ArrivalGuides
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Havana

Photo: Florian Wehde/unsplash

ESB Professional/Shutterstock.com

From a fusion of Chinese-Cuban cultures at Barrio Chino to visual arts of Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes to an awe-inspiring view at The Melia Cohiba high-rise and incredibly romantic cruise docking Sierra Maestra Terminal, Havana is topping charts just like its musical namesake (oh na-na). As you enjoy a paladar meal or two and rest against some cool, artsy wall, perhaps blue or yellow or pink, you'll be sure to have left your heart in Havana by the time you head back to East Atlanta (na-na-na).

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hp koch/unsplash

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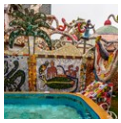


Fusterlandia
The whimsical sculptures, mosaics and all manner of street art creations by ...

THE CITY

Florian Wehde/unsplash

Effort is underway to preserve the wonderfully eclectic buildings of the Cuban capital, whose old town has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site but as of today, crumbling facades continue to define the urban landscape of the town center — the decadent charm of city streets to outsiders being of little consolation to locals who deal with the very real consequences of this rather sad state of affairs.

Beyond Habana Vieja (the Old Havana) lie some fascinating attractions and emerging suburbs worth exploring on foot or by bike: from plush Miramar to the nightlife hub of La Rampa, residential Vedado sprinkled generously with eateries and bars, African heritage-defined Cayo Hueso and the beach community of Guanabo.

With economic restrictions slightly loosening, Havana sees individual entrepreneurs make timid first steps in running private businesses, breathing fresh air into Havana's dining, art and design scenes.

DO & SEE

Avatar_023/Shutterstock.com

There is plenty to do and see in fast-evolving Havana, with modern hot-spots for art, culture and culinary effort emerging at an ever-increasing rate. Beyond the staples of Habana Vieja and the Malecón lie Havana's attractive newer districts, and unmissable attractions like the eccentric "Fusterlandia" or the original former home of celebrated novelist Ernest Hemingway.

Old Town (Habana Vieja)

Havana's vibrant Old Town is where the Cuban capital of today took root in the mid-16th century. UNESCO World Heritage Site status has brought about comprehensive restoration work to many of the city's crumbling architectural treasures, built in styles as wide-ranging as Cuban baroque and art nouveau (Plaza Vieja at the heart of Old Havana is where the eclecticism is most evident and best admired from a sidewalk cafe). The Old Town's two main pedestrian thoroughfares – Obispo and Mercaderes – are lined with government-run shops and attractive paladars.

Photo: Rafal Cichawa/Shutterstock.com

Plaza de la Revolución

The expansive Plaza de la Revolución (formerly Plaza Cívica) is an important landmark where some of Cuba's most significant political rallies took place. Part of 'new Havana', this square is the modernist home of the Cuban government (Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba), but is most known for its murals of iconic figures like Che Guevara and revolutionary Camilo Cienfuegos, as well as the city's tallest monument dedicated to José Martí, an independence activist and Cuban National Hero (take the elevator up for spectacular views).

Photo: Gustavo Ordoqui/Shutterstock.com
Address: Plaza de la Revolución, La Habana

El Bosque (The Forest)

Havana's favorite green expanse – el Bosque – is frequented by locals seeking natural respite in the shade of century-old trees with veil-like canopy reaching all the way to the ground, which gives the area a primeval forest appearance. The Almendares Park, just to the north along Almendares River, offers family-friendly activities such as mini golf and bike paths.

Photo: Anton_Ivanov/Shutterstock.com
Address: El Bosque de La Habana, La Habana

Malecón

Havana's waterfront boulevard – Malecón – is its most poetic stretch, a social hang out hub evocative of a welcoming Cuban living room (hence it being known to some as 'the world's longest sofa'). Waves crashing against Malecón's seawall can make quite the splash, at times virtually flooding parts of the boulevard, which hardly deters daily strollers from taking in its sublime sunset charm.

