 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.
* Cell phone that will work in Cuba
* Letter from CGE 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 vouching that the participants listed fulfill the license requirements
* Small manila envelopes with metal clasps to use to store passports and cash a safe at the MLKC or hotel.
* 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
* Notebook with paperwork for the group - final letter, draft program of activities, trip budget, travel notes, travel expense form, etc.
* Thank you notes

NOTE: 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. If you are aware of items in the bin that need to be replenished by the next CGE trip leader, please make ITS/Susan aware of them.

1. ***Suggested Donations***

The following donation items are useful and widely welcomed by organizations and individuals with which travel seminar groups meet. At times donations substitute for a cash honorarium. In other instances, a donation item (ie. a notebook with a college’s logo) is given in addition to the cash honorarium as an expression of appreciation. Before your trip, check the tentative program of activities so that you and your group can bring appropriate donations. Upon arrival in Cuba, collect donation items from the group and consult with your MLKC guide about how best to distribute them.

**Office Supplies**

Notebooks and notepads

Wide-ruled filler paper

File and double-pocketed folders

Pencil sharpeners

Pens and pencils

Crayons, coloring pencils, markers

Blank flash drives, CDs, and DVDs

**Miscellaneous**

AAA and AA batteries

Ziploc bags

Small sewing kits

**Toiletries**

Soap

Shampoo and conditioner

Toothpaste

Feminine hygiene products

At the end of the trip, please encourage participants to leave used clothing, remaining toiletries, etc. at the MLKC as donations to be distributed to those in need.

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

CGE partners with the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Center (MLKC) for hosting/programming in Cuba. The MLKC assigns each group a Cuban guide, translator, and driver, who accompany the group throughout the trip. They should be introduced to the group on the first day. Some of the drivers are full-time MLKC employees. Everyone else is contracted by the MLKC for a particular trip.

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

Guides:

Sandor Alvarez, cell. 5-807-7657, [sandor@gecem.co.cu](mailto:sandor@gecem.co.cu)

Ariel Ramón Arcaute Mollinea, cell. 5-350-8467, [hugoluis@cubarte.cult.cu](mailto:hugoluis@cubarte.cult.cu)

Reinier Menéndez Hernández, cell. 5-245-7161 or 5-259-7319, [reinier1983h@gmail.com](mailto:reinier1983h@gmail.com) or [reiniermenendez@yahoo.com](mailto:reiniermenendez@yahoo.com)

Ariel Moriyón Rojas, [educuba@cmlk.co.cu](mailto:educuba@cmlk.co.cu)

Rita María Ojeda, cell. 5-265-9520, home 7-260-2736, [rita@cmlk.co.cu](mailto:rita@cmlk.co.cu) or[ritamariaojeda@gmail.com](mailto:ritamariaojeda@gmail.com)

Carmen Pérez Diaz, cell. 5-258-7683, home 7-271-8241, [carmen-giua@cmlk.co.cu](mailto:carmen-giua@cmlk.co.cu)

Translators:

Leopoldo Cabrera

Alberto González, cell. 5-274-9838, home 7-262-5509, [Alberto@cmlk.co.cu](mailto:Alberto@cmlk.co.cu)

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

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

Edelso Moret, [edelso@gmail.com](mailto:edelso@gmail.com)

Drivers:

Alejandro



Ariel Moriyón Rita Carmen Edelso Alberto

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](mailto:migue@cmlk.co.cu)

Daisy Rojas, home 7-262-5960, [solidaridad@cmlk.co.cu](mailto:solidaridad@cmlk.co.cu)

Joel Suárez, director, [joel@cmlk.co.cu](mailto:joel@cmlk.co.cu)

Encourage travel seminar participants to learn the names and converse with MLKC staff people they encounter, both those working directly with your group and others based at the center (i.e. night watchmen and cooks). 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 Congress). One of only a handful of church officials elected to the National Assembly, he is currently serving his fourth term. Rev. Suárez often speaks to CGE groups. CGE 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 appears to have decided to continue 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 trip, 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*).

On the first day of the trip, 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 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.

Your translator should be available to 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 a 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$0.20/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](mailto:delfines@enet.cu). She does not have a cell phone. Her address is: Calle 27 #953 between Calle 6 and Calle 8 in the *Vedado Plaza* neighborhood.

