

Salsa in Havana and Trinidad

The ultimate salsa holiday, a fortnight of Cuban music and culture in the company of our expert local dance team.

Dates and Prices 22 August to 5 September - £1,989.00

Unique Features The ultimate salsa holiday, a wonderful fortnight of Cuban music and culture in the company of our expert local dance team.

Our Cuban salsa holidays are suitable for dancers of all abilities and ages - from complete beginners to advanced dancers we can guarantee that you will enjoy our jam-packed programme of dance classes and evening entertainment, all in the company of a great group of like-minded people and professionally trained, charismatic Cuban dancers who inject a real sense of fun into the entire trip. Not only do they dance with you in all the classes (a full fifteen hours), they accompany the group to Havana's salsa clubs, ensuring some unforgettable nights out.

We stay in the iconic 5* Hotel Nacional in Havana and our dance classes are held in a private room there which is a real treat - dancing salsa in Havana's landmark historic hotel really cements the Cuban Salsa experience. We also include four nights in Trinidad de Cuba, with its nightly salsa scene and stunning beaches.

There are lots of Cuba salsa trips on the market but don't forget that with us you're in safe hands - we're fully ATOL bonded and our staff has a combined travel industry experience of over 50 years.

Call Club Dance Holidays to book on 0207 099 4816.

Your Holiday

What's Included

- | A thorough and entertaining syllabus in salsa (fifteen hours - see Classes and Workshops)
- | A programme of nights out with our team of Cuban dancers who really spice it up (Club entry and drinks payable locally - see see "When You Get There")
- | Full hosting by our team on the ground who are experts in salsa and in Cuba
- | Return direct flights with Virgin Atlantic Gatwick / Havana.
- | Meet and Greet upon arrival and return hotel transfers
- | 10 nights' accommodation and breakfast in the iconic 5* Hotel Nacional - the best in Havana
- | 4 nights' All Inclusive accommodation in the 4* Brisas Trinidad del Mar, Trinidad
- | Transfers between Havana and Trinidad
- | A pick and choose itinerary including parties, soirees, restaurants, nights out dancing and sight-seeing suggestions
- | A pre-departure pack containing information on where to eat, where to party, tourist spots and attractions for independent sight-seeing
- | Welcome party and drink
- | A choice of optional extras

NB: Accommodation based on twin-share. Single supplement is £364. Alternatively we can arrange a room-share partner for you.

What previous Customers Have Said about this Holiday

"I feel a warning should be given to those looking at the holiday stating they will be very depressed by the end. I had such a good time a week later and I am still not over the fact I have had to return to cold England and work! Desperately want to return".

"I would like to say that the holiday was absolutely smashing - I especially enjoyed the Havana parts of the holiday. The hotel was wonderful, the dance troupe absolutely super (gold stars all around) and Ramon, our guide, exceeded all expectations being informative, friendly and looking out for us at busy social functions".

"We are not normally given to writing thank you letters, or using superlatives, but we have just returned from your salsa dancing holiday in Cuba, and feel compelled to write and say that this was just an amazing experience, and one of the very best holidays ever!".

"We were able to see so many different aspects of Cuba that as a sole tourist we would never have seen! Fantastic".

"It was a brilliant experience, especially since we had the chance to go out with Cubans".

"Brilliant. Partied for 2 weeks. Cubans are all 'locos'! and good company".

"Real eye-opening experience on Cuban society and culture".

"I cannot think of a better introduction to Cuban culture, music and dance!"

Is this holiday for me?

If you love to have a good time and enjoy meeting new people in the setting of a fascinating, friendly country with year-round sunshine then yes!

Everyone should visit Cuba at least once and you haven't danced salsa until you've danced salsa in Havana. Our team of Cuban dancers animate your entire trip and we guarantee that once you visit Cuba with us you'll be hooked. Our salsa in Cuba holidays are about so much more than just dance classes; along with our team we make sure you experience the REAL Cuba and immerse yourself in Havana's rhythm.

Our Cuban salsa holidays are suitable for ALL levels, from complete beginners to advanced dancers. Our expert teachers will ensure you get the most out of your classes and tailor their teaching to you.

Cuba is an adventure and with us you're in safe hands; unlike many salsa holiday operators we're fully ATOL bonded with over 50 years' combined travel industry experience amongst our team, almost all of whom have visited Cuba multiple times.

