

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

CUBA

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.

Documentation for U.S. and Canadian citizens travelling to Cuba from the United States:

Visas and authorization to travel must be obtained prior to arrival in Cuba. Abercrombie & Kent will provide all guests with the required Cuba visa/*tarjeta del turista*. The associated fee is included in the cost for participation in the program. In order to begin this process, each guest must:

1. Complete, sign and return the Travel Affidavit Form included in your Pre-Travel Documentation
2. Complete the online A&K Guest Information Form
3. Submit a picture or color scan of the photo page of your passport

Please email the Travel Affidavit and photo page of your passport to operations@abercrombiekent.com **no later than 90 days prior to departure.**

The Cuba visa/*tarjeta del turista* will be included in your Final Documents. **It is imperative that you carry this visa with your travel documents/passport as it will be required to board all Cuba flights.** If you lose or misplace your Cuba visa, contact Abercrombie & Kent immediately. You will not be able to travel to Cuba without it. Time permitting, A&K may be able to replace your visa for an additional fee. If you arrive at the airport and realize you have lost your Cuba visa/*tarjeta del turista*, your air carrier may be able to provide you with a tourist visa for an additional cost at the airport check-in counter.

Documentation for non-U.S. citizens travelling to Cuba from a country other than the United States:

If you are not a citizen of the United States, your entry requirements may vary. Canadian citizens require a tourist card for Cuba and should contact their airline for details. Citizens of other countries should consult the nearest diplomatic or consular office for entry requirements pertaining to your journey to Cuba.

Documentation for Cuban Born citizens:

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 contact the Cuban Embassy in Washington, D.C. or a Cuban consulate to obtain the special documentation required. This process may take up to six months.

The Cuban government requires all travellers to Cuba to have non-U.S. based medical insurance valid for the duration of the journey. Check with your airline to ensure that Cuban health insurance is included in your ticket price and keep your boarding pass stub as this serves as proof of medical insurance.

Upon arrival in Cuba you will be required to show your passport and Cuban visa. Please keep this document in a safe place. Officials may also collect the Customs Declaration Form and Health Form which flight attendants distribute to passengers prior to landing.

When possible carry a passport copy and leave the original in the hotel safety-deposit box. If questioned by local officials, proof of identity and U.S. citizenship is readily available. In the event your passport gets lost, your Program Director or local Cuban guide can provide you with information on contacting the U.S. Embassy in Havana.

Our partner VisaCentral offers easy, efficient U.S. passport processing. Visit them online at visacentral.com/abercrombiekent or call 844 823 1224 and reference A&K's account number 73001. Service fees apply.

VACCINATIONS

There are no vaccinations required to enter Cuba.

CASH & CREDIT CARDS

There are two currencies in Cuba: the Cuban peso which is the national currency (*MN-moneda nacional*) and convertible pesos (CUC-tourist currency). The U.S. dollar is not accepted for transactions in Cuba. The Cuban government requires tourists to use convertible pesos at tourist-related establishments such as restaurants, hotels and "dollar shops." It is important to make sure that you are getting back the right change in the right currency when making purchases. Although tips may be given in any currency, the U.S. dollar is not accepted for payment when making purchases or paying for services.

You can exchange U.S. dollars into CUC at the front desk of your hotel, exchange bureaus, and banks (long lines are common). You need your passport to exchange money outside of your hotel. There is a 13% fee for exchanging U.S. dollars combined with transaction fees which effectively lowers the exchange rate to about 100USD = 87CUC (subject to change). The fee is the same no matter where you exchange your money. Banknotes should be clean and in good condition. Bills that are torn or written on will not be accepted in Cuba when exchanging into CUC. When exchanging money, it's best to get pesos in lower denominations to make purchases easier as smaller establishments may not have the ability to exchange large notes. Only exchange what you feel you will need while visiting. You will be unable to buy Cuban currency or sell it back anywhere but in Cuba. Save all receipts from any currency exchange transaction. You may be asked to produce them when you exit the country, and they are required if you intend to reconvert local currency. We advise passengers not to convert currency through unofficial, "black market" vendors.

Cuba is still by and large a cash economy; therefore, you should carefully plan to arrive with enough money to use for the duration of the trip. Suggested minimum amount: USD\$1,000-\$1,500 per person.

No credit cards associated with an American bank can be used in Cuba except a MasterCard credit card issued by Stonegate Bank in Florida, although the MasterCard is not widely accepted. Many merchants in Cuba lack the infrastructure to be able to accept credit cards. If your credit card is issued by a non- American bank, contact the financial institution that issued your credit card or debit card to determine whether transactions in Cuba will be processed. Credit card transactions carry a high commission fee in Cuba and card transactions remain limited due to intermittent internet access, therefore, their use is not recommended.

ATMs exist in major cities; however, these do not accept American debit cards.

The export of Cuban convertible pesos (CUC) is strictly prohibited, regardless of the amount.

SPECIAL PROGRAM NOTES: PEOPLE TO PEOPLE

Please note that the special Cuba people-to-people programs will be different from other programs on which you may have previously participated. Abercrombie & Kent USA, LLC operates the people-to-people program to Cuba under a general license issued by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control and, as dictated by U.S. law, all participants are required to adhere to a full-time schedule of activities designed to inform, educate and promote meaningful interaction with the people of Cuba. Deviation from this itinerary, even in part, is not permitted. Per the general license requirements, this is a full-time program with many inclusions and there will be little to no free time on most days of the program.