If you are travelling to Cuba during the CGE semester program, the staff person in residence can be called on to provide support to travel seminar groups in an emergency.

1. ***Lodging and Logistics at the MLKC***

The MLK Center (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. 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. Arrangements are made for these groups to 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 U.S. participants. 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 to 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.** This is important because people trying to reach participants will no longer have accurate information on how to reach them.

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 just 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. Please caution participants that, in some of the rooms, when windows are left open, articles on the top bunk can be reached with a long hook and stolen. 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.

When toilets, faucets, air conditioners, etc. in any of the guest rooms need **repairs**, please communicate this to your guide or to Ruben, who is in charge of facility management.

**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 porks), fruit, cheese, bread, etc.

Services on-site include a pizza place and 3 bars (rooftop and 2 on ground level). Cuban baseballs 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 is hygienically prepared. Vegetarian food is always available at the MLKC. For the first couple of days, please help the servers identify participants who prefer this option. Cuban coffee (strong and delicious) is available at no charge throughout the day from the walkup counter across the patio from the cafeteria, although, technically, it is intended for MLKC staff, not groups.

**Purified water** is available at the MLKC. Participants can fill their water bottles from the cooler or pitchers in the dining room or the spigots outside in the patio. Remind them not to drink tap water anywhere in Cuba.

**Water** is occasionally turned off late in the evening until early morning. There is also the possibility of power outages especially during the rainy season. The water pump at the MLKC depends upon electricity, so water is not available during a power outage. 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 given a set price, but rather 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 houses 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, *La 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 a **park** across the street from the MLKC, where travel seminar participants can sit and talk with people. Encourage them to use free time to walk small groups) around the *Marianao* neighborhood and greet people. 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. Purchases can be made in CUCs, but change may be made 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 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 members of the group 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, who works in the MLKC kitchen 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. You will need to establish a price with him for his time and the cost of gas.

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 Hotel Tulipán, 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.** Participants should leave their passports, ticket vouchers for charter flights, and Cuban visa in the safe along with any cash and credit cards. Manila envelopes which can be used for this – label one for each person. NOTE: Participants no longer need to carry their passport when traveling outside of Havana – just a photocopy. However, they will need their passport 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 a real challenge 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.

At present, the process for program set-up in Cuba includes:

* ITS/Susan works with the travel seminar sponsor to develop a proposed program of activities.
* The month before a group is to arrive in Cuba, ITS forwards this proposed program of activities 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 has responded to requests for visits to the University of Havana, deciding which students or faculty could 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 draft program of activities to the *Comité de Asuntos Religiosos* of the Cuban Community Party 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 2012, the MLKC saw a 5- to 6-fold increase in the number of travel seminars it coordinated. The MLKC is developing strategies for dealing with this dramatic increase in demand, but it 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](mailto:USINTbriefings@state.gov). If needed, you can ask for **Julio César Llópiz Pacheco** (Cultural Affairs Assistant) or **Nancy Szalwinski**. 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 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 se-t and for which permission has been granted by an appropriate Cuban government official. Relationship-building is important and a 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. For groups traveling under a specific (“People-to-People”) or general (“educational activities”) license, participants must participate 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. When your group visits institutions and organizations, the MLKC guide will help you determine appropriate **donations** in lieu of honoraria. 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, presentations by human rights specialists, 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 bring out the things that travel seminar participants have learned or read about Cuba in the U.S. and to compare these to 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. This is especially important for presentations by Cubans who are strongly rhetorical or critical of U.S. policy, at the *Asamblea Nacional de Poder Popular* (the Cuban Congress) and the U.S. Interests Section. 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. Convene a group meeting to talk about this issue. Encourage the group to focus on why they have come on this trip—to learn. If needed, you can work with the in-group leader to set some requirements about meeting attendance, especially with students.

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:**

* + Ask your MLKC guide if participants need to carry their passports with them and, if necessary, 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 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 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.
  + Encourage participants to only take a smaller bag since space will be limited on the bus.
  + Brief participants about what to pack—sun protection, snacks, water bottle, extra toilet paper, etc.

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. Classrooms and outdoor spaces can be used 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, 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.

