

PACKING LIST

The packing guide outlined below is meant to help you plan, prepare and outfit yourself for your upcoming travels. We have provided our best recommendations and suggestions, but we want to be clear: it is only a guide. Our recommendations are based on the itinerary, our knowledge of Cuba, and our personal experiences. However, each traveler will have his or her own preferences and favorite travel items. We hope you find this resource helpful – minimize as much as you feel comfortable within these guidelines, and feel free to amend it with your favorite travel items too!

General: for use during hiking excursions, we recommend packing clothes that are made from synthetic materials, not cotton. Synthetics are ideal for hiking and touring in warmer climates (you can typically expect daytime highs of 75-80 deg F in Cuba, with varying humidity) as they wick away moisture and dry quickly. There will be opportunities to snorkel during this tour, we highly recommend you bring your own snorkel gear, at least your mask and snorkel (it could be available for rent in the bay of Pigs, the price is around 10 USD, but in Cuba nothing is for sure) Wetsuits most likely will not be necessary, as the water in the Caribbean is quite warm year-round.

Luggage Recommendations:

We think it is wise to avoid checking any luggage. We highly recommend NOT checking bags to Havana. The airport is often very busy, with multiple flights coming in at once and limited baggage carousels in some terminals. Some of our guests have waited up to 2 hours for their checked bags, which can adversely impact your Day 1 schedule, not to mention test your own patience. One thing that still might make carrying on all luggage difficult: the standard TSA limitations on liquids and gels. As many of these items are not so readily available in Cuba, if you need larger volumes of any such items, one idea is to purchase them at the your departure airport after you pass through security. If you check bags, be sure to carry everything that is either essential or would be hard to replace in your day pack/carry-on bag (medications, travel documents, important personal items/essentials).

Whether you are carrying on your luggage or checking a bag, we recommend bringing TWO bags on this tour:

1. One roll-on suitcase or duffel/backpack – This will serve as your main piece of luggage during your tour. If you are planning to carry this bag on your flight(s), the total dimensions should meet standard carry-on size of 45 inches or less (22 x 14 x 9 in.). During your tour in Cuba, we will transport this bag for you between Casas Particulares (Cuban bed and breakfast) each day, and you will have access to it each evening when we check into our accommodations. *Also, depending on your shopping plans, you may consider packing an extra soft-sided compressible duffel inside your main luggage – to use for anticipated souvenir purchases in Cuba or extra space on your return flight.

2. Hiking/hydration daypack – this dual-purposed pack can serve as your personal item during your flights, as well as your daypack each day during your tour. A hydration pack with a removable hydration bladder (1.5 – 2 liters should be adequate) will allow you to carry a larger amount of water vs. a water bottle, and will minimize your need to refill. Common brands of hydration packs include Camelbak, Osprey, and Salomon, although several others are available. Ultimately, the choice of daypack and size is your own; however we find that smaller packs generally make for a more enjoyable trip. However, consider the items you'll want to have with you during walks/hikes and daily tour activities (camera, clothing layers, sunscreen, water bottle, hat, etc.) as well as how easily accessible and organized your pack allows those items to be.

Essentials:

- Passport – valid for at least the duration of your trip
- Cuba Travel Documents: 1) Cuba Tourist card; 2) Flight tickets/confirmation; 3) Certification of Travel to Cuba (The Certification of Travel to Cuba will be provided to ALL Cuba Unbound guests)
- A photocopy of your passport, inside a ziplock bag and stowed elsewhere in your luggage (as an additional precautionary measure, consider leaving a photocopy with family or friends at home as well)

- Copy of your air tickets with ticket numbers, placed elsewhere in your luggage.
- Adequate cash for the length of your trip (*plan to exclusively use cash for all purchases and gratuities)
- Watch or small travel clock with alarm (if you are taking a phone for use as a camera, this can serve as your alarm clock as well)
- Money belt or concealed passport carrier to carry your passport, travel documents and money, hidden under your clothing
- TSA-accessible lock for luggage security when not on your person (optional- can buy these at any travel or outdoor store)

Hiking Clothes (again, we recommend that only synthetic or quick-dry materials be worn during hiking excursions):

