

GENERAL GUEST Q&A - CUBA

TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

Who is eligible to travel to Cuba?

U.S. (including Cuban-born) and international guests are eligible to travel to Cuba from the U.S. if they either a) meet at least one of 12 categories of authorized travel; or b) obtain a specific license issued by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

How did the changes in U.S. Cuba policy announced in 2017 impact cruises to Cuba?

The Office of Foreign Assets Control (“OFAC”) issued new regulations regarding travel to Cuba, effective November 9, 2017. The new regulations modify travel authorization and restrict some transactions in Cuba, among other things. The following changes may impact you:

1. Guests who made their booking on or after June 16, 2017 will no longer be permitted to engage in “self-guided” people-to-people travel. Instead, guests disembarking in Cuba must participate in group people-to-people programs sponsored either by Holland America Line or a third-party U.S. sponsoring organization, and do not qualify for the other authorized categories of travel to Cuba. Guests who booked their cruise prior to June 16, 2017, may continue to travel under the self-guided people-to-people program.
2. As part of the revised regulations, guests are now prohibited from engaging in direct financial transactions with businesses controlled or acting on behalf of the Cuban military, intelligence or security services or personnel. A [Cuba Restricted List](#) naming these business establishments has been released by the U.S. State Department.

What are the 12 categories of authorized travel?

1. Family visits;
2. Official business of the U.S. government, foreign governments, and certain intergovernmental organizations;
3. Journalistic activity;
4. Professional research and professional meetings;
5. Educational activities (also called People to People/ P2P);

7. Religious activities;
8. Public performances, clinics, workshops, athletic and other competitions, and exhibitions;
9. Support for the Cuban people;
10. Humanitarian projects;
11. Activities of private foundations or research or educational institutes;
12. Exportation, importation, or transmission of information or information materials; and
13. Certain authorized export transactions.

For more information about each of the 12 categories, and what the U.S. Government requires with respect each category, we recommend you read the [U.S. Department of Treasury’s Frequently Asked Questions Related to Cuba](#).

How will guests certify that they are traveling to Cuba under one of the 12 categories of authorized travel?

All guests (including children) will be required by the U.S. Government to complete a [travel affidavit](#) identifying their approved category of travel. This must be completed prior to boarding the vessel.

Will all guests be required to have a passport to travel to Cuba?

Yes, all guests (including international guests) will be required to have a passport. Guests cannot travel to Cuba with a driver’s license, birth certificate, or passport card. Passports must be valid for six months after their travel to Cuba.

Will guests be required to have a visa to enter Cuba?

All guests are required to obtain a visa in order to enter Cuba, regardless of citizenship or residency. The type of visa that a guest will need will depend on certain factors, including the reason for travel to Cuba. Most guests will be able to enter Cuba utilizing a “Tarjeta Turistica” (or “tourist card”) visa. Guests will purchase the “Tarjeta Turistica” from Holland America at a cost of \$75 per person. This fee will be added to your onboard account. Holland America will distribute this visa during embarkation and guests will be responsible for providing their visa to the Cuban authorities upon arrival in Cuba. If a guest loses their visa, they will be able to purchase a new visa on board at an additional cost of \$75.

Guests who were born in Cuba or are traveling for specific reasons, such as journalists, will need to obtain non-tourist card visas from the Cuban consulate or a visa service.

Are Individuals who were born in Cuba allowed to travel to Cuba with Holland America?

Yes. Cuban-born guests are permitted to travel to Cuba by ship. However, any guest who was born in Cuba who wishes to travel to Cuba by ship must request a visa from the Cuban Embassy or use a Cuban issued passport in order to enter the country. Requirements will vary from guest to guest based on their circumstances around moving from Cuba.

Visa and passport requests can be made directly to the Cuban Embassy or through the use of third-party service providers that are authorized to process these types of applications.

Guests will be responsible for the cost of obtaining their visa or passport. Please understand that the application process may take several months to complete.