*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. There are a few cafes that 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 taken 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, and the MLKC guide and a local coordinator assign people to different houses. Tell the MLKC guide and local coordinator that each guest needs to have 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 about a 3-hour drive east of Havana, developed for foreign tourists. 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. Purified water is available in a large jug (*garafón*) in the living room.

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 and Emergencies***

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 has paid 80 CUC for transportation in a private car from Santa Clara to Havana and 70 CUC from Santa Clara to Varadero.

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***

Persons authorized by the U.S. government to travel to Cuba are **NOT** permitted to purchase merchandise in Cuba. You cannot buy cigars, liquor or handicrafts to bring home with you, for instance. The **only exceptions** are ‘informational materials’ for your own use. U.S. Customs agents generally interpret these materials to include books, periodicals, paintings, sculpture, records, tapes, C.D.s, films, video cassettes, photographs, posters, etchings, lithographs, serigraphs, microfilm, and microfiche. These purchases must be made with CUC and documented by an export certificate or receipt. If not, the purchaser will probably have to get one at the airport when they leave.

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

Evening 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 and live music at all hours of the day.

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). Nice atmosphere, but touristy.

*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$4. 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 let ITS/Susan know.]

To login to a computer in the MLKC Solidarity Office, use Username=*daisy* and password=*tepescehuite.52*

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$8 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.

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, just 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 take a picture!

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 US cell phones do not work in Cuba.

CGE trip leaders will carry a cell phone 24/7 for communication (calls and texts) in emergencies. Most CGE trip leaders use British cell phones in Cuba.

Cuban law prohibits non-Cubans from buying Cuban cell phones and limits 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. The password to use to unlock the keyboard on this cell or to add additional money (*saldo*) to its account is 6623. Please note that this (or another) Cuban cell phone can be used to call the US for around CUC$1.40-$1.80/minute, but texts cannot be made to the US.

During your travel seminar, you can use your cell phone to make US$50-75 worth of calls to communicate with your family. Calls from Cuba to and from the United States cost about US$3/minute. Texts are much less expensive.

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 the Gateway Airport***

US-based CGE trip leaders usually meet the group in the gateway city—most often Miami. CGE strongly recommends that trip sponsors arrange for their group to overnight in Miami the nights before and after their charter flight departs. The **Final Letter**provides the time and location to meet the group in the gateway city. It may be helpful for you to carry a “Center for Global Education” sign. **If you run into problems in transit, phone or text CGE’s emergency cell at 612-817-2830 or email:** [**CGEemergency@gmail.com**](mailto:CGEemergency@gmail.com)*.*

CGE books our flights in/out of Havana through Marazul Charters. If you have charter-related problems, call Marazul at 1-800-223-5334 or 201-840-6711. Our primary agents are Luisa Sanchez (ext. 15) and Mayra Alonso (ext. 11); backup is Marazul Vice President Bob Guild (ext. 16).

Because of the embargo, Marazul issues vouchers for Cuba flights instead of tickets. These vouchers get exchanged for boarding passes at the gateway airport for the outbound flight to Cuba and at the Havana airport for return flight to the United States.

**Miami Gateway**

1. Marazul’s travel packet will indicate exactly where the group will check in and at what time (i.e. 12:00 pm at Concourse G). Four hours for check-in may seem ridiculous, but it takes that long for everyone to go through multiple screening and get out to the departure gate. Check-in can be complicated to find since Marazul sets up temporarily at a ticket counter right before the charter leaves. Check-in is usually on the baggage, rather than the ticketing, level. If your flight is listed as Delta or Continental, it won’t be at the regular flight check-in area. You may have to ask several times and may get conflicting responses.
2. If possible, get to the area early and identify yourself to the charter staff at the ticket counter as the leader of a larger group that is ready to check-in. Provide a list of everyone in your group. Charters are very strict about the weight limits (listed on ticket vouchers). On occasion passengers have also been asked to provide their approximate body weight. Excess baggage charges are high. If travel seminar participants check in individually, those with overweight bags are responsible for covering the cost. If the bags of others in the group are underweight or if the group is carrying a lot of humanitarian donations, you may be able to negotiate a lower overage charge.
3. Stand near the check-in area with your CGE sign and welcome participants as they arrive. Get everyone assembled and get all of the documentation to check in as a group. The process for checking in will be as follows:
   1. Each participant will check in and exchange one ticket voucher and the form clipped to the front of the Marazul travel packet for a boarding pass. They will need to show their passport and Cuban visa in order to do that.
   2. Exit tax, mandatory Cuban health insurance, and Cuban visas are covered by program costs.
   3. Each passenger’s purse, day pack, and carry-on and checked luggage will be screened and weighed. Any overage will have to be paid for in cash.
   4. The group then goes through the regular airport security screening process.
   5. Set a time for the group to meet at the departure gate in order to do a brief orientation and fill out Cuban immigration and forms – allow time for the group to get through the regular airport security, use the rest rooms and get some food before meeting you. Security lines at the Miami airport can be very long so warn people they should proceed on through and then buy food near the departure gate.
4. ***Orientations***
5. **Gateway Briefing**

