

A **Diaspora** Travel & Trade Signature Project

2018 Diaspora Music Exchange: K-Boogie Turns 40 1/2 En La Habana

Friday, August 17, 2018 - Monday, August 20, 2018
(4 Days/3 Nights) ~ Havana, Cuba

PROGRAM INFO PACKET



Double Occupancy - \$1880 USD

Single Occupancy - \$2060 USD

~~ Including All Discounts & Rebates ~~

INCLUDES

- (1) Airport Transfers in Cuba;
- (2) US Travel Affidavit;
- (3) Casa Accommodations;
- (4) Daily Breakfast/Lunch & Orientation/Birthday Dinner;
- (5) Full Program of Scheduled Activities & Tours/Transportation;
- (6) Bi-Lingual Program Guide(s)

NYC Mailing Address

119 WEST 72ND STREET, #391
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10023

INFO@DiasporaTT.com

www.DiasporaTravelTrade.com

Support For The Cuban People Program

Pursuant To 31 CFR §515.574

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INTRODUCTION - Please Read This Entire Document

THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING DIASPORA TRAVEL & TRADE!

DIASPORA TRAVEL & TRADE (“**DIASPORA**”), is a full-service consulting company servicing clients with interests in or located in Black and/or Indigenous communities in North America, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. Since 2015, we have developed a number of projects and curated numerous programs for universities, non-profit and non-governmental organizations, special interest groups, professionals, and globe-trotters.

Our focus is travel to and trade with the Black and Indigenous communities in the Americas, focusing first on Cuba and the United States. The solutions that we offer include:

- ✓ Diaspora Travel & Trade Branded Projects/Programs
- ✓ Customized Projects/Programs
- ✓ Customized Travel Itineraries
- ✓ Academic Projects/Programs
- ✓ Professional Projects/Programs
- ✓ Cultural Exchange Projects/Programs
- ✓ Conferences, Workshops, Lectures, Presentations - Live, Webinars, Conference Calls
- ✓ Booking and Logistics for Speakers & Talent Traveling to/from United States
- ✓ Business and Trade Consulting

Our team has valuable experience and extensive relationships, which we leverage on behalf of our clients. Our portfolio includes programs and projects in the following sectors: Dance, Art, & Literature, Eco-Tourism & Sustainable Development, Education, Wellness & Holistic Living, Sports & Athletics, Law, Health Care, Architecture, and Religion & Spirituality.

RESTRICTIONS ON TRAVEL TO CUBA BY THE UNITED STATES FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Those subject to U.S. jurisdiction are not permitted to travel to Cuba for tourist activities. However, individuals are permitted to travel to Cuba, if the travel activities qualify under one of the 12 travel categories that are authorized by “general license” by the U.S. Treasury Department, Office of Foreign Asset Control (“**OFAC**”).

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

2018 Diaspora Music Exchange: *KBoogie Turns 40½ En La Habana* program (the “**Program**”) was designed by **DIASPORA**.

During the Program, we will participate in various activities in Cuba. These activities include community, cultural, and city tours to learn about the history of Cuba, modern Cuba, and Cuba’s future. We will be guided to explore the impact of various historical events and time periods on the Cuban psyche and their physical environment, and your understanding of these events and time periods. We will engage with

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Saturday, April 7, 2018

community leaders, students, scholars, artists, and workers, including non-public sector workers – *cuentapropistas* and cooperative owners. We will learn of the various efforts to bring economic and social changes to respective communities and to Cuba as a whole.

Whether Timba, Jazz, Salsa, Rumba, Son, or Hip-Hop & Reggaeton - music is an expression and daily part of Cuban life. Music emanates from nearly every street corner and dancing is as habitual as breathing. The 2018 theme for the annual Diaspora Music Exchange program is “**KBoogie Turns 40 ½ En La Habana,**” exploring the lively and diverse rhythms, sounds, and movements of Cuba, and honoring Diaspora Travel & Trade’s founder. What unique challenges do Cuban artists face when creating and marketing their music? How has music from each country been influential to the other? We’ll have tours of independent music studios in Cuba, community discussions with local artists, and performance artist exchange activities; this is an opportunity to learn about music as art and industry in Cuba, and to make international connections and lifelong friendships.

The Program qualifies under the **Support For The Cuban People License** pursuant to **31 CFR §515.574**, which requires that: Individuals (and **other** entity types not relevant to the program) engage “in a full-time schedule of activities that: (i) Enhance contact with the Cuban people, support civil society in Cuba, or promote the Cuban people's independence from Cuban authorities; and (ii) Result in meaningful interaction with individuals in Cuba.” It also requires that the “schedule of activities does not include free time or recreation in excess of that consistent with a full-time schedule.”

PROGRAM PACKAGE OVERVIEW

The Program is *4 Days/3 Nights: Friday, August 17, 2018 - Monday, August 20, 2018*. It includes meals and transportation as indicated in the Final Program Schedule and does not include gratuity for services consumed by participants.