Visa and passport requests can be made directly to the [Cuban Embassy](#) (1-202-797-8518) or through the use of third-party providers that are authorized to process these types of application. [ABC Charters](#) (1-877-817-1160) and Cuba Travel Services "CTS" (1-305-428-3603) are two examples of such companies.

TRIP ACTIVITIES

Can guests go as tourists to Cuba?

Travel to Cuba for tourist activities is not allowed. Examples of activities that are not permitted in Cuba include purely recreational activities, tourist activities, travel in pursuit of a hobby, self-directed educational activities only for personal enrichment, or research for personal satisfaction only.

How do the people-to-people programs work?

People-to-people programs are a permitted category for U.S. guests to visit Cuba. These programs must be sponsored either by Holland America Line or a third-party U.S. sponsoring organization and include a full-time schedule of activities that will create educational interactions between guests and the Cuban people.

Activities can include shore excursions offered by Holland America Line. As of November 9, 2017, guests may not opt to participate in a "self-guided" program, unless that guest booked their cruise sailing to Cuba before June 16, 2017.

Such self-guided guests must still have a full-time schedule of authorized activities and must maintain their own records demonstrating such a full-time schedule.

If my cruise stays in Cuba overnight, do I have to engage in people-to-people activities both days?

Yes. For Day 2, any guest who wishes to get off the ship will need to participate in a people-to-people activity/shore excursion. They cannot rely on the prior day's people-to-people activities for the next day. For those sailings that depart at noon on Day 2, guests wishing to get off the ship will need to participate in 2-3 hours of people-to-people activities.

Does Holland America offer shore excursions that comply with one of the 12 general licenses?

Holland America Line offers shore excursion programs that are designed to fully comply with all the requirements for people-to-people programs. In planning activities ashore, guests should keep in mind that people-to-people activities must be fulfilled before guests can engage in free time. Evening shore excursions offered by Holland America Line do not currently comply with the people-to-people guidelines and cannot be considered to be part of the required full schedule of activities. Popular tours do sell out so guests wanting to ensure they book their preferred shore excursions should book early at [HollandAmerica.com](#).

How much free time is there?

After completion of a full-time schedule of people-to-people activities, guests are free to explore as they wish.

Do air carriers or vessel operators need to obtain specific licenses from OFAC to provide services?

No. A general license authorizes persons subject to U.S. jurisdiction to provide carrier services by vessel or aircraft to, from, or within Cuba, in connection with authorized travel, without the need for a specific license from OFAC. However, while no additional license is required from OFAC, persons providing carrier services may still need to secure regulatory approvals from other concerned U.S. government agencies, including the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security, the Department of Transportation's Office of the Secretary and the Federal Aviation Administration, and the Department of Homeland Security. For a complete description of what the OFAC general license authorizes and the restrictions that apply, see 31 CFR § 515.572(a)(2).

Holland America operates its cruises to Cuba pursuant a general license promulgated under U.S. Federal Regulation

31 CFR §515.572 (Provision of travel, carrier, other transportation-related, and remittance forwarding services).

SHOPPING

What are guests allowed to bring back from Cuba?

Guests are generally authorized to bring into the United States merchandise acquired in Cuba for personal use and/or consumption as accompanied baggage including Cuban cigars and rum. Please keep in mind that the revised U.S. Cuba Regulation includes a prohibition from engaging in direct financial transactions with businesses controlled or acting on behalf of the Cuban military, intelligence or security services or personnel, as listed on the U.S. State Department's "Cuba Restricted List". The restricted businesses include some hotels, shopping centers and other businesses which may cater to tourists. While there is no limit on the value of the goods that may be brought back from Cuba for personal use; goods brought back to the United States from Cuba as accompanied baggage are subject to the normal customs value limits on duty and tax exemptions for merchandise imported.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Are there any vaccines required or recommended for travel to Cuba for adults and children?

You do not need any inoculations before visiting Cuba.

Will my medical insurance cover any medical requirements during my visit to Cuba?