If there is time, hold a briefing in the gateway airport. You will need about 30-45 minutes. Some items may be repeated during orientation at the MLKC, but people 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, transfer to the MLKC or hotel, and health and safety. This is a good time to explain your role – you are not a Cuba expert, you will be a liaison with the MLKC staff.

Gateway Airport Process: The flight from Miami will be about an hour with only a beverage served. The flight from Mexico City is approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes, and Cubana serves a full meal. All flights are on jet aircraft, chartered by Marazul. Check-in is required 4 hours prior to departure. We always try to arrange check-in as a group, so you will give them a designated location and time to check-in. Luggage weight restrictions are strict and very carefully monitored. Let them know that they are responsible for costs associated with any weight overage. You will exchange a ticket voucher for a boarding pass with the charter agent in Miami.

Havana Airport Process (Jose Martí International): Upon arrival, get in line to go through Immigration. Assure the group members that it is a very non-threatening and friendly process. They will have to show their passport, Cuban visa, and return ticket voucher, and get their picture taken. Ask group members to spread out to the various lines and position yourself to go through last. Try to float between the lines just in case anyone has any questions or problems. If anyone in your group runs into problems entering Cuba, drop the name of Rev. Raul Suárez, co-founder of the Martin Luther King Center and Cuban legislator.

**If asked by Cuban authorities, group members should state that the purpose of their travel to Cuba is “tourism.” The group is not studying at a Cuban university and therefore does not need student visas. [Note: it is the U.S. government that requires that travelers to Cuba demonstrate they are there for educational purposes.]**

They will have to make it very clear to the agent if they want their passport stamped with a Cuban entry stamp. If they are asked where they are staying in Cuba they should answer the Martin Luther King Center in Havana**. Tell them to be very careful not to lose their Cuban visa which will be tucked into their passport but not attached**.

The next step is to claim checked luggage off the carousel. Make sure someone monitors the bags during this process to make sure nothing is taken. Tell the group not to let porters help with luggage.

Advise them to use the “Nothing to Declare” line at Customs. **Luggage is now commonly inspected due to increased terrorist threats and drug trafficking around the world. After picking up their bags, group members may be asked to line up their luggage and stand a few feet in front of their bags in another single file line. Bomb/drug dogs will then walk the single file of luggage to sniff everything. This is standard practice, so no one should be worried.**

**In September 2012, the Cuban government instituted new customs duties. Travelers are permitted to bring 66 pounds of miscellaneous goods into Cuba without charge. Everything after that is taxed at US$4.55/pound. Travel seminar participants are responsible for payment of any import taxes.**

**The trip leader and/or several group members may be picked out for questioning as to what the group is doing in Cuba. Be attentive and try to help answer questions if someone else is chosen for questioning. Again, this should not scare people: it is common practice in Cuba as it is in the United States.**

Once through customs, if the ***Ca****sa* ***de******Ca****mbio* (CADECA) is open, each person should change U.S. dollars into Convertible Cuban pesos (CUC) for their spending money during the trip. They will need their passport to do this. It is prohibited to use U.S. dollars for transactions in Cuba.

Once money has been exchanged, each person will need to show the official at the exit door that they have a bag tag that matches the tag on their checked luggage.