The Program is a Ground Package, which means that the cost of the flight to Cuba IS NOT included in the Program Package Price. The following items are included:

- AIRPORT TRANSFERS IN CUBA
- U.S. TRAVEL AFFIDAVIT
- CASA ACCOMMODATIONS
- DAILY BREAKFAST/LUNCH & ORIENTATION DINNER
- FULL PROGRAM OF SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES & TOURS
- TRANSPORTATION TO ACTIVITIES & TOURS
- BI-LINGUAL PROGRAM GUIDE

THIS IS ONE OF OUR LOWEST PRICED PROGRAMS!

REGISTRATION PACKET INFORMATION

CLICK HERE FOR REGISTRATION PACKET



[HTTPS://WWW.DIASPORATRAVELTRADE.COM/MUSIC2018](https://www.diasporatraveltrade.com/music2018)

*******LINK TO REGISTRATION PACKET ON PROGRAM PAGE *******

(1) Program Dates:

Friday, August 17, 2018 - Monday, August 20, 2018

(2) Program Name For Registration Packet:

2018 - Music Exchange

(3) Program Type: Ground

(4) Program Price & Payment Plan Dates:

“PRICE, PAYMENTS, DEADLINES, AND PERSONAL FUNDS” Section below

(5) Program Code:

8171882018

(6) Applicable OFAC License Category: *For US Travel Affidavit*

Support For The Cuban People License pursuant to 31 CFR §515.574

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM SCHEDULE

DAY 1: FRIDAY, AUGUST 17, 2018	
Afternoon	Arrive at Jose Marti International Airport (Airport Transfer Included)
Afternoon	Casa Accommodations Check-In (Included)
Evening	Dinner - Orientation & Welcome Dinner (Transportation & Dinner Included)
<p>Description: After several hours of traveling, we will enjoy a relaxing meal and unwind. We will have an opportunity to review the itinerary, ask questions, discuss the surroundings, and get ready for a fantastic program. We will have a meal with a few people from various parts of La Habana Province to learn about Cuba's history and life in Havana today, and to and discuss topics that will give context for the activities and experiences ahead.</p>	
Evening	Entertainment (On your Own)
<p>Description: Participants are free to explore on their own or select from the list of recommended Nightlife Activities.</p>	
DAY 2: SATURDAY, AUGUST 18, 2018	
Early Morning	Breakfast (Included)
Morning	La Habana Vieja Tour (Old Havana) (Transportation Included)
<p>Description: We will visit and learn about the city's colonial and baroque periods of architectural history and experience the virtual time machine of architectural treasures dating back over five centuries. We will explore UNESCO World Heritage sites (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), learning about conservation, preservation, and sustainability efforts.</p> <p><i>La Habana Vieja</i> preserves more of its historic colonial legacy than any other city in the Americas. In 1982, UNESCO declared <i>La Habana Vieja</i> a World Heritage Site, a veritable living museum, in which no fewer than 144 buildings from the 16th and 17th centuries are preserved. We will discuss the challenges to historic preservation in Havana, as well as some of the successes and failures of Cuba's efforts to preserve its architectural history.</p> <p>During the tour, we may visit <i>Casa Museo de Africa</i> ("Africa Museum"). The museum is housed in a 17th century mansion. Various artifacts from different African cultures are on display, including carvings, ritual and decorative masks, musical instruments, weapons, tools, textiles, and clothes. On the ground floor is a depiction of Cuba's Transatlantic Slave Trade Era and the third floor displays a collection of Afro-Cuban religious icons. Participants will learn about the historical and present-day influences of African cultures and African religions on the island.</p> <p>During the tour, we will also see and discuss the numerous government and private renovation and construction projects and learn about the impact on everyday Cubans of the recent increase in tourism and foreign direct investment.</p>	
Afternoon	Lunch - Lunch with Friends (Transportation & Included Included)

Description: We will meet with one or more performing artists who are a part of the Cuban Hip Hop scene. We will learn about Hip Hop in Cuba from its beginnings in the Alamar Housing Project to present day institutions such as the Ministry of Hip Hop. We will discuss its importance as a cultural art form and vehicle to express desires for change, and how it intersects with racial and gender issues on the island.

Afternoon	Art in Cuba Presentation/Discussion - Agencia Cubana de Rap (Cuban Agency of Rap) (Transportation Included)
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Description: Full Description TBD

Cuban Agency of Rap is under the Cuban Institute of Music, which is under the Ministry of Culture

Evening	Dinner On your Own)
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Description: Participants are free to explore on their own or select from the list of recommended Restaurants & Paladares.