Give us a call if you have any questions on salsa in Cuba - we'll be happy to talk about our favourite subject.

Your Destination, includes sightseeing

Well known for its rum and cigars, Cuba is home to a different kind of charm, history and culture which you will experience with Club Dance Holidays.

Havana, is the first grand city built by Europeans in the New World and retains the grandeur and charm of a history that spans nearly 500 years.

For a city that is forever adapting, it still houses many popular and historic buildings such as the famous Cathedral in Old Havana built in 1748, and the Palacio de los Capitanes Generales, the residence of the Spanish Captain General who ruled Cuba from 1791-1898. You can also visit the Castillo Real de la Fuerza, built between 1558-77, one of the oldest surviving colonial fortresses in the Americas and home to Giralda, the symbol of Cuba, also seen on the label of Havana Club rum.

Be sure to check out the Capitolio Nacional, a huge marble building modelled on the Capitol building in Washington and visit the Museo de la Revolucion, formerly the presidential palace. Wander along El Malecon, the famous waterfront of Havana. Pay a literary pilgrimage to the Hotel Ambos Mundos where Ernest Hemingway wrote the novel "For Whom the Bell Tolls".

When you're cultured out stroll along the Malecon and sample an ice cream from the famous Coppelia ice cream parlour, watch the strutting peacocks in the Hotel Nacional's garden, drink a mojito in La bodeguita and a daiquiri in La Floridita and take a cab ride in a 1950s Cadillac.

And, of course, dance salsa. Visit Havana's nightclubs to learn to dance like a Cuban, with uninhibited passion.

As Graham Greene said of Havana "Anything is possible".

Trinidad offers you an authentic picture of rural Cuba against the backdrop of a historic port town with colonial architecture. This charming town just five hours drive from Havana is UNESCO preserved. The Plaza Mayor, winding narrow streets and old churches remain largely untouched by the modern world. Typical views over the countryside offer sugar cane, tobacco fields and rice paddies, locals travelling on horseback and farmers herding their livestock through the streets.

Trinidad is surrounded by mountains and green landscapes, including valleys containing the well-preserved remnants of ancient sugar mills. The region holds the Escambray Mountain Range, which treasures one of the country's most varied vegetation, ranging from arboreal ferns and wild orchids to pine forests, and a unique endemic fauna. One of the first villages founded by the Spanish conquistadors in Cuba, Trinidad also boasts big caves, where many pieces of evidence have been found about the city's history and the country's first inhabitants. There are great beaches 8km from Trinidad town and in addition to white sands and crystal blue waters, these beaches offer fantastic scuba diving.

Climate and weather

Weather: The Cuban climate is mild subtropical. East to west oriented the island receives plenty of sunshine, warm temperatures and refreshing sea breezes.

No wonder that Columbus thought that he had discovered the earthly paradise! Don't forget that humidity is relatively high - in august it can be at 80%

Average Temperatures:

Jan 16/25

Feb 16/26

March 17/27

April 19/29

May 21/30

June 22/31

July 22/31

Aug 22/31

Sept 22/30

Oct 17/27

Nov 17/27

Dec 17/27

Your Accommodation

Brisas Trinidad del Mar - Hotel**** (All Inclusive) (Included)

The Brisas Trinidad del Mar Hotel is located on a beautiful white sand beach just eight kilometres from the city centre and is the perfect spot for a relaxing few days by the Caribbean sea.

All-inclusive meals can be taken at buffet and a la carte restaurants and there are unlimited drinks all day. All rooms are air-conditioned and have satellite TV, telephone, radio and safety deposit box. Within the hotel complex you can enjoy the swimming pool, jacuzzi, sauna, masseurs, gym and tennis courts. There are also shops, a chemist and travel agency which can organise car, moped and bicycle hire.

The hotel offers day and night-time entertainment as well as watersports - windsurfing, pedalos, kayaks, snorkeling and scuba diving courses for beginners.

Nacional de Cuba - Hotel***** (Bed & Breakfast) (Included)

You will be staying at the five star **Hotel Nacional de Cuba**, renowned for its refined elegance and classic splendour, as Havana's best hotel. Since 1930 it has attracted a large number of personalities from the arts, sciences and politics including Winston Churchill, Frank Sinatra, Ava Gardner, Naomi Campbell, Errol Flynn, and Alexander Fleming. Built in the 1930s and combining Art Deco features with modernist influences, the Nacional's image still appears on much of Cuba's tourist promotion literature and evokes the glamour of a bygone era. A full refurbishment in 1992 remained sympathetic to the original architecture, preserving the hotel's 1930s splendour.