Once outside the exit door, MLKC staff will greet you in the waiting area that is roped off just in front of the exit. The group should stay together on the sidewalk outside the customs gate until everyone is through customs. If no one from the MLKC is there to meet you, go to the information booth, ask them to page your guide and tell her or him to meet you there. **If that doesn’t work, then ask to use a phone to call your MLKC guide’s cell phone** (if you have it). If you must wait for a call back, make sure the group knows where you are in case the MLKC guide shows up in the meantime.

Once everyone is ready, the group will take its luggage out to the parking lot, put it on the MLKC bus, and then drive approximately 20-30 minutes from the airport to either the hotel or MLKC.

Accommodations: Upon arrival at the hotel or MLKC rooms will be assigned. You should record the room numbers and roommates so that you can get in touch with individual group members if necessary. *We request only two people per room* but whether this is honored depends on how many other groups are being accommodated at the MLKC at the time. Ask participants to let you know who they would like to room with. The MLKC has a shared bath for every two rooms; hotels have baths in each room. At the MLKC it is very important not to leave valuables on the upper bunks by the windows where thieves may be able to grab them!

Safe: Passports, Cuban visas, ticket vouchers, and extra cash will be put in a safe as soon as possible upon arrival in Havana.

Health: A few reminders - don’t drink or brush teeth with tap water! At the MLKC guesthouse, you can fill your water bottle with purified water at the tap in the patio or from the dispenser in the dining room. Bottled water can be purchased at the store across the street from the MLKC. Whenever a CGE group stays in a hotel or *casas particulares* that do not have bottled water in the rooms, the MLKC is to provide a large jug of purified water (*garafón*) that the trip leader can keep in her/his room. For day trips and overnight excursions outside of Havana, please make sure that there is a *garafón* on the MLKC bus as well. Group members can pour water from the *garafón* into their own bottles for individual use.

Toilet paper and feminine products go in the wastebasket, not in the toilet.

Daily Program of Activities:

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 some other CGE-led trips, the daily program will not include formal meetings with so-called “dissident” voices like you would hear in Miami and read in the mainline media in the US with regularity. Nonetheless, the MLKC intentionally includes a lot of free time and visits to informal settings where you can talk with local people about their views. Please take advantage of these times to speak with Cubans. You will be able to speak with people in the market, on city streets, or in taxis. We encourage you to speak with as many people as possible. If you need help with interpretation, just let your trip leader, guide, and translator know!

Most of the time, the group will go to a briefing 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). Here we will get the U.S. perspective on U.S.-Cuban relations and the Cuban reality.

As with any CGE program, there may be several changes to the program during the week. 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. Don’t get your heart set on a particular meeting or outing. We are sure that we will meet the most important trip objectives. However, you need to expect the unexpected and adjust to the local culture and infrastructure.

In our meetings, around the MLKC with our Cuban hosts, we hope you’ll make an effort to listen hard, ask probing questions in a non-offensive or aggressive manner, and be sensitive to our hosts, their reality, and the political perspectives. Be courteous and respectful in your words and manner. 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 listed on the group’s itinerary are covered by program fees. If the group goes to a music club, MLKC/CGE pays the cover charge, which may include one or two drinks per person. Additional drinks are at each person’s own expense.

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. We ask that individual participants NOT leave any cash tips in their rooms or with specific individuals because it can cause problems among MLKC staff.

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**

Because we work to establish mutual relationships with the communities in which we do programs and because we are committed to providing a transformative educational experience, we ask participants to adhere to the following:

* Attend scheduled meetings with speakers and field trips. Please be on time and do not leave midway from a meeting unless you are ill. Please try to be alert during meeting and not fall asleep. Please don't stay out late at night if that affects your ability to stay awake in meetings the next day.
* 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 further determine the speaker's views rather than trying to change their mind. Don’t reference other meetings or resource people.
* Attend scheduled 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.
* Don't abuse alcohol. We mention this because of the free and easy nightlife available in Havana.
* Dress neatly for meetings and presentations and do not wear military clothes or clothing with U.S. patriotic symbols or anti-Cuban slogans. In general, Havana is very casual, and during the summer months, you will see many Cubans wearing very short-shorts and short-skirts. You do not need to dress conservatively for most of your visits, and you may even wear longer shorts for some of the meetings and presentations, but be sure to ask your guide about the dress code for the next day every evening before s/he leaves. Travel seminar participants should dress up for visits to the Cuban Congress (*Asamblea Nacional de Poder Popular*) and the U.S. Interests Section.
* Let the Trip Leader know if you need to deviate from the schedule due to illness.
* 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.
* For each formal presentation or meeting someone in the group should make a short introduction – give the name of the group, where they are from, what their interests are, how long you have been in Cuba, etc. For most groups there are enough of these meetings that everyone gets a chance to do this.
* At the end of each formal presentation or meeting, someone in the group should stand up and give a formal “THANK YOU” in which s/he comments on something specific that was said that the person will remember or share with people back home. 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.

