

Salsa in Cuba at Xmas and New Year - 14 nights

Christmas AND New Year in Cuba - This is the ultimate Christmas holiday! Escape the dreary winter and the decision of where to go on New Years Eve. There can only be one place - on the golden sands of a warm Caribbean beach! Arriving four days before Christmas we party every night all over Havana in the company of our team of Cuban dancers. On Christmas day there is a Christmas Salsa party with the inimitable Cuban interpretation of turkey and stuffing and presents for everyone sponsored by salsa.co.uk! Chill out at the luxurious 5 star Hotel National, notably the best hotel in Cuba, and enjoy our comprehensive and inspiring course in Cuban salsa and related dances (see our syllabus for what this includes). After 8 nights in Havana we travel to the luxury Caribbean beach hotel at Trinidad to say a great SALSA hello to 2007 at our New Years Eve party. Start the year as you mean to go on with good food, wine and romance under a clear lit Caribbean night sky. During the second week take it easy on the beach where you can relax deeply before returning to La Habana for some more Salsa action with our Cuban friends before you go home. All this and more is included as well as direct flights to Cuba with Virgin. With these memories Christmas and New Year will never be the same again.

Dates and Prices 21 December to 4 January - £1,880.00

Unique Features Christmas in the Caribbean: Enjoy Christmas and New Year in the warm and balmy climate surrounded by the laid back and friendly spirit of the Cubans.

Your Holiday Christmas AND New Year in Cuba - This is the ultimate Christmas holiday! Escape the dreary winter and the decision of where to go on New Years Eve. There can only be one place - on the golden sands of a warm Caribbean beach! Arriving four days before Christmas we party every night all over Havana in the company of our team of Cuban dancers. On Christmas day there is a Christmas Salsa party with the inimitable Cuban interpretation of turkey and stuffing and presents for everyone sponsored by salsa.co.uk! Chill out at the luxurious 5 star Hotel National, notably the best hotel in Cuba, and enjoy our comprehensive and inspiring course in Cuban salsa and related dances (see our syllabus for what this includes). After 8 nights in Havana we travel to the luxury Caribbean beach hotel at Trinidad to say a great SALSA hello to 2007 at our New Years Eve party. Start the year as you mean to go on with good food, wine and romance under a clear lit Caribbean night sky. During the second week take it easy on the beach where you can relax deeply before returning to La Habana for some more Salsa action with our Cuban friends before you go home. All this and more is included as well as direct flights to Cuba with Virgin. With these memories Christmas and New Year will never be the same again.

What's Included

- | Christmas Dinner and party with presents
- | New Years Eve party in beautiful Trinidad with lovely beaches
- | Thorough and entertaining syllabus in Cuban salsa and related dances (20hrs)
- | The delightful company, every night, of a team of professional Cuban dancers all paid for by us.
- | Beautifully organised programme of salsa nights out
- | Charming hosted by our team on the ground who are intimate with Cuba.
- | 10 nights accommodation and breakfast in the 5 star National in Havana.
- | 4 nights at the all inclusive 4 star Brisas Trinidad de Mar.
- | Meet & Greet upon arrival, airport and hotel transfers.
- | Direct return flights Gatwick / Havana with Virgin (with options, possibly with a supplementary charge, to fly in from anywhere)

What previous Customers Have Said about this Holiday "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.'

'Classes were excellent with professional dancers who were fun and friendly'

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

'An exhilarating blend of dance and experience of Cuban life. Wonderful'

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 it 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 over 20 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. The salsa classes will take place in a dance space within the Hotel Nacional.

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.

Syllabus: We have recently completely refreshed the syllabus we teach in order to make it deeper and 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
- | The Bachata
- | 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.
- | Templeke and Cuban body movement
- | Rueda (Cuban Wheel)
- | Styling for both men and women
- | Spinning for both men and women

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.

21st December

Arrival and transfer to hotel.

Welcome cocktail party and introduction to your Cuban salsa team.

22nd December

Morning - Overview of the week and Salsa classes

Afternoon - Visit Callejon de Hammel and see Cubans dancing Street Rumba, African Rhythms bands and Guaguanco dancers. (OP) Lunch in picturesque Cuban restaurant in Old Havana. Wander around back to the hotel through this amazing part of Havana

Evening - Salsa-ing with your Salsa Teachers open-air at this fantastic fortress at the entrance of the Havana port just in front of the famous Malecon de la Havana.!

23rd December

Morning - Salsa lessons. (OP) Templeke Class - learn to move like a Cuban!

Afternoon and evening - Salsa your way through the afternoon and evening at this hot matinee salsa club!

24th December

Morning - Salsa lessons.

Afternoon - (OP) Visit the Rum Museum and the Tobacco Factory.

Evening - Salsa-ing in another of the most famous and lively dance venues in all Cuba with your teachers!

25th December Christmas Day Christmas dinner, carols round the tree, crackers and presents from us followed by salsa-ing all night with your team of delightful and charming professional Cuban Salsa team.

26th December

Morning - Salsa lessons

Afternoon - (OP) Cuban Style salsa class: templeke.

Evening - (OP) Dinner at local superb restaurant where to enjoy a fantastic lobster!. Later - Salsa-ing all night with your Salsa Teachers!