Evening	KBoogie 40th Birthday Celebration
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Description: Full Description TBA

Potential Highlights

- US & Cuban DJs
- Open Air/Outside Venue
- Open Bar
- Free Cigars
- Special Performances by US & Cuban Artists

DAY 3: SUNDAY, AUGUST 19, 2018

Early Morning	Breakfast (Included)
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Afternoon	Art In Cuba Presentation/Discussion - Unión Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba (UNEAC - The National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba) (Transportation Included)
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Description: Full Description TBD

Morning	Lunch - Private Studio Visit (Transportation & Lunch Included)
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Description: Full Description TBD

Afternoon	Classic Car Tour of La Habana (Transportation Included)
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Description: We will see the modern parts of *La Habana*, as we drive through and learn about some of the Residential Neighborhoods - i.e. *Central Havana* ("Central Havana"), *Cerro, Vedado, Miramar* - and we will visit important and historic locations, such as those listed below.

The tour will end at *La Feria San Jose* in Habana Vieja where we will engage with local artisans and purchase gifts and souvenirs.

During the tour, we will see more government and private renovation and construction projects, and continue our discussion about the impact on everyday Cubans of the recent increase in tourism and foreign direct investment.

1. **Universidad de La Habana** ("The University of Havana")

- UH was founded on January 5, 1728 and is the oldest university in Cuba and one of the first to be founded in the Americas. It is in *Vedado*.
- 2. El Hotel Nacional de Cuba** - ("The National Hotel of Cuba")
- Hotel Nacional is one of the oldest and perhaps the most well-known luxury hotel in Cuba. It opened in 1930 and has hosted many great artists and scholars. It is located on the *Malecón* in *Vedado* and has a gorgeous view of the Havana Harbor and the *Malecón*.
- 3. Plaza de la Revolución & Monumento a José Martí** - ("Revolution Square & Monument to José Martí")
- *Plaza de la Revolución* is the name of city square in La Habana. The city square has an area of 72,000 square meters, which makes it one of the largest city squares in the world. It is where political rallies take place and political figures address the Cuban people. The city square is home to the *Monumento a José Martí*, which features a 109 m (358 ft) tall tower and an 18 m (59 ft) statue, and the *Biblioteca Nacional José Martí* ("The José Martí National Library"). *Plaza de la Revolución* is also the name of the Municipality of the Havana Province where the city square is located.
 - **Located Behind the Monument** - *El Palacio de la Revolución* ("The Palace of the Revolution"), home to the headquarters of the *Consejo de Estado de Cuba* ("The Council of the State of Cuba"), *Consejo de Ministros* ("Council of Ministers"), and *El Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba* ("The Central Committee of The Communist Party of Cuba").
 - **Located Opposite the Monument** - **A) Ministerio del Interior** ("Ministry of the Interior") with a steel outline image of Che Guevara and the quotation "*Hasta la Victoria Siempre*" ("Until the Victory, Always"), and **B) Ministerio de Informática y la Comunicaciones** ("Ministry of Information Technology and Communications") with a steel outline image of Camilo Cienfuegos, with the quotation "*Vas bien, Fidel*" ("You're doing fine, Fidel").

Evening	Dinner On your Own)
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Description: Participants are free to explore on their own or select from the list of recommended Restaurants & Paladares.

Evening	Entertainment (On your Own)
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Description: Participants are free to explore on their own or select from the list of recommended Nightlife Activities.

DAY 4: MONDAY, AUGUST 20, 2018

Early Morning	Breakfast (Included)
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Early Morning	Depart for Airport (Airport Transfer Included)
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*** **Note:** We do our best to adhere to our planned itineraries, however, traveling in Cuba requires flexibility, and changes may occur. In those cases, we will make substitutions of equal value and interest. ***

PRICE, PAYMENTS, DEADLINES, AND PERSONAL FUNDS

REGULAR PROGRAM PACKAGE PRICE - Ground Package*

Per Person Double Occupancy: \$2280 USD

Per Person Single Occupancy: \$2460 USD

PROGRAM PACKAGE PRICE APPLING ALL DISCOUNTS & REBATES

(-\$400 USD)

Per Person Double Occupancy: \$1880 USD

Per Person Single Occupancy: \$2060 USD

DISCOUNTS/REBATES

- 1. Donation Discount: \$100 USD Discount**
 - Must bring \$50 USD worth of items (list provided) with a receipt.
 - We will make presentations of donated items to community organizations that we visit
- 2. Social Media Campaign Rebate: \$100 USD**
 - Must successfully complete the Social Media Campaign
 - Details provided in a separate document
 - Funds will be reimbursed no later than **Friday, November 30, 2018** for those who have successfully completed the Campaign
- 3. Full Payment Discount: \$100 USD**
 - Full Payment by Deposit Payment Deadline
- 4. KED Birthday Discount: \$100 USD**
 - Must Have Discount Code for this Program

PAYMENTS & DEADLINES

Cuba is a high demand travel destination; therefore, we ask participants to make every effort to meet all deadlines, we will need sufficient time to make all the arrangements. Participants may choose one of the Payment Options listed below. Registration Documents and the non-refundable Deposit of **\$750 USD** must be submitted no later than **Friday, April 27, 2018** (Deposit Payment Deadline).

