The Roots of Cuban Salsa in Havana

Rumba, Mambo, Son, Cha Cha Cha plus Afro-Cuban, Salsa and live music with Ariel Rios Robert of Afro Fusion Dance and his local Cuban dance team.

Dates and Prices

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>28 December to 11 January</td>
<td>£2,500.00</td>
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Unique Features

Rumba, Mambo, Son, Cha Cha Cha plus Afro-Cuban, Salsa and live music with Ariel Rios Robert of Afro Fusion Dance and his local Cuban dance team.

We have recently re-vamped our Cuba programme to include some really unique elements exclusive to Club Dance Holidays. This post-Christmas holiday offers an exclusive opportunity to delve into the history and tradition of Afro-Cuban and popular Cuban dance with our favourite expert, Ariel Rios, and his local team. The holiday is suitable for dancers of all abilities and ages - from complete beginners to advanced - and the company of Ariel and a charismatic team of local dancers makes the holiday extra special. Not only do they dance with you in all the classes (a full eighteen hours), we pay for them to accompany the group to Havana's salsa clubs, ensuring some unforgettable nights out.

We stay in family-owned guest houses in Havana and Trinidad, to permit a real insight into the Cuban lifestyle and enjoy the hospitality of Ariel and his family and friends and we even include dinner at Ariel's mum's house on three nights! The casas we stay at in Havana are just 15-20 minutes' walk to Old Havana and Vedado. All dance classes are held in a private room near the Malecon.

There are lots of Cuba trips on the market but don't forget that with us you're in safe hands - we're fully ATOL bonded and our staff has a combined travel industry experience of over 50 years.

Your Holiday

What's Included

- A full dance syllabus with specialist workshops accompanied by live music (eighteen hours - see Classes and Workshops)
- A programme of nights out with Ariel and his team of Cuban dancers including dancers' drinks and club entry
- Unique itinerary elements including a Cuban house party, Afro Cuban dance performances and more
- Two evening meals
- Full hosting by Ariel and our team on the ground who are experts in Cuba
- Return direct flights with Virgin Atlantic Gatwick / Havana
- Meet and Greet upon arrival
- 10 nights' accommodation in a good quality family owned guest house in Havana
- 4 nights' accommodation in a good quality family owned guest house in Trinidad
- All land transfers and Two Beach and Night out trips
- A pick and choose itinerary including parties, soirees, restaurants, nights out dancing and sight seeing suggestions
- A pre-departure pack containing information on where to eat, where to party, tourist spots and attractions for independent sight-seeing
- Welcome party and drink

What previous Customers Have Said about this Holiday

"I feel a warning should be given to those looking at the holiday stating they will be very depressed by the end. I had such a good time a week later and I am still not over the fact I have had to return to cold England and work! Desperately want to return".

"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”.

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

Is this holiday for me?

If you love to have a good time and enjoy meeting new people in the setting of a fascinating, friendly country with year-round sunshine then yes!

Everyone should visit Cuba at least once and you haven’t danced until you’ve danced in Havana’s hot clubs. Ariel and his team of Cuban dancers animate your entire trip and we guarantee that once you visit Cuba with us you’ll be hooked. Our Cuba holidays are about so much more than just dance classes; along with our team we make sure you experience the REAL Cuba and immerse yourself in Havana’s rhythm, staying in the homes of our friends and enjoying nights out accompanied by our lively dancers.

Our Cuban dance holidays are suitable for ALL levels, from complete beginners to advanced dancers. Our expert teachers will ensure you get the most out of your classes and tailor their teaching to you.

We include genuine off-the-beaten track experiences and take you to exclusive band rehearsals, dance performances and even to the home of our Cuban friends for a salsa party. ALL of the costs of accompanying dancers are included in your holiday price so the only thing you have to worry about is your club entry and personal Cuba Libre fund!

Cuba is an adventure and with us you're in safe hands; unlike many salsa holiday operators we’re fully ATOL bonded with over 50 years' combined travel industry experience amongst our team, almost all of whom have visited Cuba multiple times.