Photo: corlaffra/Shutterstock.com
Address: Avenida de Maceo, La Habana

Fusterlandia

The whimsical sculptures, mosaics and all manner of street art creations by artist José Fuster in Jaimanitas make for an entertaining excursion from Havana proper. The artist's own home is the centerpiece, decorated in his characteristically surreal style from top to bottom. The so-called "Fusterlandia" is now about two decades in the making, and continues to grow to-date.

Photo: Steve Rushing/cc by 2.0/Flickr(image cropped)
Address: Calle 226 & Av 3, La Habana
Phone: +53 7 2712932

Colonial Forts

Havana's colonial forts, namely the photogenic El Morro defined by its lighthouse and the expansive La Cabaña, are part of Havana's Histroic

Military Park and belong to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Old Havana.

Photo: Diego Cervo/Shutterstock.com

Museum of the Revolution

Housed inside the former Presidential Palace and decorated by the world-famous Tiffany's, the Museo de la Revolución tells the – admittedly partial – story of the Cuban revolution, with explanations provided in both English and Spanish. Bullet holes remaining after a failed assassination attempt of the palace's last resident, former president Fulgencio Batista, are still clearly visible in the hall area.

Photo: KKulikov/Shutterstock.com
Address: Avenida Bélgica, La Habana
Phone: +53 7 8601524

Colon Cemetery

A cemetery of historical importance and essentially an open-air museum of Cuba's past, Necrópolis Cristóbal Colón is the final resting place of many prominent Cuban figures and notable families (pick up a map at the entrance to guide you along). The cemetery's best-known resident, the Milagrosa, gathers thousands of pilgrims annually for the miraculous events surrounding her past exhumation, and is believed by Catholics to have supernatural wish-granting powers.

Photo: Mastaco/Shutterstock.com

The National Museum of Fine Arts

The Palacio de Bellas Artes contains the world's largest collection of Cuban art, with works dating mainly to the period from the 17th to the 19th centuries. Right nearby is the museum's extension, Palacio del Centro Asturiano, containing works by international artists (including big names like de Ribera and Velázquez) with works spanning a much longer time period.

Photo: Diego Grandi/Shutterstock.com
Address: Calle Trocadero, La Habana
Phone: +53 7 8632657

Hemingway's Villa (Finca Vigia)

Ernest Hemingway donated his former home of two decades to "the people of Cuba" after moving away, and it remains largely undisturbed since the 1960s. Although one cannot technically come into the house, there are plenty of spots to peek in through the windows, as well as explore the premises containing a tiny cemetery of Hemingway's pet dogs and his fabled boat Pilar, docked in what once was a tennis court.

Photo: DACPhoto/Shutterstock.com
Address: Vígia & Singer, San Francisco de Paula
Public Transport: Metro bus P-7
More Info: If taking a taxi from Havana, avoid the meter and agree on the price beforehand.

Callejon de Hamel (Hamel Street)

Hamel Street in Havanna is spattered with art: colourful paintings adorn building walls, sculptures and other forms of creative expression by different artists decorate the street, while locals spread good vibes by playing music and (occasionally) dancing.

Photo: JVV Photography/Shutterstock.com
Address: Hamel Street, Havanna

DINING

Pixabay

Gone are the days when one would struggle to find a place to eat. Today, Havana has no shortage of paladares (privately owned restaurants), many serving up the New Cuban cuisine pioneered by internationally trained chefs bringing expertise back to Cuba, and engaging with traditional flavours by introducing an exciting modern twist to old familiar favourites. Some local staples worth having are the ropa vieja (literally "old clothes"), a shredded beef dish, plantain, and malanga chips or fritters, the ubiquitous side of black beans and rice, and the coveted Cuban speciality — the much sought-after lobster.

Otramanera

For arguably the finest dining in Havana, call ahead to Otramanera in plush Miramar. They serve refined Mediterranean with an emphasis on Spanish, featuring Andalusian gazpacho, Cuban mojama (cured tuna loin), as well as meat and seafood mains, including lobster.