PAYMENT PLAN OPTIONS				
	Fri., April 27, 2018	Fri., May 25, 2018	Fri., June 29, 2018	Fri., July 27, 2018
Plan A: Full Payment	Full Payment (Incl. Deposit)			
Plan B: 2 Payments	\$750 USD Deposit	BALANCE DUE		
Plan C: 3 Payments	\$750 USD Deposit	\$750 USD Payment	BALANCE DUE	

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Plan D: 4 Payments	\$750 USD Deposit	\$750 USD Payment	\$750 USD Payment	BALANCE DUE
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SUGGESTED MINIMUM ADDITIONAL PERSONAL FUNDS: \$485 USD

This is a suggested amount of personal funds that each attendee should bring on the trip and should ***NOT*** be submitted to **Diaspora**. This is *just a suggestion*, and your personal spending habits will determine your actual amount. Please keep in mind that **\$1 USD** is worth **\$0.87 CUC**

Estimated Personal Funds

***Minimum* Suggested**

This does **NOT** include costs associated with travel to/from US Airports or Baggage Fees

Meal Costs: ----- \$60 CUC

→ Breakfast: 0/3 - \$10 CUC per meal, includes main court and 1 drink – \$0 CUC

→ Lunch: 0/2 - \$15 CUC per meal, includes main court and 1 drink - \$0 CUC

→ Dinner: 2/3 - \$30 CUC per meal, includes main course, 1 drink, & gratuity - \$60 CUC

Evening Entertainment: ----- \$120 CUC

→ \$40 CUC per night (3), includes shared transportation, entrance fee, 1 drink

Basic Souvenirs/Gifts: ----- \$80 CUC

→ \$20 CUC per day (4)

Gratuity: ----- \$80 CUC

→ \$20 CUC per day (4)

Miscellaneous: ----- \$80 CUC

→ \$20 CUC per day (4)

Total Per Person: ----- \$420 CUC

\$482.76 USD

CUBA TRAVEL INFORMATION

- PASSPORT & CUBAN VISA:** Please be certain that your passport will still be valid for 6 months after you return from the program. If you have a Combined Package, then the cost of the Cuban Visa has been incorporated into the Combined Package Price, and Diaspora Travel & Trade (“**Diaspora**”) will obtain the Cuban Visa for you and make arrangements for distribution, unless other arrangements have been made in advance. If you have a Ground Package, you are responsible for obtaining your Cuban Visa, unless other arrangements have been made in advance; please contact your airline for assistance. Nonetheless, the Cuban Government retains the right to grant or deny Visas. You are responsible for having proper documentation on your person to enter Cuba as well as to re-enter the United States. ****Very Important: Persons born in Cuba, no matter your current citizenship, will require additional documentation. Please advise Diaspora.***
- TRAVEL TO/FROM CUBA:** Charter Flight Check-In begins **3 hours** prior to the departure time and closes **1.5 hours** before departure time. Commercial Flight Check-In can be found on your airline’s website. If **Diaspora** assists you with booking your Flight, then **Diaspora** will distribute your airline tickets on the first the day of travel when Check-In begins, unless other arrangements have been made in advance. If for any reason, Flights are delayed or cancelled, please follow the instructions of the airline and the respective airport.
- CUBAN DEPARTURE TAX:** If **Diaspora** organizes your flight to Cuba, then **Diaspora** will collect and pay the Cuban Departure Tax on your behalf, unless other arrangements have been made in advance. If you purchase your flight independently, then please confirm with your airline that this cost is included.
- CUBAN HEALTH INSURANCE:** Obtaining Cuban Health Insurance is mandatory to enter Cuba. There should be an ASISTUR health insurance stamp affixed to the back of your airline ticket (www.asistur.cu). In the event of a health emergency, with your airline ticket and passport, you may be admitted to a local clinic or hospital that services foreign travelers. The coverage is for in country non-pre-existing emergency medical coverage. It does not cover medical evacuation out of Cuba. If you want the option of med-vac services you must purchase independent supplemental third-party travel insurance. If **Diaspora** organizes your flight to Cuba, then **Diaspora** will collect and pay for your Cuban Health Insurance, on your behalf, unless other arrangements have been made in advance. If you purchase your flight independently, then please confirm with your airline that this cost is included.
- FLIGHT LUGGAGE FEES:** Information about Luggage Fees for Commercial Flights can be found on the airline’s website. **Payment is CASH ONLY at the Cuban Airports.**
- PERSONAL ITEMS & CLOTHING:** You should bring your personal items, such as prescription and OTC drugs, washcloths, toothbrush, toothpaste, insect repellent, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, razors, soap, sunscreen, etc. It can be difficult and expensive to purchase these items in Cuba. Make sure to pack clothes and shoes that are appropriate for all aspects of your program, including walking shoes/sneakers, and a bathing suit and beach towel.
- CURRENCY EXCHANGE:** You can exchange USD for CUC (**C**uban **C**onvertible Peso) at any airport, hotel, and exchange bureau in town centers and some banks in Cuba. The current fee for exchanging USD to CUC is 13%. For example, in exchange for **\$100 USD** you will get **\$87 CUC**. The fee is the same no matter where you exchange your currency. You will need your Passport to exchange money. In Cuba, they will not accept bills that are torn or written on when exchanging into CUC. When exchanging money into CUC, make sure to get small denominations to make purchases and tipping easier.
- BANK CARDS, CREDIT CARDS, & TRAVELERS CHEQUES:** US bank issued credit cards, debit cards, and ATM cards do not work in Cuba. You must have cash in order to make any purchases in Cuba or

