

# ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

## CUBA: PEOPLE, ART & CULTURE

### PASSPORT AND VISA INFORMATION

Your passport needs to be valid for **at least six (6) months** after your journey ends and should have a minimum of two (2) blank visa page for entry and exit stamps.

#### Entry Requirements for U.S. and Canadian Passport Holders

**A tourist visa is required for U.S. and Canadian passport holders for entry into Cuba.**

There are currently two options available as outlined below. A&K recommends applying for a visa online prior to departure.

- U.S. passport holders can apply online at [A&K Visa Card - Cuba Visa Services](#). The current cost is USD \$85 (subject to change), plus service fees. Overnight service is available at an additional cost.
- U.S. passport holders can obtain a visa on arrival at the international airport in Miami (pre and post security at check-in area or at the gate). The current cost is USD \$100 (subject to change) and payment must be made by credit card only.

#### Documentation for Cuban-Born U.S. Passport Holders or Permanent U.S. Residents

The Government of Cuba does not recognize the U.S. nationality of U.S. citizens who are Cuban born. Citizens of the United States born in Cuba (and Cuban Nationals) who are interested in participating in this program must apply for the appropriate entry documentation online at [cubavisaservices.com/consular-services](http://cubavisaservices.com/consular-services).

#### Entry Requirements for non-U.S. citizens travelling to Cuba from the U.S.

If you are not a citizen of the United States, your entry requirements may vary. Citizens of other countries should consult the nearest diplomatic or consular office for entry requirements pertaining to your journey to Cuba. Make certain to advise them that you will be entering Cuba from the United States.

### TRAVEL AFFIDAVIT

**All guests** travelling on this journey are required to complete an online affidavit form at: [A&K TRAVEL AFFIDAVIT - Cuba Travel Services](#)

You will be required to provide the following information:

- Your name as it appears on your passport
- Your home address and telephone number
- An email address which is where the PDF will be sent upon completion
- Your travel date/s

After submittal, you will receive a PDF of the affidavit by email. **Carry this with you as you travel to Cuba.**

#### Carry Proof of Identity and Citizenship at All Times

If questioned by local officials, proof of identity and citizenship may be required and should be readily available. It is recommended that all travellers carry a copy of their passport with them during sightseeing, and leave the original in their hotel safety-deposit box.

### STAY HEALTHY ON THE ROAD

All air passengers arriving in Cuba must submit a sworn declaration about their biographic data and COVID-19 vaccination status. Passengers must complete the declaration form online within 48 hours prior to their flight to Cuba at [dviajeros.mitrans.gob.cu](http://dviajeros.mitrans.gob.cu). Upon submission of the electronic form, passengers will receive a QR code to present to Cuban health and immigration authorities upon arrival in Cuba.

The educational exchanges on this program in Cuba require, at minimum, the ability to walk at a moderate pace for a mile or two, climb stairs, enter and exit buses (sometimes with high steps) and navigate uneven or cobble-stoned streets. Some stops do not have elevators or wheelchair access. You may encounter roads which are poorly maintained and bumpy. Temperatures can be quite warm and humidity high. As noted previously, you must participate in all scheduled interactive exchange activities, which leaves no leisure time available during the day. Additionally, some scheduled transfers and activities require longer drives to reach and some longer days are necessary in order to complete the scheduled daily activities. Depending on your itinerary, travel times may range from two to four hours of driving per day with sightseeing along the way.

Medical care in Cuba varies from services provided in the United States. Physicians are generally well trained, but specific emergency services may be lacking in certain regions which may put elderly travellers and those with existing health problems at risk. Foreign visitors are generally limited to using the “tourist” clinics and/or the hospital (Cira Garcia) in Havana. The required medical insurance included in the cost of your program covers basic medical treatment; however, hospitalization may require payments via credit card. Many medications are unavailable and travellers should bring prescribed medicine in amounts commensurate with personal use. Travellers may also wish to consider bringing additional amounts of prescribed medicines and over-the-counter remedies in the event that a return to the United States is delayed for unforeseen reasons. It is also advisable that travellers entering Cuba with prescription medication carry a copy of their valid U.S. prescription along with a doctor’s letter to facilitate entry through customs.

## CASH & CREDIT CARDS

Cuba has a primarily cash-based economy. The official currency in Cuba is the Cuban peso, also known as the Moneda Nacional (CUP). U.S. dollars are accepted in Cuba for tipping as well as for purchasing beverages and souvenirs in privately owned venues. U.S. dollars are not accepted in state-run businesses. We suggest travelling with USD \$100 for each day in Cuba, but you are encouraged to bring more depending on your purchasing habits and expectations. Carry small denominations of crisp, new bills.

If you wish to exchange money, we recommend doing so at your hotel for convenience and reliability. Money can also be changed at designated currency exchange desks (CADECAS) located in banks and at the airport. Exchanging small amounts at a time offers a more favorable exchange rate. Visit [xe.com](http://xe.com) for current information about exchanging money in Cuba.