Photo: AnggunFaith/Shutterstock.com
Address: 1810 Avenida 35, Miramar, Playa, La Habana
Opening hours: Tue–Sat 12:30pm–11pm, Sun & Mon closed
Phone: +53 7 2038315
Internet: www.instagram.com/otramanera.lahabana
Email: otramaneralahabana@gmail.com

TocaMadera

If TocaMadera's menu can't excite you, few things can: from tantalizing pequeños of tamales, empanadas and taquitos, to the raw bar featuring several exciting varieties of ceviche and appetizing mains (try the hot stone with a choice of tofu, chicken, grass-fed beef or Japanese wagyu, plus scrumptious sides). The cuisine is curated by chef Suárez, a pioneer of the Cuban New Food scene that aims to incorporate local tradition into cutting-edge culinary endeavor.

Photo: wavebreakmedia/Shutterstock.com
Address: Calle 38 e/1ra y 3ra, Miramar, Playa, Cuba
Opening hours: Daily noon–11pm
Phone: +53 5 2812144
Internet: www.tocamadera.com
Email: tocamaderagastropub@gmail.com

La Guarida

Glamorized by the provocative 1993 drama "Strawberry and Chocolate," La Guardia stands strong as one the capital's best dining establishments and a prominent player on the New Cuban Food scene. Book in advance for a rare treat.

Photo: K. Decha/Shutterstock.com
Address: 418 Concordia, La Habana
Phone: +53 7 8669047
Internet: www.laguarida.com

Paladar Doña Eutimia

A reliable option for traditional Cuban, Doña Eutimia cooks up recipes passed down through generations, with staples like ropa vieja (pulled beef) and malanga (taro fritters), with a side of obligatory rice and beans.

Photo: NonSense/Shutterstock.com
Address: 60-C, Callejon del Chorro, La Habana
Opening hours: Daily noon–10pm
Phone: +53 7 8013332
Internet: donaeutimia.restaurantwebexperts.com
Email: d.eutimia@yahoo.es

5 Esquinas Trattoria

This excellent trattoria serves everyone's favourite Italian in the heart of old Havana, spoiling patrons with bulging calzones, cheese-drowned pizzas, and pasta with an extensive selection of sauces, all at very reasonable prices.

Habana # 104 , Esquina Cuarteles, Havana, Cuba

Photo: bruce mars/Pexels.com
Address: 104 Cuarteles, Habana Vieja
Opening hours: Daily 11am–11pm
Phone: +53 7 8606295
Internet: 5esquinas.restaurantwebexperts.com

Espacios

Despite its notable artistic inclination (the villa where the restaurant is housed is also a showroom for artwork), Espacios feels casually relaxed and completely unpretentious. It's both a restaurant and bar, with a selection of international dishes and frequent live music nights hosted in the courtyard, featuring traditional local performers.

Photo: Nemanja Novakovic/Shutterstock.com
Address: Calle 10 e/ 5ra y 31, Miramar, La Habana
Opening hours: Daily noon–3am
Phone: +53 7 2022921

Habana 61

For a modern take on traditional Cuban try the semi-formal Habana 61 in the old town area. The menu lists the usual suspects of ropa vieja, malanga fritters, octopus and lobster — in several incarnations.

Photo: Davide Cantelli/Unsplash
Address: Calle Habana 61, La Habana
Opening hours: Daily noon–midnight
Phone: +53 7 8619433
Email: habana61restaurante@gmail.com

CAFES

Viktor Birkus/Shutterstock.com

Havana's leisurely pace is best embraced from an outdoor terrace of the city's many cafes. Old classics mingle with hip new openings, leaving up to one's taste to pick a favourite. A good place to start is the Plaza del Cristo, where some of the trendier establishments are now concentrated — many double as bars featuring live music come sundown.

El Café

Old Havana's El Café does everything right: from all-day breakfasts to sandwiches (pulled pork with yucca, greens and orange marmalade sauce caught our fancy), coffee specialties, and even drinks with a Cuban rum kick for early pre-party gatherings.

