

2nd International Symposium on Navigated Sinus and Skull Base Surgery

2016, June 11th - 12th

www.navigated-skullbase.com

Havana - Cuba, Meliá Cohiba Hotel

organized by
ACADEMUS
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NSBS Info 01: Cuba Travel Information

In order to enter Cuba, you need a visa or tourist card required by the Cuban authorities. You will be able to acquire a visa or tourist card at the Embassy of the Republic of Cuba in your country. Your trip to Cuba can be organized individually or by those travel agencies working with Cuba. Coming from United States there is currently no direct individual flight schedule. But you may take direct charter flights, offered by travel agencies, such as: Marazul Charters www.marazul.com, ABC Charters www.abc-charters.com or CTS (Cuba Travel Services) www.cubatravelservices.com .

Upon arrival in Cuba, Immigration Control requests:

1. Valid Passport
2. Visa or tourist card issued
3. Mandatory healthcare insurance
4. Airline ticket or e-ticket with entry and return date
5. Lodging place

For further information, please visit the following website: <http://www.cubadiplomatica.cu>, where you will find the Cuban diplomatic missions and other consular services (incl. a description how to apply for visa or tourist card).

Because of the uprising diplomatic relations between USA and Cuba it might happen, that there will be direct flights between USA and Cuba before June.

Here are some **frequently asked questions** that may help to plan your trip to Cuba:



1. Is it legal to travel to Cuba for U.S. Citizens?

U.S. citizens and residents are only permitted to travel to Cuba for one of 12 authorized reasons according to a "general license". These are:

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
6. religious activities
7. **public performances, clinics, workshops, athletic and other competitions, and exhibitions**
8. support for the Cuban people
9. humanitarian projects
10. activities of private foundations or research or educational institutes
11. exportation, importation, or transmission of information or information materials
12. certain authorized export transactions

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While visiting our symposium you belong to category 7 and are qualified to travel under a "general license". There is no need for a "specific license" issued by the U.S. government. **(For more information see Infosheet 02: How US Citizens can enter Cuba).**

2. Do I need a Visa to travel to Cuba?

Yes, but getting one is very simple. It costs the equivalent of \$25-30 USD to obtain a Visa for travel to Cuba. It's available at the Cuban diplomatic services all over the world. For detailed Information please visit <http://www.cubadiplomatica.cu>, where you will find the Cuban diplomatic missions and other consular services (incl. a description how to apply for visa or tourist card).

3. Do I need special medical insurance to travel to Cuba?

Cuba requires non-U.S. medical insurance. There are agents who will sell you a temporary policy upon arrival at the Havana airport for a reasonable rate (roughly \$3 USD per day). For the application for a visa or tourist card you may also use **your private health insurance policy**. Please contact your health insurance company in advance to the application.

4. Can I check my bags all the way to Havana?

For U.S. citizens: If you're taking a direct flight from Miami, Tampa or New York, you will be able to check your bags straight through to your Cuban destination. On flights routed through Mexico City, you will have to check your bags to Mexico at the airport on your departure day, claim them once you land, and then re-check them for your onward flight to Havana. In that instance, the same is often true in reverse for the way home.

All others: Please ask at the check inn desk on the airport.

5. I've read that Cuba doesn't have the infrastructure in place to support U.S. travelers. Is this true?

There are a number of comfortable and well appointed hotels in Cuba, but there is a limited number of rooms! and some amenities (WiFi for example) are not as widely available. **Therefore academus GmbH tries to make pre-bookings for Hotels in Havana for the "2nd International Symposium on Navigated Sinus and Skull Base Surgery".**

There are plenty of taxis in Havana, that are generally safe and the drivers are courteous.

6. What is the Cuban currency? Are there ATMs in Cuba? Can I use my credit card?

For international visitors it is mandatory to pay with CUC (Cuban Peso Convertible) instead of the Cuban Pesos used by the Cubans. The CUC can be changed from international currencies (USD, EUR, CAD etc.). Euros and Canadian dollars historically get a more favorable exchange rate on the ground in Cuba.

The best way to pay in Cuba is cash!

In general it is possible to use and access ATMs. At the moment, ATMs are not available in Cuba for U.S. travelers, resp. U.S. credit cards, though banking relationships between US and Cuba are in the beginning stages. You're better off exchanging USD, EUR or CAD for CUC. In theory, MasterCard is now accepted in Cuba but trying to find a merchant to accept it is difficult. You can't pay hotels with American credit cards.

7. Hotel Recommendations for Havana

The following properties are in good locations and boast very positive reviews from former guests. (All in the portfolio of academus hotel offers):

Meliá Cohiba: A Cuba 5-star experience. Guests report this is a great location in Havana for both business and relaxation. It's located near the coastline, offers a café/nightclub, a cigar lounge and an art gallery, and of course, a swimming pool. \$250-\$400+/night.

Hotel Nacional de Cuba: If you're seeking a slightly more humble and historic experience, this may be the property for you. This hotel dates back to the late 1920s. The land it sits on has a history of pirates and towers and cannons—and the eclectic history has rolled over into this hotel's architecture, a mix of Art Deco, neo-classical and Moorish; in fact, some say it may be one of the most unusual buildings in the Caribbean region.

Hotel Saratoga: Location, location, location! This hotel, recently renovated, is in a very busy area of Havana, across from the Capitol building. Elegant, grand and guests rave about the views—which they are likely enjoying from the rooftop terrace. Note: booking is not entirely online for this property; you must submit a reservation request (email) and go from there.

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8. Cuban safety

In general, travelers will find Cuba's safety to be on par with any other westernized country. Violent crime is virtually non-existent to tourists, but petty thievery is on the rise in areas popular with foreigners and you should never exchange money with people on the streets. Common sense will take you far. Taxi drivers are as honest as taxi drivers anywhere else (running an inflated meter for foreigners is commonplace),

Your belongings will be safe if you leave them at the front desk of even the most basic hotel and some higher end hotels have room safes.

9. How can I get from the airport in Havana to my hotel? What are my ground transport options? Are there taxis? What if I want to get around the island? Can I book a rental car?

You can book a taxi from the airport in Havana.

10. Will my cell phone/tablet work in Cuba?

The cell phone coverage in Havana is very good, but you're maybe facing problems, if you use an U.S. mobile SIM card. Some U.S. carriers have or are beginning to make agreements with ETECSA (the Cuban national telecommunications company) to provide roaming services in Cuba. For more Info:

<https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/telecommunications-faqs-travelers-cuba>



11. Are there Internet cafes? How can I stay electronically connected?

Cuba has one of the most restrictive Internet policies in the world. There are no Internet cafes but some Internet access points in the inner city district of Havana. Most Cubans do not have service at all. Some hotels have service for foreigners, but expect to pay a premium, and encounter slow connection speeds.

Helpful links with additional information

Cuba Diplomats: <http://www.cubadiplomatica.cu>

What you need to know about traveling to Cuba:

<https://www.cheapair.com/blog/destinations/what-you-need-to-know-about-traveling-to-cuba/>