We encourage guests to check with their health care provider to understand coverage for their stay in Cuba. Please note that Medicare only covers medical costs within the U.S. and not in any other countries.

Will the Cuban Government require health insurance to be purchased to cover local medical services required while I am in Cuba?

Yes, the Cuban Government requires all guests to pay a Cuba Health Insurance fee. This fee is included in the taxes, fees, and port expenses.

Is Cuba accessible for guests that use a wheelchair, scooter or other mobility devices?

Accessibility in Cuba is limited due to a lack of adequate infrastructure. While accessible facilities (such as hotels) may exist, these facilities may not be comparable to accessible facilities found in the U.S. Guests using mobility devices may be limited to ground floor facilities as there are often no elevators to access upper levels.

Streets often have curbs without ramp access and many surfaces are uneven or cobble stone. Motor coaches and other transportation may not have the equipment to accommodate or store mobility devices or assist with boarding.

BANKING

What currencies are accepted in Cuba?

There are two types of currencies in Cuba – CUC (Cuban Convertible Peso) and CUP (Cuban Peso). The CUC is the currency used by tourists while the CUP is used by locals. Guests can exchange money to convertible pesos (CUCs) at the terminals in Havana and Cienfuegos as well as in hotels, banks and exchange offices. Guests are highly encouraged to carry enough cash for the day when disembarking the ship. Please note that transaction fees of approximately 10% will apply to USD to CUC exchanges. It is advisable to change U.S. dollars into another accepted foreign currency (British pounds, Canadian dollars, euros, Japanese yen, Mexican pesos, Swiss francs) before embarking for your voyage as a 10% fee is charged if you use U.S. dollars to change into Cuban pesos (none of the other foreign currencies face this charge). Guests cannot exchange CUC back to USD once in the US so all remaining currency should be changed back to USD prior to leaving the last Cuban port..

What about using credit & debit cards in Cuba?

While U.S. guests are now technically allowed to use U.S. credit and debit cards in Cuba where they are accepted, most U.S. banks have not yet finalized arrangements for credit card transactions in Cuba and most places do not accept credit cards. Please check with your card provider to determine if they have established access in Cuba. It is recommended that guests bring cash and do not rely on credit cards.

SAFETY & SECURITY

Are there any important safety tips?

As you would in any major city or destination in the world, guests should consider the following:

- Leave valuables onboard the ship.
- Avoid wearing expensive jewelry.
- Carry only the cash that you will need for the day.
- Use discretion when handling cash publicly.
- Keep your belongings secure and out of sight.

What are additional tips that I should know when traveling on shore in Cuba?

- Drink only bottled water
- Due to tropical climate, wear loose fitting airy clothes, comfortable shoes and a hat.
- Wear sunblock and bug repellent
- Only a few places are air conditioned; bring a fan and/or mister
- Purchase items only from authorized sellers
- Exchange money only at CADECAs (Currency exchange houses) or hotels

What should I carry ashore while in Cuba?

- Passport
- Visa
- Holland America issued room key
- Cash

CONNECTIVITY

Will my cell phone work in Cuba?

You will need to check with your phone provider regarding international coverage in Cuba.

Will I be able to access the internet on this cruise?

Wi-Fi is available onboard. You will need to check with your mobile carrier to determine if you will have access to data/roaming while in Cuba. The access to Wi-Fi in port in Cuba is extremely limited, if available at all.

TIPPING

Are gratuities included for Cuban tour guides and restaurants?

Holland America Line does not include gratuities or tips for our ground tour guides, drivers, or waiters. Guest should expect to tip their guides, drivers, and waiters. However, as always, gratuities are an expression of thanks and should be based on the level of service provided. We suggest the following as a guide for tipping:

- National guide: 4-6 CUCs per person
- Local (site specific) guide: 1 CUC per person
- Driver: 2 CUCs per person
- Wait staff: 3 CUCs per person or 10% of the bill (if you are eating out on your own)
- Street Performers / Characters: 1-2 CUCs per person
- Bathroom Attendants: .50 CUC per person