With its privileged location in Vedado, the centre of Havana, the Nacional stands on a promontory just a few metres from the sea and offers fabulous views of Havana Bay, the Malecón promenade and the city. There are two swimming pools, a choice of restaurants and beautiful gardens complete with strutting peacocks.

Twin, single and triple rooms are available and Executive Suites are on request.

Classes and Workshops

Classes and Teachers: Over the course of your holiday you will receive fifteen hours of salsa tuition from our team of professional dancers. Remember the criteria by which we select our teachers extends way beyond mere technical

ability or even teaching ability. We look for teachers who are charismatic and entertaining and who will teach you to dance with flair. And as these are much more than just teachers, because they will be accompanying you at night, we also select them for their personality and, quite frankly, physical attractiveness.

Dance Levels: There will be at least two levels of Salsa tuition so that the classes will cater for all abilities, from beginner through to advanced. The dance teachers will be able to advise you on the first day of classes and suggest the level that is most appropriate to your ability and experience.

Beginners will learn enough moves to enjoy themselves dancing with the Cubans in local nightclubs. Intermediate and Advanced dancers will receive expert tuition on movement and technique designed to improve their style and will come home with some great new moves and loads of fluid Cuban style. The salsa classes will take place in a dance space within the Hotel Nacional.

Syllabus: We have recently completely refreshed the salsa syllabus we teach in order to make it more comprehensive. If this is your second trip to Cuba we are confident that you will find a lot of new material in this syllabus. If it's your first time you will find this course entirely comprehensive. You will cover:-

Cuban music and how the rhythms are constructed

Rumba

Son

Mambo

Cha Cha cha - slow mambo tempo

Reggaeton (popular music from Puerto Rico - a blend of salsa, merengue and reggae and currently very fashionable)

How Cuban salsa differs from LA / New York style which you may have encountered in the UK.

Tembleque and Cuban body movement

Rueda (Cuban Wheel)

Cha Cha Cha

The Learning Experience

Over the course of your holiday you will receive over fifteen hours of salsa tuition from our team of professional dancers. Remember the criteria by which we select our teachers extends way beyond mere technical ability or even teaching ability. We look for teachers who are charismatic and entertaining and who will teach you to dance with flair. And as these are much more than just teachers, because they will be accompanying you at night, we also select them for their personality and, quite frankly, physical attractiveness.

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Daily Itinerary

Sample Itinerary

This is a provisional itinerary aiming to give you an idea of what your holiday will look like. There will be some elements which will change: (OP) indicates an optional extra for which a charge will be made in advance.

Please note that nights out are all inclusive (transport to the club, club entry, drink, accompaniment by tour host and our team of dancers) and payable locally at the beginning of the week. Each night out works out at approximately £25 per person. See Nightlife for full details.

DAY 1

Arrival and transfer to the Hotel Nacional

Evening - Welcome meeting with drink before hitting Havana's clubs for a salsa night out with your teachers.

DAY 2

Morning - Overview of the week and salsa classes in the Hotel Nacional

Afternoon - Visit the Callejon de Hammel for a Street Rumba, African Rhythms bands and Guaguanco performance.

Lunch in a typical Cuban restaurant in Old Havana (OP).

Evening - Open air dancing with the crew by the port, to the backdrop of Havana's fortress.

DAY 3

Morning - Salsa lessons in the Hotel Nacional followed by an optional Tembleque Class - learn to move like a Cuban!

Afternoon and evening - Salsa your way through the afternoon and evening at Havana's hot matinee salsa club.

DAY 4

Morning - Salsa lessons in the Hotel Nacional

Afternoon - (OP) Visit Havana's Rum Museum and the Tobacco Factory
Evening - Salsa the night away with your teachers

DAY 5

Morning - Salsa lessons in the Hotel Nacional.
Afternoon - Chill out and sleep off your hangover around the pool enjoying the salsa music and sun or take a stroll along the Malecon and visit the famous Coppelia ice cream parlour
Evening - Salsa dancing with your teachers in a fantastic club just outside the city centre, in the upmarket Marina Hemmingway neighbourhood

DAY 6

Morning - Salsa lessons in the Hotel Nacional
Afternoon - Optional Tembleke class
Evening - Dinner at a seafood restaurant specialising in lobster (OP)
Later - Hit the salsa clubs for all night dancing

DAY 7

Morning - Salsa lessons in the Hotel Nacional
Afternoon - Chill out and sleep off your hangover around the pool enjoying the salsa music and sun or take a stroll along the Malecon and visit the famous Coppelia ice cream parlour
Evening - Salsa the night away with the Club Dance Holidays crew

DAY 8

Depart by coach to Trinidad (approx five hours). Arrival and chill out at the All-Inclusive Brisas Trinidad del Mar.

