

Pre-departure Preparation

Cuba

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Payments, Cancellation & Insurance

Payments: Your final payment (minus your deposit) is due 6-8 weeks prior to departure. Please check your travel seminar brochure for the specific deadline. You may pay your balance by check or with a credit card (please note we only accept Visa or MasterCard). For some programs, you may be billed directly by the organization or group sponsoring your travel seminar.

Cancellation: Cancellation notices must be received by the Center for Global Education (CGE) in writing. Your \$250 deposit is non-refundable. A cancellation notice received up to 75 days before departure will be assessed only the deposit plus any non-recoverable costs (i.e. flight deposits, visa fee, etc.). A cancellation notice received 61-74 days before departure will be assessed 25% of the total travel seminar cost; a cancellation notice received 31-60 days before departure will be assessed 50% of the total cost. A cancellation notice received within 30 days of departure will be assessed the full program cost.

In the event that a travel warning is issued by the U.S. State Department for a country that will be visited during a program and CGE agrees that it is unsafe to travel there (or the sponsor has an existing written policy against traveling to a country/location with a travel warning), then we will try to reroute that program to another country. If we need to cancel the program, the participants will be refunded any recoverable expenses.

If there is no travel warning, but a participant cancels due to fear of a worldwide crisis, then they may be able to transfer their deposit to another program within the same fiscal year (if CGE agrees); however, they would still be responsible for paying any unrecoverable expenses related to the original trip.

Cancellation Insurance: We recommend you purchase trip cancellation or interruption insurance to protect yourself against emergencies or unforeseen events that might prevent you from traveling. Some examples of unforeseen disruptions that could require you to cancel your trip are: you or a family member becomes sick or dies; bad weather or a natural disaster results in closed airports, roads, or hotels; jury duty; terrorist attacks/civil unrest in-country or at home; health epidemics (such as H1N1, Ebola); and travel warnings issued by the U.S. Department of State. You are free to use any insurance company.

NOTE: In many instances, cancellation insurance must be purchased within 14 days of your first payment towards any trip related costs (i.e.: deposit on program or airline ticket.).

Medical Insurance: All foreigners who visit Cuba are required to purchase medical coverage from the Cuban government. This coverage will be included in your flight package. CGE also provides health/ accident insurance that includes emergency evaluation.

Passport, Travel Restrictions, Visa & Entry Requirements

Passport: The information below addresses passport requirements for U.S. citizens. Citizens of other countries should contact CGE for further information.

Cuba requires you to have a U.S. passport valid for at least six months from the scheduled date of departure from Cuba. While the average processing time for a standard passport application is six weeks, it can take much longer. If your trip is departing within six months, we strongly recommend using Expedited Service for your passport application. Consult the U.S. Department of State's Web page for fees and procedures: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html

Once you receive your new or renewed passport, you sign it on the designated page opposite your picture to validate it. If you did not provide us with your passport information during CGE registration, please send us a photocopy of this page after signing it. Make sure you also keep a photocopy with you during the trip, separate from where you keep your passport. It is also a good idea to leave a photocopy with a family member or friend at home.

Keep any documents inserted into your passport or given to you by immigration officials upon arrival in Cuba. You will need to present them upon departure.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, you must also carry with you all necessary documentation to re-enter the United States (visa, green card, etc.).

Travel Restrictions: U.S. law places restrictions on travel to Cuba. Under U.S. government regulations published on January 16, 2015, only persons whose travel falls into certain categories may be authorized to spend money related to travel to, from, or within Cuba. Currently, CGE facilitates educational programs in Cuba under general licenses. You will receive detailed information on licensing requirements before departure and are required to comply with them.

Please see the website of the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) for further information <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Pages/cuba.aspx>.

Visa & Entry Requirements: U.S. citizens seeking to enter Cuba must have an entry visa. The cost of your visa is included in your program cost. A copy of your valid passport is required to begin visa processing. If you are a citizen of a country other than the United States, contact CGE for further information. CGE will assist you in reviewing information, but the responsibility for obtaining and paying for proper documentation is yours.