Give us a call if you have any questions on salsa in Cuba - we'll be happy to talk about our favourite subject.

Your Destination, includes sightseeing

Havana, the first grand city built by Europeans in the New World, retains the grandeur and charm of a history that spans nearly 500 years. When New York was still a collection of huts Havana was a cosmopolitan city with palaces and squares, with a high society already famous for its dances.

Admire the famous Cathedral in Old Havana built in 1748. Visit the Palacio de los Capitanes Generales, the residence of the Spanish Captain General who ruled Cuba from 1791-1898 and 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, as seen on the label of Havana Club rum.

See 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".

Climate and weather

Weather: The Cuban climate is mild subtropical. East to west oriented the island 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:

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<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
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<td>April</td>
<td>19/29</td>
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Your Accommodation

Casa particular in Havana - Host Family* (Room only) (Included)

A wonderful way to experience the "real" Cuba, staying in the home of a Cuban family. We use Cuban homes in convenient locations and of a good standard and we highly recommend this option to really immerse yourself in daily Cuban life. All "Casas" have clean and comfortable double accommodation with private facilities.

Classes and Workshops

Classes and Teachers: Over the course of your holiday you will receive eighteen hours of tuition directed by Ariel and his 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.

Dance Levels: There will be at least two levels of 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.

Beginners will learn enough moves to enjoy themselves dancing with the Cubans in local nightclubs. Intermediate and Advanced dancers will receive expert tuition on movement and technique designed to improve their style and will come home with some great new moves and loads of fluid Cuban style. The classes will take place in a private dance space.

Music: All of the classes and workshops are accompanied by live music, a unique feature of our Roots of Cuban Salsa holiday.

Syllabus: This holiday inevitably includes some salsa, as the clubs in Havana are known predominantly for this. But the real aim is to go beyond the surface and explore the culture and rhythms behind popular Cuban dance and Afro Cuban dance. Classes will include:

Popular Cuban Dance:
- Rumba, Bailes de la Chancleta, Congas y Comparsas, Son, Bailes Campesinos, Danzon, Cha cha cha, Mambo, Guaracha, Mozambique, Pilon

Afro-Cuban Dance:
- Elegua, Oshosi, Ogun, Oshun, Yemaya, Oya, Shango, Obatala, Babalu Aye, Palo Monte, Arara

The classes and workshops aim to share the passion, depth of culture and variety that exists within Cuban dance.

Popular Cuban Dance

**Mambo:** Created in 1938 by the "Maestro" Orestes Lopez with the “thumArcano y sus Maravillas"orchestra as a “Danzon Mambo”. After that Mambo was created definitively by Damaso Perez Prado. In 1947 he made it popular in Mexico accompanied by Jazz Bang, giving it a new rhythm. This Dance was created in the Cabarets, where the women dancers wore cabaret dresses that when moving the hips produce a sensual and sexy movement, and men follow them moving their pelvis. Everybody danced this musical folk dance.

**Cha Cha Cha:** Created in 1951 by the "Maestro "Enrique Jorin with the "American Orchestra”. This music style was very popular in the fifties, and remains so today. It is particularly useful to improve fluency in women dancers. It is a partner dance that contains several figures and turnings to embellish the dance. Famous musical numbers are; “La Englinadura”, El Alardoso “ and “Olga La Tamalera".
**Son:** Son comes from the mountainous regions of Cuba, from the rural areas. Son arrived in Habana City in the 1920's, due to the internal migration of sugar cane workers. It is an original dance that devirves it's from folk music. In the Eastern most part of Cuban Son was known as “Changui2, and in “Isla de la Juventud “it was called “Sucusucu” and in Habana “Son Habana”. Son increased in popularity greatly between 1920 and 1940 having a great effect upon all of the popular Cuban dances.