DAY 9

Morning and afternoon - At leisure: chill out around the pool or sunbathe on the hotel's private beach. Or why not take a scuba diving course (OP)
Evening - Salsa dancing at a local venue in Trinidad

DAY 10

Morning and afternoon- Sightseeing suggestion: take a taxi into Trinidad and wander through the streets of this lovely colonial town
Evening - Salsa dancing at a local venue in Trinidad

DAY 11

Morning and afternoon - Sightseeing suggestion: Take a day trip to the Salto del Caburni waterfall, nestled in the Sierra del Escambray mountains
Evening - Salsa dancing at a local venue in Trinidad

DAY 12

Morning - Coach departs Trinidad to return to Havana (approx five hours)
Afternoon - Salsa dancing at Havana's matinee salsa club, for the dance die-hards
Evening - More salsa with our team of Cuban teachers

DAY 13

Morning - Salsa classes
Afternoon - Chill out and sleep off your hangover around the pool enjoying the salsa music and sun
Evening - Farewell salsa night out at one of Havana's best clubs

DAY 14

Morning - Salsa classes
Lunchtime - Farewell lunch at one of Old Havana's favourite restaurants (OP)
Late afternoon - Transfer to Havana airport for the return flight to the UK

DAY 15

Arrive in the UK

Nightlife

Optional Extra 'Going Out' Package

We organise nights out accompanied by our team of Cuban dancers every night. We can take the whole process of getting transport to the venue, paying for the entrance to the clubs, and organising the dancers' drinks off your hands by asking you to give us the money at the beginning of the week. All you have to do is turn up. If you would like to take advantage of this, your tour host will organise it. She may even be able to negotiate better rates or music, if she is speaking on behalf of a group of 15 or 20, than you would be able to by turning up as individuals. It is not an arrangement for profit, purely for convenience, simplicity, and hopefully, your enjoyment. In a couple of venues we receive a complimentary rum cocktail because we are a group.

If you would like to do this, the estimated cost is 140.00 CUC's for five nights or 180 CUC's for seven nights. The arithmetic is as follows: the average club cover is between 5.00 - 25.00 CUC's and transportation is about 10 per guest. Our Cuban dancers accompany us for a really special night out and we include their transport, club entry and a drink for them in the package. Your tour host will organise everything and in the case of some venues, a complimentary cocktail drink. We balance the cheaper nights and the more expensive nights out so that the average price covers the weekly expenses.

The Cuban dance scene: Dance and music penetrates much of Cuba life. Cubans are surrounded in their daily life by an eclectic mix music of Son, Rumba, Afrocuban, Danzon, Cha Cha Cha, Dancehall, Rap and Hip Hop. The dance scene is fantastic fun, playful and provocative. Partners dance close and the style is creative and carefree. The latest dance craze is 'Tembleke' which is a rapid, sassy body movement involving the shoulders, chest, torso and hips danced solo at your partner.

Clubs and venues in Havana: Using the inside information from our Cuban teaching team, we will take you to the most happening venues. These may include concerts of world famous Salsa bands (such as Los Van Van), Salsa-ing by the sea just across from the Malecon, a Salsa Matinee (hot Cuban salsa and lots of Rueda between 4.30pm and 10pm! - the Cubans come here after work), traditional 'Casas de las Trovas' where you can dance on the balcony, smart clubs with drink-as-much-as-you-like bars, hot late night venues (from 2.30am onwards) where you will find the DJs mixing Salsa with Hip Hop and rap. Most clubs cost between \$10-25. You are expected to pay your own way into the nightclubs and the transport there and back unless it is included as part of an excursion. We may walk, take taxis or organise private coach transport (about \$2) to the best clubs.

Your Teachers

In Havana you will be taught by a team of professional Cuban instructors headed by Alexis Gonzalez Valdez.