Air Travel Arrangements & Time Zone

Air Travel Arrangements: CGE will arrange your air travel between a Miami and Havana. CGE does not arrange for flights to and from Miami. It is the responsibility of the sponsor of your trip to ensure that flights are arranged to Miami. In some cases everyone in your group will be on the same flights. In others you will be directed to book your own flights to arrive in Miami by a specific day and time. Kindly check with CGE or with the person or institution organizing your trip if you have questions about how flights for your particular group are being handled.

CGE strongly encourages you to arrive in Miami the night prior to departure for Cuba as well as the night that you are scheduled to return from Cuba. CGE is not responsible for any change fees or new tickets if your incoming flight does not get to Miami in time for you to board the flight to Cuba. Similarly, CGE is not responsible for any change fees associated with your connecting air travel if your flight from Cuba to Miami is delayed for any reason.

It is essential that the name on your ticket vouchers for charter flights to and from Cuba be identical to your name as it appears on your passport. If there is a discrepancy, you could be delayed or required to purchase another ticket. Please check your ticket voucher as soon as you receive it and contact CGE immediately if there is a discrepancy.

In the event that changes need to be made in the itinerary between Miami and Cuba due to illness, strikes, terrorism, weather, or other causes, these changes will be made to ensure the well-being of all participants. Depending on the circumstances, additional expenses, if any, will be the responsibility of individual travelers or the institution sponsoring your trip, although CGE will make every effort to minimize such expenses.

Time Zone: The time is the same as U.S. Eastern Time.

Packing List & Luggage

Packing Tips: Pack as lightly as possible. Be sure to put essential items such as medications in your carry-on bag in case of a delay or lost luggage. As a general rule, if you cannot walk five city blocks with all of your gear, you have packed too much.

Pack comfortable clothing. Pants, including jeans and capris, t-shirts without U.S. patriotic or military logos and button-down shirts are appropriate. Shorts, sweat suits, and tank tops or revealing clothing are seen as informal and should not be worn for meetings with government officials or worship services. They are fine the rest of the time. Bring items that are lightweight and can be layered in case of temperature or weather changes or air-conditioned rooms.

Do not bring anything with a camouflage pattern or of a military style.

CGE strongly recommends leaving expensive jewelry/watches at home.

Suggested items to include:

- Passport and photocopy of the photo page (packed in 2 separate places)
- Medications and toiletries that you anticipate needing (e.g. tampons, mouthwash, disposable razors); the most common ailments are traveler's diarrhea, colds, and motion sickness
- Comfortable walking shoes with a closed toe for rural areas and markets, where there may be mud or biting insects
- Sandals or flip flops
- Swimsuit and towel
- Sweater, sweatshirt or jacket for cool evenings and air-conditioned rooms
- Rain jacket, poncho, or umbrella – a MUST during the rainy season from May-October
- Ear plugs (if you are a light sleeper) and eye mask (for shared rooms)
- Toilet/tissue paper
- Sun & insect protection – hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, insect repellent
- Camera and extra batteries
- Small flashlight & extra batteries (for dark streets, rural areas, and frequent power outages)
- Refillable water bottle with a wide mouth that can be easily cleaned
- Power bars or high-protein snacks (especially if you are vegetarian or vegan)
- Small backpack or shoulder bag for daytime excursions and overnight trips
- Notebook or journal
- Reading material, deck of cards, etc. for waiting times or delays
- Money belt or neck pouch to hold valuables
- ATM or credit cards (these won't work in Cuba but you may need them if you experience flight delays in the United States)
- Hand sanitizer
- Two-prong plug adapter (if you are bringing electrical appliances)

Luggage: On charter flights to and from Cuba, there are additional fees for checked bags and weight overage. All fees are your responsibility and must be paid in cash at both the Miami and Havana airports. Passengers are limited to a combined total of 44 pounds for checked luggage

and any carry-on bag. All of your items will be weighed together. If their combined weight is over 44 pounds, you will be charged \$2-4 per pound over the limit. In addition, there is a \$20 fee per checked bag. Charter agents may oblige you to check luggage that qualifies for a carry-on with a domestic carrier.