# **Departure from United States/Gateway Briefing Checklist (30-45 min)**

* Introduce self and your role with the group and the MLKC -- note that more complete orientation to follow upon arrival
* One-hour flight, beverages only
* Filling out Cuban immigration forms
  + Customs form - Give them the MLKC address and sample form in English
  + Public health form
* Upon arrival in Havana, participants should spread-out to various immigration lines, with passport, tourist card/visa and return airplane ticket in hand – some people may get questioned
* Trip leader will be the last one through the line.
* Agent may not stamp your passport unless you explicitly ask.
* Remind Participants: DO NOT LOSE YOUR CUBAN VISA
* Claim baggage and use “nothing to declare” line
* Luggage may be checked by dogs & one or two members of the group will routinely be pulled aside from questioning. None of this is unusual.
* Plan to change money at the airport at the *Casa de Cambio* (CADECA). There is one right before you exit customs. If it is closed, MLKC staff will take you to another one in the departure area.
* MLKC staff will meet group immediately outside the customs area. If you don’t see them, then stick together until I exit.
* The MLKC will provide transportation from airport - about a 20-30 minute drive.
* Do not let porters help with luggage
* Rooms assigned upon arrival at the MLKC/Hotel, you as trip leader should ask participants if they have roommate preferences
* You as trip leader should record room numbers/roommates
* Put trip participants’ passports, Cuban visas, ticket vouchers, and extra cash in safe ASAP upon arrival. Keep a copy of your passport with you.
* Breakfast/group meeting times and places will be announced. Listen and be on time.
* Accommodations are modest!

- thin mattresses – can stack 2 on top of each other

- possibly cold water showers

- possibly more than 2 people per room depending on how busy the MLKC is

- if things break, let you or the guide know

* Program is extremely busy - many meetings/activities per day
  + Licenses for authorized travel to Cuba from the United States require participation in a full-time schedule of educational exchange activities, so free time will be extremely limited
* Challenges of traveling with a group – can be difficult to always meet individual needs in the midst of a group
* Brief overview of the program
  + limitations of perspectives you can get
  + how the MLKC sets up program and requests government permission for visits to public institutions, so difficult to change

1. ***Orientation in Cuba***

In-country Briefing with MLKC Staff

As soon as possible after arrival, have an introductory briefing with MLKC staff. This will take 1-2 hours. MLKC staff will facilitate this session with your input. Items for this meeting:

* Personal introductions
  + Name, family, work
  + 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)
* Review staff roles

*CGE Trip Leader*: (***can do in gateway city instead***)

* + Liaison to the MLKC, our hosts in Cuba
    - NOT an expert on Cuba
    - Resolve programmatic issues/concerns
  + Work with in-group organizer or professor 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.
  + If there is no in-group leader/organizer, then the Trip Leader should also fulfill those responsibilities, which are listed below.

*In-group leader/organizer* (if applicable): (***can also do in gateway city instead***)

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

*MLKC guide:*

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

*Interprete*r:

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

Weather may be hot in comparison to where group comes from. Wear sunscreen and drink lots of water. Drink only purified water (water on pitcher on tables, in large metal dispenser in cafeteria, or in the two spigots outside the cafeteria wall). Brush teeth using purified water.

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

Wash hands well at every opportunity! Use hand sanitizer when sinks aren’t available.

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

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

If you become ill, let the Trip Leader know right away. Pepto Bismol and Imodium may be good medications, although sometimes it’s better to get things out of their system. Rice, bananas and tea are good for a slightly upset stomach.

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 and sanitize hands regularly.