Over the course of your holiday you will receive over fifteen hours of salsa tuition taught by our team, who will be a consistent presence throughout the two weeks. Remember the criteria by which we select our teachers extends way beyond mere technical ability or even teaching ability. We look for teachers who are charismatic and entertaining and who will teach you to dance with flair. And as these are much more than just teachers, because they will be accompanying you at night, we also select them for their personality and, quite frankly, physical attractiveness.

Alexis and his Cuban team (who have professional dance training) will introduce you to Cuban Salsa and thus introduce you to life in Cuba – a life which pulsates with energy, wildness and sensuality. Alexis was born in Havana. He graduated from the Escuela Nacional de Arte in Havana specializing in Show dance and has toured Europe performing with different Cuban dance troupes. He is an active member of UNEAC – the Cuban Association of Artists and Writers and performs with the Cuban Television Ballet.

Food and Meals

Please remember that Cuba is a poor country. Sometimes the food is plain and simple, and there is a limited selection of dishes by European standards. This is just one of the unavoidable aspects of being in Cuba. Although Cuban food can sometimes be uninspiring we think that you will usually be pleasantly surprised at the quality of the food you get. We shall naturally do our best to ensure that the restaurants we take you to serve food of an acceptable quality.

The quality of the food may vary but the food is generally cheap and wholesome, with lots of rice and beans, fried fish and plantains. A typical Cuban menu might include Frijoles (a kind of stew with beans and ham), rice and black beans (moros y cristianos), cucumbers and tomatoes, cassava or malanga (local root vegetables), roast pork, fried chicken, plantains, corn fritters, bread, fried fish, pizza, followed by coconut pudding or ice cream.

Vegetarians: Vegetarianism is not understood in Cuba, where meat is a rare treat. So please be patient with locals who do not understand your needs. Please be aware that vegetarian choices can sometimes be very limited. On the other hand the staple diet of Cubans includes a lot of beans, rice and plantains, all suitable for vegetarians.

Optional Extras

In addition to your holiday we also offer you a variety of optional extras to make your holiday even richer and add some local colour. You can buy your optional extras at the welcome meeting at the beginning of your holiday. We will ask you to pay in cash and fill out a form.

These are the optional extras that we anticipate running – actual details and prices will be confirmed on arrival. Some may require minimum numbers.

Optional Extra 'Going Out' Package

We organise nights out accompanied by our team of Cuban dancers every night. We can take the whole process of getting transport to the venue, paying for the entrance to the clubs, and organising the dancers' drinks off your hands by asking you to give us the money at the beginning of the week. All you have to do is turn up. If you would like to take advantage of this, your tour host will organise it. She may even be able to negotiate better rates or music, if she is speaking on behalf of a group of 15 or 20, than you would be able to by turning up as individuals. It is not an

arrangement for profit, purely for convenience, simplicity, and hopefully, your enjoyment. In a couple of venues we receive a complimentary rum cocktail because we are a group.

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Extensions in Varadero, Trinidad or Santiago de Cuba

Stay on for another week or few days to chill out on the beach or explore Cuba's beautiful interior. Please ask our Reservations Team for more information at the time of booking.

Beach Trip - Playas del Este: 30 CUC
(Weather permitting). Minimum number: 10

Spend the day on the beach by Atlantic Ocean. Travel by mini bus or coach to El Megano and enjoy the light golden sand shelving into stunning aquamarine waters. Optional lunch approx 15.00 cuc extra, a little more if you have lobster!

Special Dinner 40 CUC each including transport
Minimum number: 10

Previous trips have included El Chansonier, The Roof Terrace at the Parque Central El Barco & The famous El Aljibe. Amanda will inform you which of the restaurants we will be going to during the week.

Walking Tour of Old Havana 25 CUC
Minimum number: 10

Transfer by mini bus to Central Havana. Opportunity to learn about the old city and enjoy the colourful 'Old Havana' in the company of your Official Guide. Time permitting, you may get the opportunity to take a stroll round the flea market and buy souvenirs. Then, transfer to Vedado back to the Hotel Nacional.