Weather

The following are average temperatures, not extremes. As in the United States, weather patterns can vary. We recommend checking weather sites on the internet for the time of year you will be traveling.

From November to April, the temperature averages 75-80 F. From June to August, the range is about 85-90 F. Rainy season is May-October. Bring a light sweater or jacket for the occasional cool evening or air-conditioned building.

Money

Most participants find \$150-\$250 to be sufficient spending money for a two-week seminar to Cuba. Of course, how much you bring should depend on your personal spending habits. Remember that all meals and scheduled group activities are covered in your program cost.

Exchange: Dollars are not accepted in Cuba so you will need to exchange money into Convertible Cuban Pesos (CUC). U.S. Dollars (USD) can be exchanged at a money exchange (CADECA) upon entry at the airport or at select hotels. Plan to bring cash. Even though U.S. law changed on January 16, 2015, such that U.S. banks can now facilitate credit card transactions in Cuba, this is not yet operational. Money changers in Cuba do not accept dollar bills with writing, stamps, tears, or rips. We strongly encourage you to bring a money belt.

At last update, 1 USD = 1 CUC plus an additional exchange fee of 10% (that is, including the exchange fee 1 USD = .90 CUC). For current information concerning exchange rates from the dollar to the CUC, visit <http://www.xe.com>

Cuba has two circulating currencies. National Cuban pesos are used by Cubans. Transactions by foreigner occur in CUCs. When prices are posted, you will need to figure out which currency is being used.

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

When departing Cuba, Cuban officials may ask to see a receipt, showing the purchase price in convertible Cuban Pesos (CUC). Generally, this occurs for artwork and antique items valued at more than about 20 CUC.

Accommodations & Electrical Current

Accommodations: In Havana groups mostly stay in a modest hotel or the Martin Luther King Jr. Center guesthouse with air conditioning. You must be able to walk up two flights of steps to get to the rooms, so please let us know if you have any mobility issues. Accommodations in the countryside often are more basic than those in Havana. You may not always have access to hot water or standard mattresses. We are confident that this experience will enhance your understanding of the country in a challenging, experiential manner.

Electrical Current: The electrical current in Cuba varies greatly. Some sockets are the same as in the United States (110 volts, 60 cycles). Other newer ones take 220. It is good to check first before plugging anything in. Although sockets in Cuba usually accept both continental European (round) and U.S.-style (flat) plugs, some outlets cannot accommodate a grounding prong or wide flange. If you are bringing electrical appliances, you will need to bring a two-prong adapter to fit any outlet with two narrow slots.

Health & Safety Information

Health: Review your vaccinations: Check with your doctor or the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) regarding recommended vaccinations for travel to Cuba. Currently, the CDC requires no vaccinations to enter. It recommends that you be up-to-date on routine vaccines like diphtheria-tetanus and measles and that you consider a Hepatitis A vaccine. You may call the CDC at 404/332-4559 or visit their website at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>

- **Bring enough medical/health supplies.** If you take prescription or over-the-counter medication, make sure you bring enough to last your entire program, including a possible day or two of delay. Be prepared, and bring medical and health supplies for potential problems. Medication, including common over-the-counter items, will not be readily available. Bring everything in its original, labeled bottle.
- **Drink only purified water.** It is best to drink bottled water or water from trusted sources. You will be provided with purified water during your seminar, although you must put it in your own water bottle. Don't forget to use purified water when you brush your teeth. Avoid ice cubes.
- **Drink enough water.** Besides drinking contaminated water, not drinking enough water and getting dehydrated and/or constipated is the most common health problem.
- **Wash your hands with soap** or use hand sanitizer whenever possible. Clean food and water can be contaminated by dirty hands.