Photo: Lisa Holmen Photography/Shutterstock.com
Address: 358 La Amargura, La Habana
Opening hours: Daily 9am–6pm
Phone: +53 7 8613817
Internet: elcafe.restaurantwebexperts.com
Email: elcafehavana@gmail.com

Café Fortuna Joe

Quirks galore at Fortuna Joe, a cafe of curiosities where guests are welcome to interact with the "exhibits" by getting comfy in a cushion-padded bath tub or on a (permanently) docked boat out on the terrace. Although food and drink aren't the main pull, they just so happen to be quite decent — breakfasts are especially popular.

Photo: Dragana Djorovic/Shutterstock.com
Address: Calle 24/Avenida 1ra, La Habana
Opening hours: Daily 9am–midnight
Email: cafefortunajoe@gmail.com

Cafe Bohemia

Hidden in plain sight steps away from the heart of Old Havana (Plaza Vieja), this pleasant cafe — the namesake of a reputable Cuban cultural periodical — serves scrumptious Italian specialties and great coffee.

Photo: Kati Finell/Shutterstock.com
Address: San Ignacio, La Habana
Opening hours: Daily 9am–11pm
Phone: +53 7 8603722
Internet: www.havanabohemia.com/cafe
Email: bohemia.plazavieja@gmail.com

Esto no es un Café

House specials take the cake at this unusual establishment that refuses to admit its cafe status, with dishes named after and inspired by prominent artists like Pollock (chicken with

chocolate and mint flavour) and Duchamp (pork loin in artisan marinade). The owner recommends the house take on traditional Cuban ropa vieja, dedicated to Wifredo Lam.

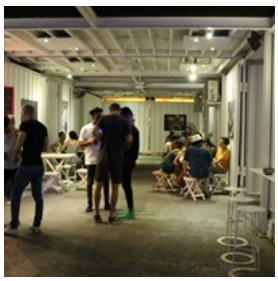
Photo: mavo/Shutterstock.com
Address: Callejon del Chorro, La Habana
Opening hours: Daily 8am–10pm
Phone: +53 7 8625109
Email: estonoesuncafe@gmail.com

BARS & NIGHTLIFE

Dmitry Polonskiy/Shutterstock.com

Rum flows freely into the glasses of nighttime revellers, who tend to head straight for one of Havana's three major hot spots: the Malecón, La Rampa (or Avenida 23), and the Avenida De Los Presidentes. There are numerous establishments to suit all tastes, from outdoor salsa dance parties (Jardines de la Tropical are as de rigueur as ever) to live music concerts (anything from Afro-Cuban to jazz) and fiery cabaret shows.

Fábrica de Arte Cubano



Perhaps the trendiest address in Havana, the FAC is an expansive, multi-purpose venue housed inside a refurbished oil processing plant. It boasts a fairly dense cultural program which includes art exhibitions, shows and concerts, and is currently the hippest nightlife hot spot of the Cuban capital. The on-site restaurant, Tierra, is wildly popular (reservations advised) and serves fine dishes of international origin.

Photo: Yoeztudioz/cc by-sa 4.0/Wikimedia(image cropped)
Address: Calle 26 entre Avenidas 11 y 13, Vedado, La Habana
Internet: www.instagram.com/fabricadeartecubano
Email: fabricadeartecubano@gmail.com

Café Teatro Bertolt Brecht

Virtually every night of the week sees live music played on the venue's stage, while Wednesdays are reserved primarily for Afro-cuban jazz. Café Teatro Bertolt Brecht hosts local acts and is a haunt known to and well-visited by the artistic elites (see them mingle at the on-site cafe open to all).

Photo: Roxana Gonzalez/Shutterstock.com
Address: Centro Cultural Bertolt Brecht, Calle 13 Esquina I, Vedado, La Habana
Phone: +53 7 8329359
More Info: Located at the Bertolt Brecht Cultural Center

El Surtidor @ Gran Hotel Manzana Kempinski

Perhaps the most lustrous hangout for drinks in Havana, the rooftop bar of Gran Hotel Manzana Kempinski boasts views of the city's many major attractions, which can be seen from both the bar and crystal-blue waters of its open-air infinity pool.