Single Room
Supplements,
Upgrades and
Budget Options

Option 1 - Included

Nacional de Cuba - Hotel***** Bed & Breakfast - (22/08/2013 to 29/08/2013 - 7 nights)

Single Room (1 Person)	182.00 GBP
Triple Room (Based on 3 sharing)	Included
Twin Room (Based on 2 sharing)	Included

Extra Nights

One Bed Suite Executive Floor (Per Room)	0 GBP per night
Single Room (Based on 1 sharing)	83 GBP per night
Triple Room (Based on 3 sharing)	180 GBP per night
Twin Room (Based on 2 sharing)	104 GBP per night

Brisas Trinidad del Mar - Hotel**** All Inclusive - (29/08/2013 to 02/09/2013 - 4 nights)

Twin Room (Based on 2 sharing)	Included
Twin Room (Single Occupation) (1 Person)	80.00 GBP

Extra Nights

Suite for single occupancy (Per Room)	0 GBP per night
Twin Room (Based on 2 sharing)	84 GBP per night
Twin Room (Single Occupation) (Based on 1 sharing)	64 GBP per night

Nacional de Cuba - Hotel***** Bed & Breakfast - (02/09/2013 to 05/09/2013 - 3 nights)

Single Room (1 Person)	78.00 GBP
Triple Room (Based on 3 sharing)	Included

Twin Room (Based on 2 sharing)	Included
Extra Nights	
One Bed Suite Executive Floor (Per Room)	0 GBP per night
Single Room (Based on 1 sharing)	83 GBP per night
Triple Room (Based on 3 sharing)	180 GBP per night
Twin Room (Based on 2 sharing)	104 GBP per night

Flights and Transfers

Flights: We include direct flights from London Gatwick to Havana Jose Marti airport. Virgin Atlantic permit 23 kilos of luggage plus one peice of hand luggage per person.

If you wish to book your own flights to Cuba we are happy to offer you a flight-exclusive price. If your flight coincides with our airport transfers we can reserve you a place. Please ensure you advise us of your flight times.

Transfers: We include meet and greet and an airport transfer for everyone arriving on our standard flight. If you are arriving on a different day or at a different time we can book you a private transfer; please enquire at the time of booking.

Making you own way to the hotel for ground only package

Making your own way there: For those whose flights don't coincide with our Airport coach transfer, you can make your own way to the Hotel in Havana. The distance between the José Martí International Airport and the city of Havana is approximately 20 km (12 miles).

There are no public buses that pass by the airport en route to Havana, so you must either take a personal taxi or tourist bus. Taxis charge approximately 30 CUC, and the tourist bus charges approximately 15 CUC. Journey time: approx 30 minutes.

What to Expect in terms of Organisation

On Arrival: You will receive a detailed itinerary and any other important information, including an overview of the local sights, recommended restaurants and other helpful tips.

Club Dance Holidays Host: Your holiday tour host is there to make your holiday as enjoyable as possible. Club Dance Holidays Tour Hosts are a cut above your typical Holiday Rep with a lightness of touch that enables you to get the best out of your holiday without being in the least bit interfering. We make sure you get the best out of the destination even though you are there for a relatively short time and we do this through our local knowledge and our knowledge of dance.

Club Dance Holidays Tour Hosts normally offer much more of themselves than you would expect including making sure your nights are sociable and fun often well into the small hours if that is your whim. During the daytime the level of participation and presence of Club Dance Holidays tour hosts varies according to the nature of each holiday and its destination. Tipping at the end of the holiday is at your discretion.

Overview of the Week and Welcome Drink: At the beginning of your holiday there is an Overview of the Week where your tour host will tell you about all details of your holiday and answer any questions you might have. At the Overview of the Week you can buy your optional extras and Club Dance Holidays will invite you to be our guest for a drink.

Before Your Go

Books on Cuba Of the books we have read about Cuba or set in Cuba these are the ones we would recommend:

"Enduring Cuba" by Zoe Bran - Honest and inquisitive look into Cuban life. "Land of Miracles" by Stephen Smith – An excellent recent travel book written about Cuba, witty clever and informative. Strongly recommended. "Waking up in Cuba" by Steven Foehr – An honest, entertaining account of what you can expect to find in Cuba. Especially informative about the music and cultural history. "Cuba" - The Lonely Planet Guide by David Stanley - One of the most detailed guide books on Cuba.