27th December

Morning - Salsa lessons

Afternoon - Chill out round the pool enjoying the salsa music and sun! Evening Salsa-ing all night with your Salsa Teachers! 28th December Morning - Salsa lessons

Afternoon - Chill out round the pool enjoying the salsa music and sun! Evening Salsa-ing all night with your Salsa Teachers! 29th December

Transfer by private coach to your fabulous all inclusive beach location to start the New Year in style - chill out! 30th December

Morning and Afternoon- At leisure: enjoy the fantastic facilities of the hotel, its swimming pool or the private beach!

Evening - Salsa-ing with your host in the hotel beach bar!

31st December NEW YEARS EVE Morning and afternoon - At leisure: enjoy the fantastic facilities of the hotel, its swimming pool or the private beach!

Evening - Celebrate New Year's Eve with a fantastic party - salsa-ing under the moonlit caribbean sky

1st January NEW YEARS DAY

Morning and afternoon - Chill out and sleep off your hangover around the pool enjoying the salsa music and sun!

2nd January Return transfer by coach to Hotel National in Havana Afternoon- For the Salsa die-hards, Salsa-ing at a Salsa Matinee!

Evening - Last night Salsa-ing with the Cuban dance team in Havana. 3rd January Morning - Salsa lessons.

Afternoon - Chill out round the pool enjoying the salsa music and sunshine.

Evening - Salsa-ing in another of the most famous and lively dance venues in all Cuba with your teachers! 4th January

Lunchtime - (OP) Last day lunch at famous Havana Restaurant in one of the most sought after districts. Late

afternoon - Flight departs to return to UK arriving morning of 5th January.

Nightlife

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 fun. The latest dance craze is 'Templeke' which is a rapid, sassy body movement involving the shoulders, chest, torso and hips danced solo at your partner.

Clubs and venues in Havana: On the inside information of 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 'Casa de la 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 \$6-20. 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 \$1) to the best clubs.

As we are going to stay there at Christmas time, we are expecting to go to typical Cuban Christmas parties mixing with the locals and with our Cuban team. An extra charge in the Salsa Venues could be at these parties on the 25th and 31st December.

Your Teachers In Havana you will be taught by a team of Cuban instructors headed by Alexis González Valdez. He 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. He 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. Please see the note under Your Classes for details of the syllabus.

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 What are 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.

* Lunch in an Art Deco restaurant in Havana with live music and peacocks (approx £12).

* Dinner at elegant restaurant in Havana with option to have lobster (approx £15).

* Guided visit to the Rum museum and Tobacco Factory (approx £16 including transfers) in Havana. *Last day lunch at upmarket Havana Restaurant (approx £18)

Single Room Supplements, Upgrades and Budget Options

Option 1 - Included	
Nacional de Cuba - Hotel***** Bed & Breakfast - (21/12/2006 to 28/12/2006 - 7 nights)	
Single Room (1 Person)	182.00 GBP
Twin Room (Based on 2 sharing)	Included
Brisas Trinidad del Mar - Hotel**** All Inclusive - (28/12/2006 to 01/01/2007 - 4 nights)	
Twin Room (Based on 2 sharing)	Included
Twin Room (Single Occupation) (1 Person)	84.00 GBP
Nacional de Cuba - Hotel***** Bed & Breakfast - (01/01/2007 to 04/01/2007 - 3 nights)	
Single Room (1 Person)	78.00 GBP
Twin Room (Based on 2 sharing)	Included

Flights and Transfers Flights: Published prices are based on flights from UK airports and there is usually a choice. Our customer care team are happy to price you a flight from any airport and you can also buy the holidays without a flight and make your own way there. If you live outside of the UK you can travel directly to the resort. There could be substantial "Early Bird" prices available so please see our special offers page on our website or ring us to find out what these are.

Transfers: We are normally able to meet you at the airport and take you by private transfer at no additional charge to your hotel. Sometimes you may have to wait a short while at the airport to connect with this transfer. Occasionally depending on your arrival time there may not be a group transfer available and we may ask you to make your own way to the hotel by taxi or public transport. In these circumstances we would give you easy to follow instructions.

Making your 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 La Habana (Havana) is approximately 20 km (12 miles). There are no public buses that pass by the airport en route to La Habana, so you must either take a personal taxi or tourist bus. The taxi charges approximately \$20-30 dollars, and the tourist bus charges approximately \$10-15 dollars. Journey time: about 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 will be hosted by Amanda Maitland ably supported by a team of professional ground handlers. Amanda is Scottish and intimately familiar with the salsa scene in the UK where she is well known as a salsa teacher, she is particularly passionate about Cuba where she is a frequent visitor and therefore her preference is Cuban Casino Style Salsa & Rueda. She will be with you for the week.

Amanda may contact you in the UK before your departure to make sure you are comfortable with all the arrangements

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.

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 Dance Holidays will invite you to be our guest to a drink.

Getting Around: You are responsible for making your own way to the dance classes and meeting points on the itinerary. We give you a detailed, annotated map and itinerary which make this easy. Nearly all of the activities we plan are within walking distance of the hotel. On one or two occasions it may be wise to get a taxi, and we will let you know when and how.

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 - Recommended travel book written in 2002. 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. Please refer to the optional extra section of the fact sheet for the prices of the optional extras.

Three course meal with drinks: 15 Euros

Tipping per day: 2 Euros

Nightclub entrance: 5-20 Euros

Rum and coke in nightclub: 4 Euros

Beer in a bar/cafe: 2 euros

Coffee in a bar/cafe: 1.50 euros

Airport tax on leaving Cuba: 25 Euros

Gifts for Cubans: Cuba is without many of the essential things that we take for granted. Things that are particularly difficult to get hold 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 t-shirts. 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

The following are 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.