Plane tickets to Cuba include health insurance for foreign tourists. In Cuba, tourists can go to a clinic or hospital for free. Encourage group members to let you know with some advance warning if they think they will need to go to a clinic, and ask if anyone else in the group may need to see a doctor so that you can organize a minimum number of trips.

* Safety and Security

Take the same precautions you would take in any large city. Don’t go out alone - go out only in groups of at least 2 or 3 people. In certain tourist areas, children may approach you and ask for pens or money. As in any large city, watch for pickpockets on the streets and in crowded markets. 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 – just take out a small bill. Havana is relatively safe, day and night, but incidents can happen anywhere, so be careful.

If your room at the MLKC faces the outside, make sure you keep things off your upper bunk if you open the windows! Always close and lock windows when leaving the room and when sleeping. The MLKC is guarded 24-hours per day, and the halls are usually locked at night. Note key location in the inside hallways. Outer door is locked at night. There’s a doorbell, and it’s ok to come in late.

Theft is common at the crowded baseball stadium, so be careful if you go there.

Don’t get paranoid: Cubans are incredibly friendly. Explore the neighborhood of the MLKC, downtown Havana, and talk to strangers!

Violent crime is rare in Cuba compared to most countries in the world, but due to the poverty of Havana, petty theft is common. Therefore, feel free to walk around and get to know your neighborhood, but take the same precautions you would in any large city.

**In-country Briefing with MLKC Staff Checklist (1-2 hours)**

* Personal Introductions
* Review Staff Roles
  + CGE Trip Leader (if didn’t do in gate city)
  + In-group leader/organizer
  + MLKC Guide
  + Interpreter
    - Health
  + Drink only purified water, do not brush teeth with tap water
  + Wash hands every time you can
  + Place toilet paper in WASTEBASKET, not tank
  + Use insect repellent
  + Food at the MLKC and selected restaurants is safe and healthy
  + **Let me know if you become ill!**
    - Safety and Security
  + Do not leave valuables on upper bunks by windows! Close/lock windows when away or sleeping
  + Do not go out alone - go out in groups, w/o expensive jewelry
  + Baseball stadiums especially risky
  + Drop your key off at the front desk when you leave if they ask you to do so.
  + Be extra cautious in front of the MLKC and in Old Havana.
    - Participant Responsibilities (***can do in gateway city instead***)
  + Follow the rules of the particular license under which your group is travelling (i.e. full-time educational program)
  + Get enough sleep at night so that you do not sleep during meetings
  + Attend all scheduled meeting for entire duration
  + Ask questions respectfully/be respectful to speakers
  + Attend and arrive on time to group reflections
  + Ask permission before recording/taking pictures
  + **Be respectful of other participants**
  + In meetings/presentations ask *one question*, then wait for others to speak
  + If you ask a question in Spanish, either translate it or wait for the translator to do so
    - Meeting Protocol
  + Participants rotate responsibility to introduce group to speaker
  + MLKC guide introduces speaker to group
  + Participants rotate responsibility to thank speaker – do it profoundly!
    - Miscellaneous
  + Purchases limited to informational materials and crafts/T-shirts/flags
  + Carry a copy of your passport with you at all times, original in safe with ticket vouchers and Cuban visas
  + Money can be put in safe, but it is not accessible every day
  + Phone cards can be purchased and used to make local and international calls.
  + Email: There are 2 computers at the MLKC that are really slow. Internet cafes downtown charge about 8 CUCs/hour.
  + Clothes washing: Yamila or housekeeper
  + Keep your suitcase closed it so you don’t take home “stow aways” (bugs, etc.)
  + There is a *tienda* (store), *el Piropo*, across the street that sells snacks, cold beverages, etc.
  + There is also a post office right across the street

**Briefing First Night at the MLKC (if get in later in the day)**

* + Can fill up water bottles from large metal receptacle in cafeteria or from spigots on the wall outside the cafeteria.
  + Throw toilet paper in the trash—don’t flush.
  + Don’t put valuables on the top bunk by a window—whether you are in the room or not! (If you do, they may disappear.)
  + When sharing a bathroom between rooms, be sure to unlock the other door before you leave so you don’t prevent folks in the other room from access.
  + Will do a more thorough orientation tomorrow.
  + If you decide to go out, please let me or the in-group leader know. Exercise caution. Some MLKC guests have been targeted for theft. Carry a copy of your passport with you and the MLKC’s address/phone. Leave valuables in your room or the safe. Don’t go out alone.
  + The MLKC is guarded 24 hours a day. If the door to the hallways outside the guestrooms are locked, there is a key hanging near the door.
  + In the morning, there is an espresso bar where you can get strong coffee before breakfast is served, although this is technically for MLKC employees.