The Dual Economy: Cuba's economy has been distorted by the American blockade and by the withdrawal of subsidies by the former Soviet Union. There are two economies running side by side in Cuba. One is in Cuban pesos and is for Cubans. The other is in CUC, Convertible Cuban Pesos and is for tourists. The dual economy is to cater for the difference between the average Cuban wage and the wage that a visiting tourist will earn back home. It's worth bearing in mind that the average monthly wage of a Cuban is \$12 - \$15. In a nightclub a tourist might be asked to pay between \$5 - \$20. A Cuban will pay 30 pesos which is about 600 times less. The concept of a dual economy may

seem strange to you but to Cubans it is as natural as your economy is to you.

Money: Until recently, the second economy was the American dollar. However, Castro eliminated the dollar from circulation in November 2004. You can no longer use US Dollars or any other foreign currency in Cuba, and if you bring american dollars a tax of 10% will be applied to you at the exchange of them for Cuban Convertible Pesos (this tax will not be applied to other currencies). So our strong recommendation is to bring cash Euros, UK Pounds or Canadian Dollars and change them on arrival in Cuba to the CUC. Additionally you will be able to exchange back the remaining CUC at the end of your travel. The CUC has an exchange rate equivalent to the American dollar and for this reason its sign is a '\$'. Whilst bringing your money in cash may seem a bit alarming, it is from our personal experience, the most practical way of buying. Cheques, credit cards that are related to US banks and American Express travellers cheques are not accepted. There are very few (if any) cashpoints. You can take cash out by showing your credit card and passport at a till within a bank but you will probably have to queue for a long time.

Tipping: Tourism is the most important industry in Cuba and those who are able to work with tourists, even as room cleaners or barmen, earn more money than doctors and other professionals. Tips therefore often constitute the main source of income for many of the Cubans who you will meet. We feel our tour hosts work hard to give you an exceptional holiday and sometimes you may find that they add some special touches which are beyond the call of duty. If you agree with us, you might wish to show your appreciation by way of a tip. You can do this by putting money in an envelope on your own or by getting together with other guests. All tipping is evidently entirely at your discretion.

Budgeting for your holiday: Here are some guidelines on prices, to help you do your own calculations. We have translated these approximate prices into GBP to help with your budgeting. Please refer to the optional extra section of the fact sheet for the prices of the optional extras:

Three course meal with drinks: £15

Tipping per day: £2

Nightclub entrance: £5 - 20

Rum and coke in nightclub: £4

Beer in a bar/cafe: £2

Coffee in a bar/cafe: £1.50

Airport tax on leaving Cuba: 25 CUC

Gifts for Cubans: Cuba is without many of the essential things that we take for granted. Things that are particularly difficult to get hold of in Cuba include toiletries (shampoo, moisturiser, razors, soap, toothpaste, etc), perfumes and aftershaves, pens and paper, books in English or Spanish, clothes, and shoes. In the past some visitors have taken small gifts to give to the Cubans they meet or have left some of their own things behind them when they travel back to the UK.

Passports: These must be valid for at least six months beyond the length of stay. Please check your passport now.

Tourist Visa Card: You require a Tourist Visa Card to enter Cuba. We as a tour operator can issue Tourist Visa Cards to our clients who come from Britain, Australia, Canada, USA, other EU countries and Japan. (If you live in another part of the world, please arrange your own visa to enter Cuba). Cuban Tourist Visa Cards are valid for one single trip of up to 30 days, although the stay can be extended in Cuba. The card must be bought in the country where the trip has been arranged (through us!). All passengers must hold tickets and other documentation required for their onward or return journey unless holding special annotation issued by a Cuban Consulate. You will be sent your Cuban Tourist Visa Card with your tickets a few days before you go. You will need to keep your Tourist Visa Card safe as you will need it to get in to Cuba and to get back out of the country. So look after it carefully during your trip.

Health and Fitness: There are no particular health requirements for a dance holiday. However you should be able to dance for at least two hours a day in order to be able to enjoy the dance classes. Please inform us if you have any medical conditions that we need to be aware of.

Luggage Labels and Lost Luggage: We strongly recommend that you secure your luggage before flying by all means possible – tape and locks. You should attach large and clear labels to your luggage with your name, flight number and destination. Do not put travellers cheques, jewellery or money in your suitcase. In the unlikely event that your luggage is lost during the journey you need to independently take the matter up directly with the airline at the airport in Havana.

Vaccinations: We are informed by the Cuban Embassy that no special vaccinations are required for travel to Cuba. However, the following vaccinations are recommended by NHS Direct: tetanus, typhoid, hepatitis A, polio, diphtheria, BCG and hepatitis B. Please consult your own GP in respect of which vaccinations you should have.