Taste the flavours of Cuba and international classics while enjoying spectacular views of La Habana Vieja.

Photo: Edgardo W. Olivera/cc by 2.0/Flickr
Address: Calle San Rafael (entre Monserrate y Agramonte), La Habana
Opening hours: Daily 11:00–11pm
Phone: +53 7 8699100
Internet: www.kempinski.com/en/gran-hotel-kempinski-la-habana
Email: reservations.lahabana@kempinski.com
More Info: At Kempinski, you'll also find Confluencias, San Cristobal Panoramic Restaurant, Bar Constante, El Arsenal Lobby Lounge And Bar, and Evocación Tobacco Lounge

La Bodeguita del Medio

Although Havana's iconic bar might have lost some of its former lustre over the years, it remains a must-do for many visiting the Cuban capital, not least for its iconic status and ever-flowing mojitos.

Photo: Lena Wurm/Shutterstock.com
Address: Empedrado, La Habana
Phone: +53 7 8671374
Internet: labodeguitarestaurant.restaurantwebx.com

Dance & Cabaret Shows

There is no shortage of thematic dance entertainment in Havana, ranging from folk dance and music performances of the PG-14 variety to feisty cabaret shows and the more familiar flamenco (held at Meson de la Flota). Some venues worth considering include Centro Cultural El Gran Palenque, Palacio de la Artesania, the Patio Amarillo by ARTexand Cabaret Parisien.

Photo: Angel L/Shutterstock.com

El Dandy

"Hipster" doesn't sound like a tired cliche when applied to El Dandy in Havana's Plaza del Cristo, a fun establishment with a touch of bohemian chic. The eclectic interior, cocktails and breakfast menu are some of El Dandy's strong suits.

Photo: Roman Voloshyn/Shutterstock.com
Address: Calle Brasil/Teniente Rey 401 entre Villegas & Cristo Plaza de Cristo La Habana Vieja, La Habana
Opening hours: Daily 8am–midnight
Phone: +53 7 8676463
Internet: www.bareldandy.com

La Zorra y El Cuervo Jazz Club

Enter through a faux British phone booth and take in one of Havana's most beloved music genres — jazz — in the intimate basement of La Zorra y El Cuervo Jazz Club, which habitually gathers a line outside.

Photo: sirtravelalot/Shutterstock.com
Address: Entre calles N & O, Avenida 23, La Habana
Opening hours: Daily 10pm–2am
Phone: +53 7 662402

SHOPPING

Stephan Schlachter/Shutterstock.com

As strict government control over economic activity eases, the Cuban capital sees a timid rise of private businesses producing and selling their own goods. Although such outlets are still few and far between (and many prefer to stay hidden, only made known by word of mouth), there are several reliable locations across Havana stocking high-quality, locally made souvenirs. The main Cuban exports are cigars and rum, both available in unlimited supply, which still isn't the case for daily use items foreign visitors are often accustomed to. Remember to pack all your essentials and bring them along from home, leaving only souvenir shopping to be done here, in Havana.

Almacenes San Jose Handicraft Market

This huge indoor market is the number one shopping stop for visiting pleasure cruisers, and an instant favorite for anyone looking for the largest possible selection of Cuban souvenirs, all under one roof. The market was temporarily closed following a fire, but is re-opened as of mid-2018, with only a section remaining closed for business.

Photo: Kamira/Shutterstock.com

Address: Ave. del Puerto, La Habana

Antique Book Market

It's worth stopping by Plaza de Armas on your tour of Habana Vieja regardless, but literary enthusiasts are in for an added bonus of being able to shop around at the capital's well-established antique book market if they come any day between 9am and 6pm. There are some print souvenirs to be had as well.