pay for any services. Most places will not take USD, so you must exchange currency upon arriving. Travelers Cheques may also be difficult to cash while in Cuba. Although this is slowly changing, we suggest bringing the cash that you will need for the trip.

9. **GRATUITY:** It is common to tip people in all walks of life if they do something special for you, including restaurant staff, housekeepers, porters, taxi drivers, concierge, and others in the hospitality industry. Ten to fifteen percent (10-15%) is considered reasonable.
10. **LANGUAGE:** The official language of Cuba is Spanish. Spanish in Cuba, as with Spanish in all countries, has its own pronunciation, sound, and phrases. English is also spoken in Cuba, but is not an official language and is not widely spoken outside of the tourist areas. Knowledge of Cuban Phrases and a Translation Dictionary and/or App (that does not need the internet to access the information) may be helpful.
11. **TELEPHONE & INTERNET:** Traditionally, most US cell phone companies do not have service plans that include Cuba, even with an international plan. However, this is changing. Please consult your cell phone company for details. It is possible to call home from one of the local hotels. You can also purchase local Calling Cards to use on pay phones and landlines and disposable SIM Cards that can be used in unlocked cell phones. It is possible to have problems getting a line to the US from Cuba. Internet Access is not as available throughout Cuba as many U.S. citizens are accustomed. Many hotels have a business center with computer stations, with limited hours, where Internet service is available and there is access to their Wi-Fi, for a fee. In 2015, the state owned and operated telecommunications service provider *Empresa de Telecomunicaciones de Cuba S.A.* (ETECSA) established public pay-for *Wi-Fi Zonas* (Wi-Fi Zones/Hotspots) throughout the island, with many in Havana. Internet is often the most convenient way to communicate with family and friends outside of Cuba. Internet Access Cards, Calling Cards, and disposable SIM Cards can be purchased at ETECSA Multiservice and Mall Offices.

MAKING INTERNATIONAL CALLS:

- **Calling the United States From Cuba:** International Access Code (119), US Country Code (1), Area Code, Number
- **Calling Cuba From the United States:** International Access Code (011), Cuba Country Code (53), Area/City Code, Number
- **About Cuban Phone Numbers:**
 - Havana's Area/City Code is one digit - (7)
 - Other Area/City Codes are two digits
 - Individual Phone Numbers can range from five to seven digits.

MAKING CALLS INSIDE OF CUBA:

- All Cuban cell phone numbers begin with a (5)
- Havana Landline → Havana Cell: Dial (0), then (5), then the rest of the cell phone number.
- Havana Cell Phone → Havana Cell Phone: Dial (5), then the rest of the cell phone number.
- Havana Landline OR Havana Cell → Havana Landline: Just Dial the landline number

OPERATOR AND DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE

- **Domestic:** Dial (113)
 - **Other & Collect Calls:** Dial (180)
12. **ELECTRICITY:** It is common to find both 110v and 220v outlets throughout Cuba. Sometimes both European and American plugs can be used. It is advisable to bring a converter. In Cuba, it is possible to experience temporary power outages due to limited resources on the island. Though this seems to be happening less frequently in the past few years.
 13. **SAFETY:** Cuba is generally a very safe place to travel, but it is always best to watch your belongings and beware of pickpockets and purse-snatchers.