**Rumba:** A Spanish work which Cuban ancestors choose to name to their interpretations though rudimentary instruments and songs. This type of dance has three forms, “Yambu”, “Guaguancó” and “Colombian”. A pair dance were the woman and man represent theatrically different occurrences from their everyday lives.
With “Yambu” and “Guaguancó” the rhythm is slightly faster as are the movements. It is characterised by the actions the man carries out towards the woman, known as “Vacunao”, a movement the man carries out towards the pelvis of the woman. “Columbia” which is only danced by men, demonstrates all the virtues of the dancers: agility, capability and skill in carrying out all movements.

**Casino (Cuban Salsa):** This dance came about in Cuba at the end of the 1950's. It was only danced by white people who lived in the east of Habana City. This style of dance was carried out in Casinos, thus it's name. Over the years it has undergone different changes, it has elements of Rock and Roll, Cha-cha-cha, mambo, son and other rhythms created in Cuba. It is really a combination of all the Cuban Popular Dances.

**Afro-Cuban:** Most of the dances are from the Afro-Cuban religion of Santeria These dances originate from Yoruba traditions imported by enslaved Africans into Cuba . These slaves were controlled by the Spanish and were forced to speak Spanish and convert to Christianity. In order to preserve their native religious traditions, the slaves gave their African deities the names of Christian saints and thus continued to worship them. This religion is known as Santeria, and under disguise, many religious rituals, dances and musical traditions from Africa were preserved. Santeria is still practised in Cuba today.

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**The Learning Experience**

This holiday goes beyond learning Cuban salsa and aims to uncover the traditions and culture behind traditional Cuban dance including Rumba, Mambo, Cha Cha Cha, Son, and Afro-Cuban. Over the course of your holiday you will receive over fifteen hours of tuition from Ariel and our team of professional dancers. This will include specialist workshops which will be complemented by evening and afternoon activities so that you not only learn new skills, you understand the origin and meaning surrounding the music and dance.

There will be at least two levels of 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.

Beginners will learn enough moves to enjoy themselves dancing with the Cubans in local nightclubs. Intermediate and Advanced dancers will receive expert tuition on movement and technique designed to improve their style and will come home with some great new moves and loads of fluid Cuban style. The salsa classes will take place in our own private dance space in Havana.

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**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.

Note that club entry and drinks on nights out are payable locally.

**DAY 1**

Arrival and transfer to your Casa Particular (private house or guest house) for a six-night stay.

Evening - Welcome meeting at Ariel's mum’s house with drink (Mojito or a Cuba Libre), before a group dinner and salsa night in Havana's clubs out with your teachers. Jet lag permitting!

**DAY 2**

Breakfast in your Casa (payable locally)

1100 - 1300 Overview of the week and 2 hours of Cuban Traditional Dance classes at Amanecer (local dance centre). Afro-cuban and Son plus live music

Afternoon – City tour by classic American car (Subject to schedule. Approx 10 cuc)

Lunch in a typical Cuban restaurant in Old Havana (OP)

Matinee at Casa de la Musica Miramar with live band “Habana de Primera”

Evening - Salsa the night away with your teachers
DAY 3 (New Year's Eve)
Breakfast in your Casa (payable locally)
1100 – 1400 Cuban Traditional Dance classes at Amanecer.
Afternoon and evening - Salsa your way through the afternoon and evening at Havana's hottest matinee salsa club.
New Year's Eve Party at Miriam’s house (Ariel's mum). Enjoy a traditional Cuban house party with food and drink flowing.
Optional: Live music at Casa de la Musica Habana

DAY 4
Breakfast in your Casa (payable locally)
Free morning
Afternoon – Matinee at Casa de la Musica Habana.
Evening - Group Dinner
Salsa the night away with your teachers

DAY 5
Breakfast in your Casa (payable locally)
1100 – 1400 Cuban Traditional Dance classes at Amanecer. Cuban Salsa and Rueda de Casino incorporating different Cuban styles.
Afternoon - Attend a Cuban Band rehearsal and head to the beaches on the outskirts of Havana for a beach party.
Evening - Salsa dancing with your teachers.