Photo: Maridav/Shutterstock.com
Address: Plaza de Armas, La Habana
Opening hours: Daily 9:00-18:00

Clandestina

The pioneer of independent Cuban design labels, Clandestina specializes in up- and recycled clothing bearing memorable slogans of the owning designer's creation. They also ship worldwide, a service to-date unmatched by local competitors.

Photo: Juri Pozzi/Shutterstock.com
Address: 403, Villegas, La Habana
Phone: +53 7 8600997
Internet: https://clandestina.co

Piscolabis

This artisan bazaar stocks a wide variety of decor items, jewelry, clothing and Cuban souvenirs produced and designed by local creators (many of the pieces are up-cycled). There is an on-site cafe that's essentially one with the store, so feel free

to browse with a drink in hand.

Photo: Photographee/Shutterstock.com
Address: San Ignacio, La Habana
Phone: +53 5 8433219
Internet: http://piscolabishabana.com

Alma

Alma stocks one of Havana's finest selections of Cuban souvenirs, from traditional straw hats with a bit of a twist to clothing, ceramics, jewelry, artwork, and many other unique, hand-made items procured locally. Feel free to get inspired by their Instagram.

Photo: gg-foto/Shutterstock.com
Address: Calle 18 #314, between 3ra & 5ta, La Habana
Phone: +53 55355828
Internet: www.almacubashop.com

La Casa del Habano

There are multiple cigar stores across Havana, its most reputable one, La Casa del Habano, also boasting several locations throughout the city. Most locations have an on-site lounge where cigars can be sampled, sometimes accompanied by Cuba's fabled spirit – rum. "Habanos" are Cuba's official brand, operating several other varieties under different names. To ensure you're getting the finest quality, shop at authorized locations only.

Photo: marcin jucha/Shutterstock.com
Address: Av 5 & Calle 16, La Habana
Phone: +53 7 214 4737
Internet: http://lacasadelhabano.com

Habana 1791

The artisan perfumery sources its own raw materials and produces perfumes on-site, making the atmosphere reminiscent more of an old-time chemist's shop rather than a perfume boutique, which adds all the more charm.

Photo: Bazalieiev Ievgen/Shutterstock.com
Address: 156 Mercaderes, La Habana
Phone: +53 7 8613525

Memorias Librería

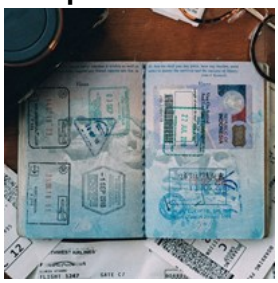
This one is for those of us who enjoy a deep dive into books and all manner of related paraphernalia and antiques, not limited to books only. Many of the items on sale date back decades, and are one-of-a-kind.

Photo: Roman Kraft/Unsplash.com
Address: 57 Animas, La Habana
Phone: +53 7 8623153

TOURIST INFORMATION

Linhao Zhang/Shuttrstock.com

Passport & Visa



Travelers visiting Cuba are required to hold a valid passport valid for at least 2 months following their travel date, medical insurance, and proof of return tickets. Proof of sufficient funds to support the stay is also required (50 dollars/day).

Citizens of Namibia can stay in Cuba indefinitely. Citizens of Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kenya, Malaysia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Russia, Serbia and United Arab Emirates can stay for up to 90 days. Citizens of Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines — up to 60 days.

Pasport holders of Antigua and Barbuda, Belarus, Mongolia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Singapore can travel for 30 days, while travelers form Barbados and Dominica are welcome for up to 28 days

The remaining majority of international visitors will need to obtain a Tourist Card, Tarjeta del Turista, that grants permission to stay in Cuba for 30 days and can be extended once for a further 30. The card can be obtained via the airline, travel agent or a Cuban mission abroad.

Citizens of the following countries are not eligible for a Tourist Card and will need to apply for a visa: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, India, Iran, Iraq, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Syria, and Yemen. Admission is refused entirely to Kosovo nationals.

