



cubandivingcenters

Q&A

Get answers to the most frequently asked questions.

Q: How do prices in Cuba for food and entertainment compare to other Caribbean destinations?

A: They are very reasonable . . . but remember 1 CUC = 1 USD. In Havana at a local restaurant (not the more expensive, privately owned) Lobster dinner, with 2 mojitos and dessert aprox. \$25 (USD).

Q: Once in Cuba, where will we exchange our currency into CUC?

A: You can exchange at the airport upon arrival, banks and most hotels. Know that there is a surcharge for USD exchange to CUC. No extra charge for other currencies.

Q: Departing Cuba tax payment?

A: You will need CUC 25 (local cash) for your Cuban Departure Tax. On the day you depart Cuba you will check-in and receive your boarding pass then go to the counter where you will pay for your departure tax. This amount MUST be paid in CUC's.

Q: How many beverages are included in the diving package and what is the serving size? How much do extras cost?

A: You get 8 beverages a day included in the package price. The water and soda bottles are standard size (12 ounces). Price for extras: 3 cuc for water, 4 cuc for soft drink, and 5 cuc for beers.

Q: What does the typical dive day look like?

A: Light breakfast, dive, breakfast, dive, lunch, dive, Mojito time. All with plenty of surface time to relax and enjoy your surroundings, take a nap, change batteries in your camera, etc. Bring sunscreen and hats, just in case.

Q: Are the tank valves Yoke or DIN style?

A: Both styles are available.

Q: Men dress code in Havana, are long pants needed for dining out or will nice shorts be acceptable?

A: Long pants are NOT required . . . unless you plan on dining in a fancy restaurant.

Q: Do we need our dive log for proof of recent diving experience or can we leave it home / just bring blank pages?

A: Bring your certification cards. Blank pages for your logbooks are fine.

Q: Is the dive staff equipped for and able to perform minor gear repairs or do you recommend bringing some type of save-a-dive kit?

A: They will not service your regulators. They are not allowed to rent equipment, but have plenty of back-up equipment should you need something.

Q: What is the dress code for dinner on the yacht?

A: Very casual . . . shorts and t-shirts are fine.

Q: Where is dive gear stored at night? Do we need to bring hangers or anything for storage?

A: No hangars necessary . . . equipment is handled for you and there's an equipment area for storage.

Q: Is the transfer bus equipped with a restroom and do they stop for breaks?

A: There is not a toilet aboard the bus. It does stop for a snack and drink about 1/2 way to Jucaro. There is also a toilet at the rest stop. We suggest bringing a packet of toilet paper or tissues, as some of the public toilets don't have it.

Q: What kind of outlet adapter do we need for hotel in Havana?

A: The yachts have both 220 and 110, but we can't say the same for hotels. Bring converters/adaptors and whatever you need to make what you have work. Better to be safe than sorry.

Q: Cell phone and communication in Cuba? (FOR U.S. TRAVELERS ONLY)

A: US cell phones do not work anywhere in Cuba, and satellite phones are an absolute no-no. DO NOT try to bring one in. They will find it, and they will take it, and it will be a long process. Also, email is tricky everywhere down there, so don't count on being able to be in touch while in-country. Email connections in Havana are limited, but you can buy a card at the hotel that allows you to log on and check email while at the hotel.

If you want to try and have a phone connection while in country, there are some companies that offer world-wide cell phone services. There is a phone provider called mobal.com that can sell you a phone for either \$29.00 or \$99.00 that will work in Cuba. You then pay about \$2.00 per minute if you need to use it. You are supposed to be able to easier send and received calls when in range. This should work fine in Havana but may not when out in Jardines de la Reina or other remote locations.

To purchase go to:

<http://www.mobal.com/international-cell-phones-buy/#opt1>

Q: What type of communication is available on the yachts?

A: None... Tortuga is the only vessel that has wifi. If you need to connect you can ask one of the instructors to take you with them on one of their daily trips.

Q: Can I drink the water and what about ice?

A: We recommend drinking bottled water which is readily available.

Q: You may purchase water at local markets or stands. You will find the bottled water in your hotel room's mini bar to be rather expensive.

A: Please note, Cubans drink water from the tap, and the water is considered safe. Drinking bottled water is advised, but not mandatory. In the hotel and in the restaurants chosen on your program, all ice is made from filtered and purified water.

Q: Is it safe to eat salads and other foods that may have been rinsed with local water?

A: Overall, Cuba is a healthy country where a great deal of emphasis is placed on teaching about hygiene. Many Cubans drink the water directly from the tap. It is rare for travelers to get sick from eating food. Eating salads and fruit is generally safe. However, each person is different, and if you do have a sensitive stomach, you are advised to exercise caution when choosing what to eat.

Q: Should I be concerned about safety?

A: Cuba is a relatively safe country, but like any country we recommend that you exercise caution and take care in crowded situations. Do not leave wallets visible from pockets and always be aware of where your valuables are. Be sure to use the safe in the hotel room. We recommend securing any checked-in luggage with TSA approved locks.

Q: What is the service like in Cuba?

A: Be prepared for slow BUT warm and pleasant service. Do not be surprised if your fax takes a few hours to send, the last telephone card was just sold or your coffee order takes 20 minutes to reach you. This is Cuba – you will be surrounded by beauty, Great Spirit and warmth... enjoy it.

Q: What is the normal tip/gratuity %?

A: Normally you tip 10 to 15%. Cuban Citizens make a salary of 30 CUC a month but the cost of living is very high. Also remember that if you tip in USD, it turns out that 10% less because there is a 10% charge on the exchange.

Q: What will the weather be like?

A: Temperatures do vary during these months with July, August and September being the warmest months when you can expect temperatures ranging from 75°F / 23oc - 90 °F / 33 oc degrees. It tends to be cooler from December to early February and temperatures can sometimes drop to below 75°F / 23oc degrees in January. We recommend looking at a website like www.wunderground.com before traveling to get accurate up-to-date information.

Rain can happen at any time but you are most likely to experience it in May - June.

It's always useful to travel with a small travel umbrella or a very light-weight rain jacket.

Q: What is the water temperature?

A: It is approximately 80°F / 27oc in winter and 86°F / 30oc in summer

Q: Can I drink the water and what about ice?

A: We recommend drinking bottled water which is readily available.

Some useful links to wonderful videos and our website

 <http://www.cubandivingcenters.com>

 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdu6pY5gfMM>

 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjdOU4jCdgg>

 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZT1xF3Ppz5o>

 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTpsdjmYuFY>

 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MEV5WpleuWQ>