DAY 6
Breakfast in your Casa (payable locally)
1100 – 1400 Cuban Traditional Dance classes at Amanecer.
Afternoon - Rumba Matinee at Palenke (Cuba’s National Folklore Centre)
Evening - Group Dinner, relax and later get ready to hit the salsa clubs for all night dancing.

DAY 7
Breakfast in your Casa (payable locally)
Depart by coach to Trinidad for a 3-night stay.
Check in to your Casa Particular(B & B).
Afternoon - Free time to chill on the beach and explore Trinidad
Evening - Salsa the night away with the our local dancers.

DAY 8
Breakfast in your Casa (payable locally)
1100 - 1300 Traditional Trinidad Dance Classes
City Tour
Group lunch (OP)
Afternoon - Beach Party
Evening - Night out with Ariel's team and local friends at “Casa de la Musica Trinidad”.

DAY 9
Free morning
Optional excursion into the Trinidad Nature Reserve where you will discover the natural beauty of the surrounding Sierra del Escambray mountains, flora and fauna.
Evening - Farewell to Trinidad with an evening at Casa de La Musica.

DAY 10
Breakfast in your Casa (payable locally)
Return to Havana
Check into your Casa and enjoy a free afternoon
Evening - Salsa night out

DAY 11
Breakfast in your Casa (payable locally)
1100 – 1400 Cuban Traditional Dance classes at Amanecer.
Afternoon - Visit a Professional Dance Company and watch them rehearse.
Evening - Salsa dancing with your teachers in yet another fantastic club.

DAY 12
Breakfast in your Casa (payable locally)
Optional excursion to Pinar del Rio and the Vinales Valley (Subject to schedule) OR beach trip
Evening - Salsa the night away with your teachers

DAY 13
Breakfast in your Casa (payable locally)
1100 – 1400 Cuban Traditional Dance classes at Amanecer.
Afternoon - Browse Old Havana's new covered market with its huge art collection and gift stalls.
Evening - Salsa night out at one of Havana's best clubs, for the dance die-hards.

**DAY 14**
Breakfast in your Casa (payable locally)
Free morning
Explore Old Havana followed by an afternoon visit the Museo del Ron (Rum Museum).
Evening - Farewell salsa night out at one of Havana's best clubs, "1830", with live salsa band.

**DAY 15**
Breakfast in your Casa (payable locally)
Free morning
Lunch at "El Guarachero Restaurant“ before transferring to the airport for the return flight.

**DAY 16**
Arrive in the UK

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**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, Afro-Cuban, 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 carefree. The latest dance craze is ‘Tembleke’ which is a rapid, sassy body movement involving the shoulders, chest, torso and hips danced solo at your partner.

Clubs and venues in Havana: Using the inside information from Ariel and the Cuban teaching team, we will take you to the most happening venues. These may include concerts of world famous bands (such as Los Van Van), exclusive performances by some of our famous Cuban friends, a real Cuban house party, dancing by the sea just across from the Malecon, a Salsa Matinee (hot salsa and lots of Rueda between 4.30pm and 10pm! - the Cubans come here after work), traditional 'Casas de las Trovas' where you can dance on the balcony and hot late night venues (from 2.30am onwards) where you will find the DJ's mixing Salsa with Hip Hop and rap. We pay for our dance team to accompany you to ensure you have a night to remember.

Club entry prices range from 3 to 20 CUC:

- Casa de la Musica, 10 to 20 CUC
- Hotel Florida 5 CUC (Includes 2 cocktails)
- Club 1820 3 CUC
- La Gruta 5 CUC

Drinks at clubs vary in price depending on which club you go to and the time of day you attend. For example, Casa De La Musica bar prices are cheaper at Matinee shows and more expensive in the evening.