Those who fly to Cuba from US airports must purchase a "Pink Tourist Card" which is mainly available in the US and fill an Affidavit form, airlines in the US will be able to provide more information about how to purchase the Pink Tourist Card. These Pink Tourist Cards are needed for everyone flying from the US to Cuba on a direct route. Those who enter Cuba from non-US airports must purchase a "Green Tourist Card", which is often less expensive.

Special regulations apply to Cuban-born foreign citizens, who will need to make visa arrangements for a Cuban visa in advance (via a Cuban Embassy), unless they hold a valid Cuban passport.

Photo: ConvertKit/unsplash
Internet: www.visaguide.world/north-america-caribbean/cuba-visa/requirements

Best Time to Visit

The best time to visit Cuba is probably the dry season, which runs November through April. Cuban tropical climate means that temperatures remain high for the majority of the year, although they can drop significantly between October and March (pack a jacket if you're planning to travel during the period). It's good to have a light water-proof coat when travelling during the rainy season, which falls on the summer months of June through September. Risk of hurricanes is higher from August to October.

Photo: Daniel Seßler/unsplash

Travel Advice

Internet connection may be difficult to come by in Cuba, but ways of accessing the Internet do exist. In order to get connected, you will need to purchase an Internet card from an ETECSA office and locate an ETECSA WiFi hot-spot or a designated Navigation Room. Card sales are limited to 3 per person regardless of time value, so if you know you'll be needing connection a lot, purchase ones with the highest allowance available (5 hours at the time of writing). ETECSA cards are also sold at hotels and some shops, and some hotels offer Internet access via ETECSA to guests as well. Some international mobile operators offer 3G connection in Cuba, always inquire with your provider as this isn't guaranteed.

Cuban merchandise can be taken out of the country, provided it is for personal use only (as opposed to re-sale). This includes all products made in Cuba, including rum and cigars. Prices for these are normally very similar in downtown Havana and duty-free shops at the airport and cruise terminals.

Cash is used for most transactions in Cuba, and very few places accept card payments. For those that do, there is still risk of your card being declined, especially if it's issued in the USA.

Photo: Jessica Knowlden/unsplash
Internet: www.tourepublic.com/blog/wifi-in-cuba

José Martí International Airport (HAV)

There are several options for reaching the city if you have no tour shuttle transfer pre-arranged. These include renting a car (arrivals areas of terminals 2, 3 & 5; booking in advance is recommended) or taking a taxi (taxi ranks are located just outside the terminals, always agree on the price in advance). Rental cars must be booked in advance.

The average travel time from José Martí International Airport to downtown Havana is 30 minutes, while Varadero can be reached within 2 hours.

Make sure all necessary formalities are in order prior to travel. Medical insurance and proof of financial resources, a passport valid at least 2 months following the date of arrival (more in some cases), as well as appropriate visa documentation and/or Cuban Tourist Card, are all required for everyone entering Cuba.

Photo: Horacio_Fernandez/cc by 3.0/wikimedia(image cropped)
Internet: www.havana-airport.org

Public Transport

There is a hop-on/hop-off bus that operates in Havana, which can be a good compromise between private taxis and public buses. It's mostly geared at tourists, and stops at most major landmarks in Havana.

Although private transportation is recommended, there are several ways of getting around like a

local, although some knowledge of Havana goes a long way with those.

One option is flagging down "taxi colectivos," classic old cars that circulate around Havana, marked with a "taxi" sign in the front. They run primarily between the university and Parque Central, and can be stopped nearly anywhere along the way. Flag down a passing "colectivo" and name your destination (a major landmark) to the driver, who will indicate whether or not it's on his route. "Taxi colectivos" are not to be confused with regular private taxis, which charge much more for the rides and deliver you to the desired address.

Public buses are another option. These have fixed routes, designated stops and most often a line of people waiting for one. Exit through the back and keep an eye on your belongings.

If you're in the mood for something different, you might want to consider a tour of Old Havana by horse-drawn carriage. These are, of course, more of an entertainment option than efficient means of getting around.