Travellers are advised to keep transactions receipts in order to exchange any unused Cuban currency prior to departure. The export of Cuban Pesos (CUP) is strictly prohibited, regardless of the amount.

Credit cards issued by U.S. banks are not accepted in Cuba. Credit cards issued by select non-U.S. banks have limited acceptance. Card holders should contact the financial institution that issued said cards to determine whether transactions in Cuba can be processed. There are no ATMs in Cuba.

## SPECIAL PROGRAM NOTES: PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE SMALL GROUP JOURNEYS

### Itineraries

A&K’s people-to-people small group journeys have been carefully planned to provide engaging, intimate experiences with Cuba’s residents. Immersing you in everyday life, they allow you to interact with locals while fostering a better understanding of what makes Cuba such a fascinating place. People-to-people travel allows for very little free time, as your time will be spent experiencing Cuba at its most authentic, through one-on-one talks and in-person visits.

During this rewarding, educational experience, you will spend full, enriching days visiting and interacting with the Cuban people one on one. Alongside your A&K Program Director and knowledgeable Cuban guides, you will experience — in intimate fashion — the day-to-day lives of

residents, all the while learning about Cuban cultural, social and religious organizations firsthand. All participants are required to adhere to a full schedule of activities designed to inform, educate and promote meaningful interaction with the Cuban people.

As of January 16, 2015, A&K was authorized to provide these people-to-people trips pursuant to OFAC (Office of Foreign Assets Control) general license 31 C.F.R. 515.565(b). Under this general license, this people-to-people educational exchange program adheres to the U.S. government's current restrictions governing travel to Cuba among persons subject to U.S. jurisdiction.

As part of this agreement, you must participate in all scheduled activities on your itinerary. Deviation from the planned itinerary is not allowed, as you are travelling to Cuba under OFAC's people-to-people general license, and the U.S. government requires you to participate in the guided, educational activities. Hence, unlike other Abercrombie & Kent trips, you cannot opt out of activities. By not participating in any scheduled activities, you may be individually liable for criminal or civil penalties.

#### Accommodations

A&K is known for its practice of using the very best accommodations all over the world. However, hotels in Cuba are restricted to those approved by the U.S. Department of State under the Cuba Prohibited Accommodations (CPA) list for use by American citizens and/or those travelling to Cuba under U.S. jurisdiction. Cuba is a moderately developed nation undergoing significant economic challenges and changes. Cuba has had limited resources for an extended period of time and while progress is being made, temporary power outages are not uncommon, plumbing pressure may be problematic and air-conditioning may not always work properly. Be assured that A&K has judged the hotels featured on this program to be the very best accommodations available: clean, comfortable and with a friendly welcome for their guests.

#### Meals

Food shortages are common in Cuba and items such as eggs, fresh fruit and vegetables are not always available. Selections in restaurants may be limited and menus that accommodate special diets are generally unavailable. Food supplies in Cuban hotels and restaurants which cater to foreign visitors generally do not allow for cooking meals to dietary specifications. Options for vegetarians or alternative choices may be limited (usually vegetables and fruit, pasta, rice, beans and legumes).

Breakfast buffets at the hotels are included and although they offer considerable variety, the selection may not be what you are accustomed to. Lunch tends to be a heartier meal in Cuba. Dinner is customarily served later in the evening. Vegetables are not typical of the Cuban diet and salads are basic with tomatoes, cucumbers and cabbage. Coffee may not always be included after a meal. Those who drink tea may want to bring their own tea bags, as tea is sometimes difficult to find in some restaurants.

#### Keep Connected

Mobile phone use in Cuba is unreliable and intermittent due to a lack of infrastructure. However, the status of telecommunications changes rapidly. Check with your wireless provider for the latest developments before you travel. Some U.S. carriers have or are beginning to make agreements with ETECSA (the Cuban national telecommunications company) to provide roaming services in Cuba. Sprint and Verizon, for example, currently offer roaming services in Cuba (service is intermittent and costly). Also, please note that satellite phones are not allowed in Cuba.

#### Please Pack Your Patience

Pack your patience and good humor as well as your passport. It is important to remain flexible, expect the unexpected and keep in mind that you are travelling to a very special destination, in a country where you are welcomed by people who wish to show you their most authentic traditions and ways of life and are warm, friendly and respectfully curious towards foreign visitors. Discussions on politics, society, and everyday life are welcome when kept to open, polite and

respectful conversation. This does not mean that you must avoid asking questions; just ask them in a non-confrontational way.

#### Gifts to Locals

Throughout your journey, you may have opportunities to meet with children and local residents and you may choose to pack some small items to give as gifts. It is not appropriate to hand gifts directly to children or the locals you meet on scheduled people-to-people visits; please consult with your Program Director for the appropriate protocol on gift-giving.