Insurance: This is a condition of booking please refer to the information supplement for details.

Travel Documents: You receive these (which include a detailed Information Pack, your flight tickets and your Cuban Tourist Visa Card) when you have paid for your holiday in full and as soon as we have received your airline tickets. In some cases the airlines do not release the tickets until five days before the departure date. We also confirm the

address and phone number of the hotel and the emergency contact numbers.

Essential equipment and clothing to bring

Useful Things to Bring: It's worth remembering that due to the US embargo you will not find as much availability in the shops (especially chemists and clothes shops) so its a good idea to come well prepared:

Shoes suitable for walking around the streets
Broad brimmed sun hat/sunglasses
High factor sun cream
Insect repellent/anti-mosquito spray
Antiseptic cream in case of bites
Elastoplasts for sore feet
Aspirin/Nurofen for hangovers!
Immodium for stomach upsets
Shampoo, soap, toothpaste and other toiletries (hard to obtain and expensive in Cuba)
Condoms (local condoms are of low quality)
Travel washing powder (although the hotel may provide a laundry service)
Paper tissues/toilet paper
Swimming costume essential/beach towel
Money belt
Money, plane ticket, full valid passport, visa
This fact sheet

What to wear for dancing: It is probable that you may get through quite a few clothes in the classes and dancing at night (you can get quite hot!) so bring a variety of outfits. In the clubs, the local dress code is quite casual and 'streety' as opposed to elegant and smart. Cuban women tend to wear jeans/tight trousers or mini skirts with sassy little tops whilst men tend to wear trousers with tshirts.

Trainers are allowed at most venues. Shorts are not permitted. A useful tip for women is in that some salsa clubs you have to leave your handbag in the cloakroom. Therefore its a good idea to bring a wrist/ankle purse or a purse that clips on to your trousers/skirt.

At Your Destination A few tips for the new traveller to Cuba.

The Cuba Factor: Be aware that Cuba is a place where things do not always go according to plan. Sometimes the most carefully constructed plans just don't happen. At other times new and exciting opportunities arise to, for instance, see a famous Cuban band playing live, or to experience some exciting aspect of life in Cuba that no one could have possibly predicted. Turn every problem into an opportunity and you will experience the best of Cuba.

Making friends with the locals and people not on the holiday: Cuba is a great place to make friends with the locals, and should you do so and would like them to come along to the activities organised by us, then just ask your Tour Host and except for the dance classes and provided you pay their way there should not be a problem. However, we discourage Non-Cubans who have not paid for the holiday from coming out with us more than once or from joining in activities arranged specially for the group. We would be grateful for your assistance and cooperation in this respect.

Buying drinks and meals for Cubans: Often Cubans will ask you to buy them a drink or food. They are often unable to afford to buy their own. At your own discretion you may wish to occasionally buy drinks and or a meal for the Cuban friends that you make. This is usually only a matter of a few dollars and is another feature of the peculiar circumstances that prevail in Cuba.

Attention in public places: Visitors from the West should be aware that they are likely to get a much higher level of physical attention in Cuba than they are used to back home. This applies to men as well as women! In nightclubs, Cubans dance close and often in a very sensual way. Sometimes they may try to push their luck. This is always done with a smile, is usually just playful and can be great fun. You should exercise common sense and, if you find that you are feeling hassled you should be firm and disengage from your partner with a polite and friendly smile. One of the team will normally be on hand to provide moral support, or escape, should you need it!

Keeping your valuables safe: Although crime rates in Cuba are very low, it is a poor country and you represent to them a rich foreign tourist whose pockets are stuffed with unimaginable wealth. So please be careful. Our advice is to leave expensive jewellery and unnecessary valuables at home. It is best not to put temptation in peoples' way. Do not leave your luggage unattended at any time and ensure that there is some way of locking or padlocking your suitcase or travel bag on the occasions where the luggage needs to be left in the bus or in the reception of the hotel. It is not unheard of for unlocked bags to be tampered with. When travelling we suggest that you keep your passport, travellers cheques, dollars and other important valuables about your person, in secure money belts or pockets. Although your possessions should be reasonably safe in your hotel rooms please ensure that your traveller's cheques, dollars and other important valuables are always locked in your suitcase or in your safe when you go out.