- One pair sturdy hiking/trail shoes (*Make sure to wear them several times prior to your trip – broken in well-fitting shoes are critical)
- Three –four pairs light synthetic or merino-wool socks (consider best fit with your choice of hiking shoe)
- One pair long, lightweight, nylon hiking pants with zipper pockets (Zip off legs give you more options)
- One - two pair hiking shorts
- Swimsuit
- One quick-dry sport dress (optional for easy over the swimsuit/hiking)
- Sarong (optional but very handy for changing clothes, laying on the ground, etc.)
- Three – four short sleeve button-up shirt(s) or t-shirt(s) (synthetic is best)
- One long sleeve shirt for sun protection (You can buy tight-weave nylon shirts with SPF protection made by companies such as Columbia, Patagonia, Exofficio or REI etc. Sun protection is essential)
- Hat – wide-brimmed hats are great in Cuba for sun protection (nylon variety is ideal, as it packs well.)
- One lightweight raincoat (a windbreaker that has some waterproof qualities will work as well)
- One bandana or Buff for sun protection & cooling off (optional)
- One pair sandals with ankle straps to wear while walking on the beaches, around town, etc. (Chaco, Keens or Tevas are preferred but there are many other brands that are suitable)

Casual Clothing (in general, clothing in Cuba should be informal):

- Two – three other comfortable pairs of pants/shorts/dresses (lightweight dresses pack small and make great travel options for women)
- One – two short or long sleeve and/or button up shirt(s) for town
- One – two t-shirt(s) or tank top(s)

- One light-weight packable fleece, vest, or sweater, or light jacket for warmth in the evenings and mornings (optional for spring tours)
- One pair light-weight pajamas
- Underwear (Consider total # of days on the trip and pack accordingly)
- Three pair light nylon or cotton socks
- One pair casual shoes for evening outings (optional)

Gear and Other Essentials:

- Hiking poles (optional – most airlines will require these in checked luggage)
- Daypack per above
- Snorkeling gear: snorkel, mask, & fins (fins optional – consider packing space & weight)
- One water bottle, 1 liter or larger (A bottle that fits in a daypack pocket or clips to the outside is ideal)
- Quick-drying camping towel (ideally packs down well and fits in your daypack- you can get them at most outdoor stores)
- Camera/film/batteries/battery charger
- Universal electrical plug adapter (most outlets in Cuba will match U.S. outlets and plug types, but in some locations, other types may be present)
- Binoculars (Optional but nice for bird and wildlife watching)
- Sunglasses, polarized are highly recommended for sun protection and enhanced clarity
- Retaining strap for glasses and sunglasses (Chums, Croakies or similar item)
- Extra pair of sunglasses and glasses/contacts
- Three to four kitchen garbage can liners – for wet clothes, dirty laundry, soiled shoes, etc.
- A few quart-size or 1-gallon ziplock bags for packing sunscreens, lotions or anything that might make a mess
- Book(s) or E-reader, pen and note pad, pocket Spanish-English dictionary, deck of playing cards or other games, etc.
- iPod/small portable music player with headphones
- Inflatable travel pillow/nightshade/earplugs (optional, and should pack down very small)
- Headlamp or small LED flashlight
- Electrolyte tablets/mix, Hammer Gels, Clif bars/blocks, etc. for fuel replenishment while hiking (hard to impossible to find in Cuba)

- Additional before & after-activity snacks (Optional – granola bars, candy bars, etc. Fruits, seeds, and veggies are not permissible)

Toilet Kit/First Aid (most, if not all, of the products listed below are nearly impossible to find in Cuba – please plan accordingly. *Also, liquids/gels in carry-on luggage must be under 3.38 oz/100ml (another reason that checking bags may be necessary):

- Standard toiletry kit including general hygiene products, toothbrush/toothpaste, etc.
- Sunscreen – at least 30 SPF recommended
- Lip balm with SPF 15-30
- Pre-moistened towelette packets or disposable shower wipes to refresh
- Personal medicines/prescriptions (Dramamine-motion sickness, Benadryl -allergic reactions, Advil or Aspirin, etc.). Make sure that any prescription drugs include your doctor's/pharmacist's identification label on the outside of the container.
- Insect repellent- we recommend repellent with DEET or Picaridin Insect Repellent (Picaridin is less toxic and less harsh on gear/clothing than DEET. Here is one example of a Picaridin-based repellent: sawyer.com/products/picaridin-insect-repellent/)
- Anti-itch medication and/or topical cream (e.g. Benadryl)
- Heavy duty skin lotion for dry, sun-baked and salted skin
- 3 Small squeeze bottle of hand-sanitizer gel
- Shampoo and body wash (one small travel flask of each - these items can also be scarce in Cuba and casas particulares will not always provide them)
- One roll (or partial roll) of toilet paper (TRUST ME ON THIS ONE)
- Feminine hygiene products