Specific itinerary inclusions (visits, meetings with individuals and organizations, home visits) are dependent on outside factors and host availability; therefore, it may sometimes be necessary to substitute with alternatives of equal relevance and interest. Things work differently in Cuba, and activities that had been scheduled far in advance may sometimes become unavailable for a number of reasons. Therefore, flexibility is key and it is very important to go into this experience with an open mind. Your local guide will be adept at swapping activities for others when and if needed, but do not be disappointed if something in your program changes - it is likely to happen. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to visit a country that has been inaccessible to Americans for a long time, so you are encouraged to make the most of it and enjoy every moment.

This comprehensive itinerary will put you in direct contact with Cuban citizens, and provide structured activities to facilitate your discussions. Your experienced guide will facilitate many of these interactions, but it is a good idea to ask questions to get the most out of the experience. While the people you meet may not speak English, you will be surprised at how much you can share through body language and with the help of a good translator.

As part of your obligations as an authorized traveller under the general license, you are obligated to comply with certain requirements, including maintaining a record of your activities and expenses for five years. We encourage you to keep a travel journal.

Abercrombie & Kent is known for its practice of using the very best hotels all over the world, but hotels of that premier caliber are rarely found in Cuba. 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.

Food shortages are common in Cuba and items such as eggs, fresh fruit and vegetables are not always available. Selections in restaurants will 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 are limited (usually tomatoes, cabbage, cucumbers and fruit).

Breakfast buffets at the hotels are included and although offer lots of 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 restaurants.

Luckily, people who enjoy travelling "off the beaten path" know that its pleasures far outweigh small inconveniences. Be assured that A&K believes that the hotels featured on this program are the very best accommodations available - clean, comfortable and with a friendly welcome for their guests.

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 made welcome 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 doesn't mean that you have to avoid asking questions, just ask them in a non-confrontational way.

Cuban Customs on Arrival and Departure

Under U.S. law, you are allowed to bring to Cuba personal effects (such as clothing, jewelry, and medicine) and other personal items such as photographic cameras, camcorders, cellular phones, Blackberries, laptops, iPods, MP3 players, video games, hair dryers, electric shavers, binoculars,

a portable radio receiver, a tape recorder, a portable music instrument and a sound recording device. (Please note: Most U.S. cell phones do not work in Cuba.) These personal items must be owned by the individual. Satellite phones as well GPS devices are not allowed in Cuba. Your cellphone's GPS will also not work in Cuba.

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 liaise 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; sun screen, 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.

Shopping opportunities are very limited and are not the primary focus of A&K's people-to-people educational exchange program. There is no limit on personal consumption spending (e.g., food, beverage, etc.) while in Cuba, nor is there a 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. Due to new U.S. restrictions, certain shops in Old Havana are off limits to U.S. travelers and your Program Director can provide details.

Keep Connected

Communications between the U.S. and Cuba can be challenging. In Cuba, telephone service varies greatly in quality from place to place despite major improvements in recent years. The hotels included on this program have good international telephone service, both for receiving calls from abroad and for dialing from Cuba.

As is common around the world, hotels impose a hefty surcharge on international calls placed through their switchboards. International calls from Cuba are very expensive, sometimes more than 2.50CUC per minute along with connection charges. If you wish to use the phone in your hotel room you will be required to leave a cash-deposit at the front desk to activate your line. We urge you to check hotel policy before placing any call through your hotel.

The telecommunications market in Cuba is changing rapidly, so before you travel, be sure to check with your wireless provider for the latest developments. 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). If your carrier offers a roaming plan and your mobile phone is capable of roaming in Cuba, you should ask your carrier about any additional charges for voice calls, data, and outgoing text messages that you may incur during your trip. As a short-term visitor, you will not be able to purchase a local SIM card in Cuba for use in your own phone.

It is important to note that mobile phone use in Cuba is intermittent due to a lack of service installations which limits their use to major cities and tourist resorts and as such is unreliable. Your hotel phone is a far more reliable option. As mentioned previously, international calls to and from Cuba are very expensive.

Internet and e-mail is becoming increasingly available in Cuba, although these services are still scarce, slow, and expensive compared to most other countries. Hotels on A&K programs have internet access and A&K has arranged for complimentary internet service for you during your stay; however, internet service is often intermittent and unreliable.

Stay Healthy on the Road

The educational exchanges on this program in Cuba require, at minimum, the ability to walk at a moderate pace for a mile or two, and the balance and agility necessary to 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 travelers 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 in cash. Many medications are unavailable and travellers should bring prescribed medicine in amounts commensurate with personal use. Travelers 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.**

PACKING LIST

CUBA

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.

PACKING LIST

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

Other Recommended Items

- Sunglasses (100 UV protection suggested)
- Sun block and lip balm
- Simple first-aid kit
- Prescriptions and medications (in their original bottles and/or packaging)
- Mosquito repellent
- Smartphone
- Extra eyeglasses/contact lenses

- Toilet paper (in short supply in public restrooms)
- Kleenex (may not always be available in hotel rooms)
- 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
- Batteries, memory cards and extra film for camera (may not be available for purchase locally)
- Charging cables for electronics
- Global travel adapter

Optional Items

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

Laundry service is available at most hotels and dry cleaning is available in larger cities. Check costs and return times before using these services.

TIPPING GUIDELINES CUBA

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

	Connections People-to- People Small Group Journey
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

If you feel you have received exemplary service you can, of course, leave an additional gratuity (in CUC) for services rendered on an individual basis.)