14. **TAXIS & TRANSPORTATION:** Taxis are abundant. Please use your discretion when choosing taxis, some are licensed by the Government and others are independent. Payment will most likely be in CUC, though there are different types of taxis including those that charge in local Pesos, referred to as CUP (Cuban Pesos).
15. **US EMBASSY IN CUBA:** Diplomatic relations between the United States of America and the Republic of Cuba were restored on **July 20, 2015**, and the building that housed the United States Interests Section in Cuba since 1977 resumed its role as The Embassy of the United States of America in Cuba. The Embassy is led by a Scott Hamilton who is a senior Foreign Service Officer and currently serves as the Chargé d'affaires, ad interim. The Embassy is in the Vedado Neighborhood of the City of Havana and is across the street from a section of el Malecón (officially Avenida de Maceo). The Embassy contact information is as follows: **Address:** Calzada, between L & M Streets, Vedado, Havana, Cuba; **Phone:** (53)(7) 839-4100; **Website:** <https://cu.usembassy.gov/>.
16. **CLIMATE/WEATHER:** Cuba has a tropical climate with warm to hot whether that is moderated by trade winds. **December, January, and February** are the *coolest* months: the average maximum daily temperature is around 77°F, and the nighttime average is around 65°F. The summer months are from **June thru August** with an average High around 85-90°F and an average Low, in the low 70's. The rainy season typically runs from **May to November** and the hurricane season/tropical storm season is from **July to November**. Natural events such as tropical storms have not generally been a risk to life in Cuba. However, they can cause interruption to travel plans. Cuba is very well organized and prepared for such natural events with evacuation procedures for citizens and visitors. During your trip, please keep in mind that it may rain at any time, so it is wise to have rain gear. It will be hot, so wear comfortable, cool clothing. It is common to have air conditioning in restaurants, hotels, and other indoor facilities, so layering can also be wise. Please keep in mind that not all places have air conditioning in Cuba.
17. **DRINKING WATER:** Tap water is potable and treated in Cuba however tap water on Caribbean islands generally has a different pH and microbial content than tap water in the United States. When deciding whether to drink tap or bottled water, please take into consideration any public health announcements and your individual health circumstances. Bottled water is sold in the restaurants and paladares and easily found for sale in many stores and hotels. **Diaspora recommends that visitors drink bottled water.**
18. **LAVATORIES:** Be prepared with toilet paper and small coins when using public facilities. You should also bring wet wipes and hand sanitizer. In many cases, avoid throwing paper into the toilet due to flushing problems. It is advisable to use the wastebasket placed next to the toilets.

HELPFUL BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CUBA

***PLEASE NOTE: THESE TOPICS CANNOT BE SUMMED UP IN A FEW PARAGRAPHS.
WE PROVIDE THIS INFORMATION IN AN EFFORT TO ASSIST OUR CLIENTS IN LEARNING ABOUT CUBA.***

CUBA AND THE USA FROM THE REVOLUTION TO THE BEGINNING OF THE EMBARGO/EL BLOQUEO

On January 1, 1959, revolutionary forces led by Fidel Castro successfully overthrew the authoritarian government of then President General Fulgencio Batista (the “**Revolution**”) and on February 16, Fidel Castro was sworn in as prime minister of The Republic of Cuba. Almost immediately, Castro and the new Cuban Government used the newly enacted Agrarian Reform Law of May 17, 1959, and began extensive economic and social reforms on the island. The reforms included the expropriation of land, businesses, companies, and other private property owned by Cuban and Foreign interests. Numerous laws followed, which by 1968 led to the nationalization of all forms of property on the island - from corporations and schools, to small farms and street vendors.

Prior to the Revolution, Cuba’s economy and political system were intertwined with economic and political interests found in the United States of America (the “**US**”). The introduction of the US Platt Amendment in 1902 assisted in establishing the US influence over Cuban political affairs; and just prior to the Revolution, US businesses owned 75% of Cuba's fertile land, 90% of its public services, and 40% of the its sugar industry. It is estimated that the Cuban sugar trade with the US was the source of 80% of Cuba’s foreign currency. In the first months following the Revolution, it appeared as if the US Government and US Corporations were not too concerned with the change in “local” power. In 1959 US investors and businesses continued with the scheduled investment and trade plans. In fact, initially US President Dwight D. Eisenhower officially recognized the new Cuban Government. However, since the property nationalization efforts included US private property, and the Cuban government was engaging Socialist countries to become trade partners, it was clear that the reforms would affect the US business community and the Cold War paradigm. The Cold War was the name given and the description of the political and military relationship and power struggle that developed after World War II, between (1) the United States - a Capitalist Liberal Democracy - and its allies, and (2) the Soviet Union - a Marxist-Leninist Socialist State ruled by the Soviet Union Communist Party - and its allies: “Democracy vs. Communism.”

Beginning in 1960, relations between the US and Cuban governments rapidly deteriorated. While the Cuban Government continued its nationalization efforts, the US Government instituted and then increased trade restrictions, and organized and implemented plans to overthrow what it began to call, the “Castro Regime.” In February 1960, a trade mission from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (the “**USSR**” or the “**Soviet Union**”) traveled to Cuba. This meeting resulted in a trade agreement providing for, among other things, (1) the sale of Cuban sugar to the Soviet Union from 1960 - 1964, in exchange for currency and unrefined oil, (2) a loan from the Soviet Union to Cuba, and (3) technical assistance from the Soviet Union for the construction of plants and facilities. In May 1960, the Cuban Government and the Soviet Union Government resumed diplomatic relations, which had been suspended since 1952. An East German Trade Mission and a trade agreement with Poland followed. In response, the US Government became

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increasingly more concerned with what they viewed as an open invitation for the extension of the Communist influence in the Americas.