***XV. Departure***

Brief the participants on re-entry into the U.S. a day or so before departure for home.

Topics:

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. A letter from CGE/Augsburg College is included in their travel packet. If the group travelled under a People-to-People license, a copy of CGE/Augsburg’s license is included there as well.

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.

Buy “informational materials” in Cuba to take back legally to the United States and keep receipts! You will need an export certificate/receipt for each item, especially art purchases. If you do not have this paperwork, you may need to pay 3 CUC per item at the airport.

**Logistics for the day of departure:**

\*The MLKC often does not arrange any visits on the day of departure, even if your group has a late afternoon flight. Plan on doing a final group reflection and evaluation.

\* Check the departure time of your return charter, because at times there are last-minute changes. Confirm return charter flights the same day or day before by calling the telephone number on the back of the ticket voucher.

\* Announce when breakfast will be (arrange this ahead of time) and what time they have to have their luggage in the lobby of the MLKC or hotel to be loaded (make it prior to breakfast!).

\* Arrive at the airport 3 hours before departure. Your travel packet will identify when. If the ticket counter area is crowded, the group may be instructed to wait outside the terminal for a bit before they are permitted to enter the departure hall.

\* Tell participants that money exchange, shops, and a restaurant are located in the departure area, but they may not open for early 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 25 CUC/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 3 CUC per item. They may need to do that even if the art is in their checked luggage, so they have all receipts handy.

Beyond immigration and security, there is a cafeteria, tourist shops, and a money exchange house.

If your group is travelling via Cancun or Mexico City, they will be “in transit” in Mexico and should keep their boarding pass so they won’t have to pay the Mexico departure tax. They will check-in individually for the flight back to the United States. Each person should get her/his own luggage claim ticket.

**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 or x-ray checked. Relax, you have done nothing illegal!

**Departure from Cuba Meeting Checklist**

* CGE and MLKC Evaluations
* Day of Departure Logistics
* Double-check local time of flight departure
  + Arrive 3 hours before departure
  + Tell participants when to leave their luggage in the lobby (before breakfast) to be loaded on the bus
* Havana Airport at Departure
  + Check-in and pay exit tax as a group: trip leader does group check-in, has all passports, tourist cards, tickets in hand, CGE pays 25 CUC per person exit tax
  + Go through immigration individually
  + Agent may not stamp passport unless asked to do so
  + Keep export certificate (receipt) for any artwork purchased handy
  + Money exchange, shops, and restaurant are past immigration and security
* U.S. Immigration and Customs
  + Participants: be prepared to show authorization letter from CGE or sponsoring institution and any other required legal documents demonstrating legality of the trip
  + Complete U.S. immigration form—flight originated in Cuba, was an educational trip (*not tourism!)*
  + Have itemized list of purchases available. Buy legal and keep receipts!
  + DO NOT LIE TO U.S. CUSTOMS! You have travelled to Cuba legally!
    - Other Basics
* CGE will send each travel seminar participant a post-trip email with the group’s acual schedule
* CGE can always use support for scholarships and new program development
* Participants will get CGE’s quarterly newsletter and request to get it electronically
* CGE does customized travel seminars for lots of different kinds of groups at multiple sites.
* CGE offers undergraduate semester programs in Cuba, Mexico, Central America, the Netherlands, and Southern Africa
* Tell participants they can leave medicine and other items at the MLKC for distribution in the community
  + - 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 Gonzalez. Be careful of pickpockets and scams, such as being sold music CD’s that do not work. One of Gonzalez’s assistants, Elias Assef 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 the Cuban 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 2 CUC 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**

About an 80-minute musical review (a little like a Broadway musical) of Cuban, U.S., and European traditional, classical and popular music. CUC$15/person in the restaurant venue, less if a few 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 confirm 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 will not be allowed into the building. 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 will

exchange their passports for a name badge.

Briefings generally last about an hour. 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 5-page 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.