- **Watch your food.** Eat meat, fish and vegetables only if they are well cooked. Avoid salads unless the greens have been washed with purified water. Fruit that you peel is the safest. CGE staff will give you more information on safe eating and drinking habits.
- **Pace yourself.** During a travel seminar there will be when it is necessary to walk a considerable distance in heat and humidity. If a particular health condition makes strenuous walking a concern, please communicate your limitations to your group leader and CGE trip leader.
- **Be aware of your environment.** If you have a history of allergies, other respiratory illness or heart problems, you could experience complications during your stay due to factors like pollution, pollen, and heat. If you use medication for these problems, be sure to bring an adequate amount after consulting your doctor.
- **If you get sick,** please let your CGE trip leader know right away. This will help to pinpoint problems with food and water. They can arrange a visit to a doctor or medical clinic if necessary.

Possible Ailments:

Traveler's Diarrhea: Just the change in food, water and climate can lead to an upset stomach. If you get diarrhea, treat it with Pepto-Bismol and drink lots of water. When you are ready to eat again, start with rice, bread, crackers, and broth (bring bouillon cubes or dry soup). Imodium (Loperamide is the generic equivalent) is a stronger medication to be used only when absolutely necessary. It does not cure the diarrhea but slows down the digestive system, which can lead to other problems. Some herbal teas such as ginger root, raspberry, comfrey, and peppermint are thought to aid in the prevention and treatment of diarrhea. Feel free to bring some tea bags with you.

Hepatitis A: Studies have shown that travelers in developing countries with “standard” itineraries, accommodations, and food consumption behavior may contract Hepatitis A.

Malaria: Malaria is a mosquito-borne illness that is present in parts of the Caribbean, including in Cuba.

Chikungunya: Chikungunya is an illness caused by a virus that spreads through mosquito bites. In June 2014, Cuba documented 6 cases of Chikungunya infections. Since there is no preventative medicine for chikungunya, take measures to avoid mosquito bites such as using insect repellent with DEET and covering exposed skin.

Dengue Fever: This disease is primarily an urban viral infection transmitted by mosquitoes. Since there is no preventative medicine for dengue fever, take measures to avoid mosquito bites such as using insect repellent with DEET and covering exposed skin.

Typhoid: Typhoid Fever is a bacterial infection transmitted through contaminated food and/or water, or directly between people. The CDC recommends a typhoid vaccination for those traveling to tropical areas.

Safety

Your safety is our highest concern. Since 1982, more than 10,000 people have participated in CGE travel seminars. CGE has thus gained a great deal of experience with group travel. CGE works closely with our in-country partner, the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Center, to monitor the situation in Cuba. CGE will not hesitate to cancel a trip should something occur that would make it appear to be unsafe to travel to a specific country or area.

For up-to-date CGE Safety Notices and Information please visit:

<http://www.augsburg.edu/global/about/safety.html>

Out of our extensive experience we have developed the following guidelines for you to observe before and during your travel seminar. These guidelines come out of important safety, security and cultural concerns. At times, the reasons for these guidelines may not always seem obvious to you. Keep in mind that following these guidelines helps to ensure the safety of travel seminar participants, CGE staff, in-country partners, and resource people. In addition, they enhance the group's educational experience and foster long-term relationships of trust and mutual respect which the CGE seeks to develop in Cuba.

If all participants follow these guidelines, it means less inconvenience for you and the group and less work for our staff. Please read these guidelines carefully and be familiar with them before your departure.

As you prepare for your travel seminar to Cuba, please keep the following in mind:

- Military clothing and hats could be mistaken for military apparel and should not be taken on the trip. Apparel with U.S. patriotic messages or symbols (such as conspicuously displayed flags) could provoke aggressive responses and should be left at home.
- Bring a small lock for your bag. You should also bring a money belt that can be hidden under your clothes in which to keep your money and important documents.
- Please do not bring any expensive jewelry or watches. Anything that looks expensive should be left at home.