Photo: Renzo Vallejo/cc by 2.0/wikimedia (cropped)(image cropped)

Medical

If you take certain medications on a regular basis, it is highly recommended that you bring those along from home in ample supply.

Foreign visitors in need of medical attention are generally referred to the Clínica Central Cira Garcia Hospital. This clinic also has a pharmacy. Medical consultations and treatment at Cuban hospitals generally require payment by a Visa or Mastercard credit card.

Medical help is generally of high quality and readily available in case of emergency. Since health insurance is an obligatory requirement for anyone entering Cuba, all fees and expenses are also accounted for in most cases.

Photo: Mika Baumeister/unsplash
Address: Clínica Central Cira Garcia, esquina calle 20 & 13, Miramar, Playa, La Habana
Phone: +53 7 2042811

Post

For important and/or time sensitive mail, it is recommended to use private providers like DHL. Cuban postage services are notoriously unreliable when sending mail overseas, reports indicating that while some items arrive abroad within weeks, many others never reach their final destination or take many months to arrive. Letters can be mailed at post offices as well as at many hotels via the reception desk.

Photo: Ali Bakhtiari/unsplash
Address: Correos de Cuba, 459 Obispo, La Habana
Internet: www.correos.cu

Taxi

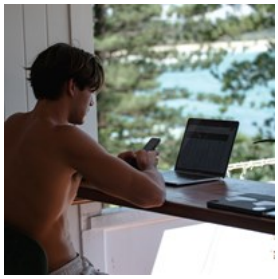
There are both private and government-run taxis available for hire in Havana. The difference in price is marginal between the two, and fares need to be agreed on in advance in both cases, even if

the car is outfitted with a meter. The yellow and black Ladas tend to be cheaper, and therefore better fit for long-distance travel.

A cheaper and significantly more cheerful way of getting around are the so-called three-seater coco taxis (those of yellow color transport tourists). A similar, but slower option are the two-seater bici-taxis, which are essentially a passenger bike. Note that the safety of using either of the two options has been called into question, even though most rides go incident-free.

Photo: Louis Renaudineau/unsplash

Telephone



Your mobile operator may or may not support roaming in Cuba, so inquire with your provider in advance. ETECSA cards used for Internet connection also work as phone cards, and can be used to make international calls. Calls can be made from blue phone booths, ETECSA offices, and some hotels.

To call abroad from Cuba, dial 119 (the international access code) followed by destination country code and phone number.

A 0 sometimes precedes Cuban phone numbers when calls are made between different provinces. To call landline numbers, dial the provincial code first, followed by the number. From landline to cell phone, dial 0 followed by the number.

To call mobile numbers from a mobile phone within Cuba, dial the number only, which usually starts with 5.

Photo: Mark Broadhead/unsplash

Electricity

110 or 220 V (the latter supported by some hotels), 60 Hz. International visitors might require a voltage converter. The standard plug type is a US-style two- or three-pin, but some hotels also have European-style plugs. Bring a universal travel adaptor to be prepared for any eventuality.

Photo: Steve Johnson/unsplash

Population
2.4 million (2021)

Currency
For many years, there were two currencies in simultaneous circulation. The Cuban Peso (CUP, or MN — moneda nacional) was used exclusively by Cubans, while the Cuban Convertible Peso (CUC) was used by foreigners.

In 2020, the Cuban Convertible Peso (CUC) was eliminated. Only the Cuban Peso (CUP) remains in use.

Private hotels will often accept payments in Euro or US dollar. Bringing Euro is the better choice.

Internet
www.vivacuba.se

Emergency numbers
Police Department: 106
Fire Department: 105

Tourist information
There are several government-run agencies providing visitor information.

The Infotur agency is the one best-represented.
Calle 28, 3ra y 5ta Avenida
+53 72 04 31 78
www.infotur.cu

Centro de Información Turística Habana Vieja
Calle Obispo No. 524
+53 78 66 33 33
www.cubatravel.cu