Average club drink prices

- Cocktails 3 - 4 CUC
- Soft drinks and beer 1 - 3 CUC
- Bottle of rum 12 - 20 CUC

Evening meals

- Budget restaurant 8 - 12 CUC
- More upmarket restaurant 12 - 20 CUC

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Your Teachers

In Havana you will be taught by a team of professional Cuban instructors headed by Ariel Rios Robert of Afro Fusion dance.

Native to Cuba, Ariel has 20 years of teaching and dancing experience, from workshops to theatrical performances, including choreography, costume and dance. He has toured the world dancing and teaching foreign & British students all aspects of Cuban Dance, Latin American dance as well as contemporary dance.
Ariel has had the privilege to share the stage with some of the best internationally recognised artists. He has performed and choreographed at some of the best theatres in Havana, Cuba and have toured the UK theatre circuit with the Nitro Theatre Company.

Seven years teaching in the UK has added further to his communication skills. Having taught all ages from 5 to 80 years old, he thrives on developing people to achieve their maximum potential.

Ariel's passion is to inspire, educate and motivate through dance culture. He loves to mix Afro-Cuban, Latin American and European dances, creating exciting new contemporary styles.

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
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.

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<th>Optional Extras</th>
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<tr>
<th>Option 1 - Included</th>
<th>Casa particular in Havana - Host Family* Room only - (28/12/2015 to 03/01/2016 - 6 nights)</th>
<th>Option 2</th>
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<td>Double Room (Per Room)</td>
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<td>Casa particular in Trinidad - Host Family* Room only - (03/01/2016 to 07/01/2016 - 4 nights)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single Room (Per Room)</td>
<td>66.00 GBP</td>
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<td>Extra Nights</td>
<td>Casa particular in Havana - Host Family* Room only - (07/01/2016 to 11/01/2016 - 4 nights)</td>
<td>Extra Nights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Double Room (Per Room)</td>
<td>50 GBP per night</td>
<td>Single Room (Per Room)</td>
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<td>Single Room (Per Room)</td>
<td>25 GBP per night</td>
<td>Twin / Double (Per Room)</td>
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Extra Nights

Double Room (Per Room) | Included |
Single Room (Per Room) | 44.00 GBP |
Single Room (Per Room) 25 GBP per night

**Flights and Transfers**

**Flights:** We include direct flights from London Gatwick to Havana Jose Marti airport. Virgin Atlantic permit 23 kilos of luggage plus one piece of hand luggage per person.

If you wish to book your own flights to Cuba we are happy to offer you a flight-exclusive price. If your flight coincides with our airport transfers we can reserve you a place. Please ensure you advise us of your flight times.

**Transfers:** We include meet and greet and an airport transfer for everyone arriving on our standard flight. If you are arriving on a different day or at a different time we can book you a private transfer; please enquire at the time of booking.

**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 Havana is approximately 20 km (12 miles).

There are no public buses that pass by the airport en route to Havana, so you must either take a personal taxi or tourist bus. Taxis charge approximately 30 CUC, and the tourist bus charges approximately 15 CUC. Journey time: approx 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 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. Tipping at the end of the holiday is at your discretion.

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

**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:


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. We have translated these approximate prices into GBP to help with your budgeting. Please refer to the optional extra section of the fact sheet for the prices of the optional extras:

Drinks at Clubs vary in price depending on which club you go to and the time of day you attend. For example, Casa De La Musica bar prices are cheaper at Matinee shows and more expensive in the evening.

Average club drink prices

- Cocktails 3 - 4 CUCs
- Soft drinks and beer 1 - 3 CUCs
- Bottle of rum 12 - 20 CUCs

Evening meals

- Budget restaurant 8 - 12 CUC
- More upmarket restaurant 12 - 20 CUC

Tipping per day 3 - 4 CUCs

Airport tax on leaving Cuba 25 CUC

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 it's 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!
- Imodium 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

Universal socket adaptors (2 pin flat or round 110V-220V)
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 tshirts.

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 it's a good idea to bring a wrist/ankle purse or a purse that clips on to your trousers/skirt.

At Your Destination

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.