Suggested items for gifts include toiletries (lip balm, shampoo, conditioner, deodorants, toothpaste and toothbrushes, soap); small gifts for children such as coloring books, crayons, school and art supplies, hair Scrunchies and accessories, little notebooks, small toys and small packs of paper. For community projects, suggested items include supplies for sewing classes, yarn, arts and crafts, beads for making jewelry and reusable plastic bags, sunscreen, bug spray, store-bought reading glasses, flip-flops or Crocs and gardening, utility or heavy-duty work gloves.

Gift parcels (not to exceed \$800) brought to Cuba may be given to any individual (excluding certain Government and Communist Party officials) or to a charitable or educational organization "not administered or controlled by the Cuban government". Large quantities of the same item (for example, 15 baseball caps) given away at any one stop may be confiscated. Gifts must fit into your luggage. While unlikely, gift items can be collected at Customs and re-distributed at the government's discretion.

#### U.S. & Cuban Customs Arrival and Departure

Travellers are permitted to bring personal effects out the U.S. and into to Cuba, including such items as clothing, jewelry, cameras, medicine and personal electronics. Currently, there is no limit on the value or quantity of items you can bring home; however, keep in mind that you are subject to the normal limits on U.S. duty and tax exemptions for personal use. Keep all sales receipts for items purchased throughout your trip and try to pack all items that you will need to declare together. This will ease the Customs process upon re-entry into the U.S. Consult the U.S. Customs and Border Protection website for more details at [cbp.gov](http://cbp.gov). Effective September 24, 2020, authorized travellers may no longer return to the United States with alcohol and/or tobacco products acquired in Cuba as accompanied baggage for personal use. Persons authorized to travel to Cuba may purchase alcohol and tobacco products while in Cuba for personal consumption in Cuba. For a complete description of what this general license authorizes and the restrictions that apply, see 31 CFR § 515.585(c) and (d) ([cbp.gov](http://cbp.gov))

## PACKING LIST

Please use the provided A&K luggage tags, even if your bags already have ID tags. This makes it easier for A&K staff to find and manage your luggage for you.

Choose comfortable, casual clothing in light, natural breathable fabrics that can be layered if the weather requires. Although most hotels and restaurants will have air-conditioning, not all places on scheduled activities do, so it will be hot. Casual wear is acceptable for daytime dress throughout the country. Light cotton slacks with long sleeved shirts will offer protection from the sun and protection from mosquitos. Shorts, tee shirts and similar clothing will be appropriate for travellers on this active itinerary.

For dinners in and outside of your hotels, "resort casual" attire is appropriate. Jackets and sports coats are not needed. Polo-style shirts, khaki or linen pants (no shorts), capris, sundresses, skirts, nice shoes or sandals are acceptable. Formal clothing is not necessary.

#### Clothing

Casual slacks

Walking shorts

- Polo shirts, casual short-sleeve shirts or blouses
- Comfortable walking shoes with low or no heels
- Socks
- Waterproof, lightweight, well-broken in hiking boots for trekking activities (if applicable)
- Sweater or lightweight jacket
- Swimwear/cover-up (Note: program schedule leaves little free time which may not coincide with hotel pool closing/opening times)
- Long sleeve shirts or blouses
- Lightweight raincoat (preferably non-plastic)
- Bandana or light scarf to keep the sun off your neck
- Brimmed hat for sun protection
- Sleepwear
- Personal garments
- Bandana or light scarf to keep the sun off your neck

Other Recommended Items

- Sunglasses (100 UV protection suggested)
- Simple first-aid kit
- Mosquito repellent
- Extra eyeglasses/contact lenses
- Toilet paper (in short supply in public restrooms)
- Hand sanitizer; first-aid items such as Band-Aids, remedies for minor stomach complaints or motion sickness, aspirin or other analgesics, antacids, antihistamines, antibiotic ointments, anti-itch cream
- Charging cables for electronics
- Sun block and lip balm
- Prescriptions and medications (in their original bottles and/or packaging)
- Smartphone
- Kleenex (may not always be available in hotel rooms)
- Batteries, memory cards and extra film for camera (may not be available for purchase locally)
- Global travel adapter

Optional Items

- Small LED flashlight
- Lightweight binoculars
- Foldable walking stick
- Small waterproof daypack

Laundry service is available at most hotels. Check costs and return times before using this service.

## TIPPING GUIDELINES

While decisions regarding tipping rest entirely with you, we suggest the following gratuities (noted in U.S. dollars):

	<b>People-to-People Small Group Journeys</b>
A&K Program Director	\$15 per person, per day

Local Guides	Included
Drivers	Included
Airport Transfer Drivers	Included
Hotel Porters	Included
Housekeepers	Included
Included Meals	Included
Restaurants or Room Service on Own	10-15% unless already added