In May 1960, the Cuban Government ordered the oil refineries on the island - Standard Oil, Esso (which became Exxon in the US), Texaco, and Shell - to refine Soviet crude oil. On June 7, 1960, due in part to pressure from the Eisenhower Administration, the companies refused. In response, the Cuban Government nationalized these oil refineries, and in July 1960, President Eisenhower retaliated by canceling the remaining 1960 sugar imports and all future scheduled sugar imports. Eisenhower used authority given to him through a then recent bill passed by the US Congress that allowed him to cut the Cuban Sugar imports if he deemed it was in the US national interest. As sugar was the largest Cuban export and made up much of the Cuban economy, the Cuban Government responded by (1) nationalizing most US-owned assets on the island, including banks and sugar mills; and (2) establishing sugar trade agreements with other nations, that were Socialist regimes. This led to the US Government taking the first step of what is known in the US as The Embargo: On October 19, 1960, the US Government placed an embargo (prohibition) on all exports to Cuba, except food and medicine. In the first few days of 1961, the Cuban Government, suspecting espionage, ordered the US Embassy to reduce its 300-person staff. On January 3, 1961, the US Government responded by officially ending diplomatic relations, and increasing funding of covert, and overt, military and non-military efforts to overthrow the Castro Regime. Castro formally declared Cuba a socialist state on May 1, 1961.

For the 50+ years after the 1959 Revolution, the governments, businesses, and people of both countries made decisions that culminated in the deterioration of their relationship and the establishment of the Embargo that we know today. The US federal statutes that form this commercial, economic, and financial embargo and their effect are known in Cuba as *el bloqueo*, "the blockade." One consequence of which is that US citizens have not been able to travel freely to the island for over 50 years.

Although a few US Presidents have taken steps to normalize relations and/or to relax some of the Embargo restrictions, it was not until 2014 that we started to see substantial changes and widespread desire for permanent change. On December 17, 2014, US President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raúl Castro announced their respective country's intentions to reestablish diplomatic relations in an effort to begin to normalize relations between the neighboring nations.

EL PERÍODO ESPECIAL "THE SPECIAL PERIOD"

"It is not possible to describe the severity of the first stages of the Special Period without having lived it, when a single provider - the state - had nothing to provide to a population that had become used to being provided for" -- Ronaldo Ramirez, Cuban Architect and Scientist

On December 25, 1991, Mikhail Gorbachev resigned as the eighth and last leader of the Soviet Union and on December 26 of that same year, the Soviet Union was formally dissolved. Although Cuba and Soviet Russia (one of the 4 states to form the Soviet Union) had a history of political interactions, the well-known Cuban-USSR Partnership of the Cold-War Era did not begin until after the Revolution, in 1960. The political-economic power struggle between the US Government and the Cuban Government during the first few

years after the Revolution coupled with the Cuban Government's ideological shifts toward those of the Soviet Union, set the stage for its substantial dependence on the Soviet Union for economic and military support. The alliances made in these early years helped sustain Cuba's economy until 1991.

By the late 1980's the Cuban-USSR relationship had changed; Castro and the Cuban Government were becoming increasingly critical of the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, the collapse of this nation decimated the Cuban economy. Coupled with the subsequent tightening of US Embargo laws, Cuba entered a crippling economic crisis, officially named *El Período Especial En Tiempos De Paz* "The Special Period During Times of Peace," and often referred to as *El Período Especial* "The Special Period." Since all trade with the Soviet Union ceased to exist, this period was characterized by fuel shortages, which lead to the deterioration of public and private transportation, and the collapse of various industries that were dependent on fuel, including farming and food transportation. The result was widespread famine and a deep and transformative impression on Cuban society. The Cuban Government was no longer able to provide for its citizens; often not even the bare necessities.

Cuban people are innovative and resourceful people. Therefore, despite the lack of resources during this period, the Cuban people used creativity, imagination, and vision to survive and thrive – recycling and repurposing became commonplace. Many of the modern Cuban innovations and creations were created out of necessity during this time-period, including sustainable and urban agriculture and community engagement efforts to revitalize and beautify neighborhoods.

HOUSING IN CUBA

The 1959 Cuban Revolution marks the transition from a country led by domestic and foreign-based capitalist concerns, into a socialist state with a centrally organized political system and a centrally planned economy. Immediately following the Revolution, the Government began political, social, and financial reforms. These reforms included the complete overhaul of the existing social institutions and policies. Revolution Housing Policy and Theory dramatically departed from past policies and theories. Housing shortages and shortcomings have always been a Cuban reality, therefore since 1959 the Government has experimented with and changed its housing theories, policies, and regulations to respond. However, 2 fundamental ideologies and practices have not wavered: (1) Housing is a right, not a commodity; and (2) The government is the primary decision maker.