If in doubt about the appropriateness of an item, it is best to err on the side of caution.

When you arrive at the airport in Cuba:

You may be asked by Cuban officials about your itinerary and schedule. If so, simply respond: **you don't know your schedule.** (You will receive a tentative schedule of appointments upon arrival.) Identify yourself as a tourist if asked; the official purpose of your trip is tourism. Watch your bags and documents at the airport.

Do's and Don'ts

While on the travel seminar . . .

Do . . .

- Listen carefully to all safety information during your in-country orientation.
- Keep your passport copy with you at all times. Only carry your passport with you when changing money, going to the U.S. Interests Section, or if otherwise instructed by CGE staff.
- Stay close together as a group when you are out in public, and always travel in groups of two or more.
- Always ask permission of a person before tape recording or photographing.
- Be conscious and cautious about what you say in public (including airplanes, airports, restaurants and hotel lobbies). There will most likely be people around you who will understand English. Also, North Americans tend to speak in louder voices, so keep your voice at a low level--even when in your hotel room.
- Be respectful of resource people, even those with whom your views differ. This doesn't mean that you have to avoid asking the "hard" questions, just ask them in a respectful and non-confrontational way.
- Be respectful of other group members. Before asking multiple questions of resource people, look around to see if other people have questions. Remember that people have varied learning styles and may need more time before asking questions. Remember that you are part of a learning community and not simply an independent traveler.
- Drink a lot of purified water to maintain good health. When the weather is hot, you will dehydrate much more quickly! The CGE trip leader will help you find sources of safe water.

Don't . . .

- Photograph military personnel or military installations. In Cuba, airports and bridges are included in this prohibition. This is true for U.S. immigration and customs areas as well.
- Leave suitcases, bags, or purses unattended, even for a minute!
- Handle large amounts of money in public. Know how much you have and where it is.
- Give anybody any reason to rob you. That means don't wear flashy (or any) jewelry, watches, bulging pockets, or expensive-looking sunglasses.
- Disclose the tentative schedule or names of resource persons and groups of which you may be aware. This information should not be given either to "friendly strangers," to other resource persons on the program, or to anyone outside of your group. If you want to ask someone about information provided by another resource person/organization, find a way to do this without mentioning the other person/organization (e.g. "I read before I came that. . .").
- Flush toilet paper down the toilet. It will stop up the septic system. Dispose in waste basket next to toilet.

Your group will have an orientation session upon arrival in Cuba. You will receive additional information and have the opportunity to ask questions at that time. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the information above, call the International Travel Seminars staff at CGE: 1-800-299-8889.

NOTE: It's likely you will hear the above guidelines again at various points during your travel seminar. We ask for and appreciate your patience with this fact in advance of your trip.

Policy on Controlled Substances

Policy on Controlled Substances: Because of a past incident with one of our travel seminar groups, we would like to bring the following information to your attention:

The use, possession, transport, or purchase of “controlled substances” (i.e., illegal drugs) by a travel seminar participant carries significant risks and penalties for the participant, the entire group, and CGE’s reputation and legal status in the countries in which we work.

A participant who uses illegal drugs while on a CGE program will be sent home at his or her own expense. If the participant is detained or arrested, government officials in the site of the arrest (U.S. or foreign country) likely will not permit CGE staff to contact or assist the participant in any way. CGE’s responsibility for the participant ends at the time of detention or arrest for drug violations.

U.S. law prohibits the transport of illegal drugs across its borders. Also, U.S. law does not protect U.S. citizens, U.S. residents, or others traveling abroad who violate foreign drug laws. The laws that prevail are those of the country in which the law was broken.

Please reference the U.S. State Department’s Travel Warning on Drugs Abroad for more information: <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/drugs.html>.

And remember:

Police and customs officials have the right to search your luggage for drugs.

In many countries local laws make no distinction between hard and soft drugs.

U.S. laws DO NOT apply to U.S. citizens or U.S. residents abroad who violate foreign laws. Once you are overseas, you are subject to the same penalties for drug violations as the nationals of the country you are visiting.