THE NEW CUBAN ECONOMY

Cuba is a Socialist country with a centrally planned economy. In recent years, the Cuban Government has made significant legislative changes affecting the way business may be conducted. In 2011, the Cuban Government approved a set of economic reform goals called the "Guidelines on Economic and Social Policy for the Party and the Revolution." In 2013, the new Labor Code was adopted; and in 2014, the government approved a new Foreign Investment Law. These changes reflect an economic strategy Cubans refer to as an "updating of the economic model."

The Cuban Government asserts that it remains committed to the Revolution and the Socialist Project and that the introduction of certain free market methods is an effort to continue to engage the global economy

for the benefit of Cuban citizens. An example is the authorization of the direct purchase and sale of privately owned houses and cars.

The Cuban economy is still based on the Socialist ownership of the basic means of production and government planned economic activity, rather than market forces. However, the Government is also encouraging other forms of business interaction as it phases out certain government jobs that it finds redundant or ineffective. These business interactions include worker owned cooperatives in various industries, and self-employment. The concept of self-employment, *Trabajadores Por Cuenta Propia* ("Workers By Own Account"), referred to as *cuentapropistas*, was first introduced into legislation in 1993, with further reform to this legal status in the most recent legislative changes mentioned above. The Government has listed over 200 businesses that Cubans can own on their own.

CUENTAPROPISTA EXAMPLE - PALADARES

Paladares are restaurants that are owned and managed by *cuentapropistas*. Mostly family-run enterprises, they are a counterpart and provide competition to the state-run restaurants. As many of the *Paladares* are in the living/family room or dining room of a private house, they can also provide a more intimate interaction with Cuban reality and "homemade" Cuban food. Over time, the staffing and management practices have evolved to include establishments that have integrated teams with professional chefs, often with long experience in gastronomy, and business professionals with skills such as marketing, accounting, and public relations.

Paladares (Portuguese and Spanish for "palates") is the name of the restaurants that are run by a character in "Vale Tudo," a Brazilian telenovela from 1988-89. The Cuban broadcast in the 1990's coincided with the first issue of *cuentapropista* licenses, so Cuban popular culture designated use of this term.

AFRICA IN CUBA

The Cuban people and their culture are heavily influenced by (some say are merely expressions of) the various African ethnic groups brought to Cuba during the Transatlantic Slave Trade. With the first record of the Transatlantic Slave Trade as early as 1513, it began earlier and lasted longer in Cuba than in the rest of the Americas. The trading of enslaved Africans and their descendants was abolished in Brazil in the 1850s, the US in the 1860s, and in Cuba not until October 7, 1886. This legacy is palpable today.

CRAFTING THE FUTURE

The past, the present, and ideas about what the future might bring mix and mingle in Cuba to invent the extraordinary: Tobacco plantations once worked by enslaved Africans became tobacco farm cooperatives where the workers share in the profits; mansions became senior and day care centers; dilapidated buildings became the canvas for living works of art; classic American cars became taxis; health care and education for all, yet easy internet access only for some; private homes became bed and breakfasts (*Casas Particulares*) that compete with the best state run hotels; and the family kitchens became public restaurants (*Paladares*). Things are constantly changing in Cuba and the people are ever hopeful.

THE FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY

The concept of the Feminization of Poverty describes the phenomenon that women and girls represent a disproportionate percentage of the world's poor - according to the United Nations (“UN”) women are the majority of the 1.5 billion people living on the equivalent of \$1 USD a day or less. Women everywhere are fighting to claim their right to health care, housing, work, education, and reproductive freedoms. They are fighting to escape violence, poverty, and discrimination. They are fighting to create a better world for the young women coming after them. The Cuban Revolution was more than a regime change for economic or political reorganization; for over 50 years Cuba has been committed to establishing a fundamental shift in the relationship between human beings such that its society realizes full gender equality. It has promoted the protection and expansion of the rights and opportunities of women and girls through its constitution, legislation, and labor and community efforts. However, in Cuba, as in the rest of the world, there is much work that remains to be done in this area.

CUBA IS MORE THAN HAVANA

Many people travel to Cuba and only visit Havana. They leave believing that the Havana experience is representative of the entire island. It is not. Cuba is divided into 15 Provinces and one special Municipality not included in any Province, the special Municipality *Isla de la Juventud* (“Island of the Youth”). Havana is one of the 15 Provinces and it is divided into 15 Municipalities, which are further subdivided into 105 Neighborhoods. For a well-balanced experience, it is necessary to travel outside of the City of Havana to visit the countryside, suburban communities, and other smaller cities.

You will be inspired by the warm and inventive spirit of the Cuban people in this magical place where everything is ALIVE! Thank you for choosing to take this journey with **Diaspora**. You will not be disappointed.