In some countries, anyone who is caught with even a very small quantity of drugs for personal use may be tried and receive the same sentence as a large-scale trafficker.

If you are arrested for drug possession abroad you may be subject to interrogation and/or solitary confinement for up to a year before trial and receive a mandatory prison sentence of seven years to life if you are convicted.

Suggested Publication Guidelines

Suggested Publication Guidelines: Some participants write blog posts or an article for their community newspaper, organizational newsletter or other media outlet following their travel seminar. In order to minimize risks to the security of resource persons who will meet with your group, without obscuring the written information or losing the strength or credibility of the article, we suggest the following publication guidelines. You will learn more about security-related issues when you arrive in each country. We appreciate your consideration of these guidelines.

- Some people and organizations with which you meet may ask that you not identify them by name in anything published about your visit.
- In order to be more forthcoming in his/her presentation, a resource person may request no photographs, tape recordings or videotaping.
- Visits to the U.S. Interests Section (the equivalent of our Embassy) in Cuba are considered to be background briefings only and are officially "off the record." U.S. government officials ask not to be quoted or identified by name.
- Cameras, cell phones, and tape recorders are not allowed inside the U.S. Interests Section.
- We request respect for all speakers, whether you agree or disagree with their perspective. Ask the "hard questions," but be aware of the manner and tone in which they are stated.
- Discussing sensitive issues on the phone or over the internet during your travel seminar is not advisable.

The following are some examples of journalism following the suggested guidelines:

Some of the church people that had gathered after the trial was canceled were bitter. 'Here you don't see any justice,' said one woman, 'only injustice.'

American diplomats and Salvadoran political analysts argue that the gains in curbing gross human rights abuses, stabilizing the economy, training the army and supporting an elected civilian government are essential and hard-won first steps.

Local religious sources and foreign development workers in different parts of the country report that . . .

'We often go hungry to feed our children,' says an agricultural laborer with three children.

Gift Giving

The Center for Global Education is committed to building long-lasting relationships with the communities in our host countries. As part of that commitment we have a policy of not giving

gifts, no matter how small or inexpensive, to people on the streets, including not giving candy to children. Regardless of the intentions, the practice of gift-giving can lead to ill feelings among both givers and receivers. It also reinforces the stereotype of North Americans as patronizing, wealthy foreigners. If you wish to share something with the people you meet, we suggest you bring postcards, photos or mementoes from your home community and family.

Some groups may decide to make a monetary donation to one or more of the organizations with which they meet. This is always done in coordination with CGE staff, and the donation is given to a responsible individual within the organization to ensure that it goes for the intended purpose. This type of gift-giving is always voluntary.

Diversity

The Center for Global Education strives to create for its participants an intentionally diverse community of co-learners where a variety of cultures and backgrounds is represented. Students, faculty, and staff help each other respond to issues of oppression such as racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, economic inequality, xenophobia, classism, and religious discrimination in an environment where diversity expands participants' thinking and worldview.

Under 18 Years Old

Young adults under the age of 18 are welcome to participate on a travel seminar provided they and their parents and/or legal guardians have completed a travel permission form and checked with CGE in advance. All travelers under 18 years of age are required to carry two notarized letters or certificate of consent forms with their passport.

Contact Information

Because of the embargo, communication between the United States and Cuba is very difficult. Please don't expect to access the internet or speak by phone during your trip. There are some internet cafes in Havana, but service is often very slow and there may be long lines. You may be able to purchase a phone card to call the United States, but finding a working phone can sometimes be difficult.

In case of emergency, friends and family may be able to place a direct-dial call to you. Before your departure, CGE will provide you with direct-dial emergency numbers for the places you will be staying. Most of the accommodations CGE uses do not have phones in the rooms and operators may only be able to speak Spanish.

An after-hours emergency cell phone is carried by a CGE Minneapolis staff member whenever a travel seminar is in progress: 612-817-2830.

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