Havana, Cuba Student Handbook
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Mission Statement

The mission of Spanish Studies Abroad (The Center for Cross-Cultural Study or Spanish Studies Abroad) is to promote in-depth understanding of Spanish-speaking countries for our students, through specifically designed academically rigorous university-level and cultural travel programs. We consider all of our students to be willing to cross cultural boundaries, to live as members of another culture, and to thus learn about others as they learn about themselves.

In accordance with our mission, Spanish Studies Abroad promotes equal opportunities within our programs and does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, age, physical ability, gender, sexual orientation, or other characteristics. We believe in educating students on cultural tolerance and sensitivity, acceptance of differences and inclusiveness.

Getting Ready to Go to Havana

We are sure you are excited about your experience abroad, but before you depart, there are a few things you need to take care of. Please read carefully!

ONLINE ACCOUNT
All students studying with Spanish Studies Abroad have an online account. If you applied with an online application, you did so through your online account. If you applied via paper application, an account was created for you. Please use your online account to complete important pre-departure tasks. To access your account, go to www.spanishstudies.org and click the “Login” link at the top of the page. You will then be prompted to enter your username and password. If you have forgotten your password, you may request a new one on the login page.

ITEMS YOU MUST SEND TO THE U.S. OFFICE OF SPANISH STUDIES ABROAD
In order to finalize your acceptance in a Spanish Studies program, you must submit the following items via your SpanishStudies.org account as soon as possible. All pre-departure items will be due within two weeks of the application deadline.

- Passport Information and Copy
- Course Selection & Digital Photo
- Housing Questionnaire
- Spanish Studies Health Form
- Academic Pledge and Program Conditions & Release Statements
- Transfer of Credit and Transcripts Form
- Program Deposit (due within 10 days of acceptance)
- Arrival Information
- Speaking Partners Form
INCOME TAXES

U.S. residents who are abroad during the spring semester will need to make arrangements for filing federal and state income taxes. Individuals who are temporarily living abroad can request an extension on the deadline for filing their federal income tax return. This extension is generally until June 15. Please note that if money is owed to the government and an extension is filed, interest will be charged on the amount, if it is not received by April 15. For more information on federal income tax laws and regulations, please consult the IRS official web page [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) or call (800) 829-1040. Individuals should contact their state government for regulations information on extending state taxes.

POWER OF ATTORNEY

If your signature will be needed for any official or legal document while in Cuba, you should make the necessary arrangements for a “power of attorney” to be held by parents, guardians, or another appropriate person to act on your behalf. This can be done by writing out in detail the specific duties that this person will have, (i.e. signing a check; corresponding with the school or university about financial or academic matters; or obtaining medical records and information, in case of an emergency). This letter should then be notarized so that it is legal and official. Public notaries are available at many banks, post offices, public libraries, and town halls.

ABSENTEE VOTING

Voting is a privilege and right for all U.S. citizens. If you are abroad during an election, Spanish Studies Abroad urges you to take advantage of this right by voting via absentee ballot. You should apply to do this before you leave home. U.S. citizens can get more information, as well as the forms needed to apply for the absentee ballot, by visiting the Federal Voting Assistance Program website at [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov) or by calling your local city clerk’s office.

FACEBOOK FAN PAGES

While you may have already joined the Spanish Studies Abroad Facebook fan page, students should also plan to join the location-specific page for Spanish Studies Havana by following the link in your acceptance packet. This page is for alumni, current students, and prospective students, so it will be a great resource to you as you begin to prepare for your program and meet fellow Havana students. This will help Spanish Studies students to meet their Speaking Partners before the beginning of the program. For all program-related questions for Spanish Studies staff, please email info@spanishstudies.org.

We also have a Cuba Community page on Google Plus. This is an excellent resource for information, music videos and conversations about Cuba.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Spanish Studies holds students to the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating. Any student who acts dishonestly will face disciplinary sanctions, which may range from a failing grade on the assignment to dismissal from the program. Acts of academic dishonesty may be reported to the student’s home campus.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS AND STAFF

Participating Students

A limited number of students will be participating in this program with you. All participants are degree-seeking students from colleges and universities located throughout the United States.

SPANISH STUDIES ABROAD Staff

The Resident Director, Tom Millington, will meet you in Cuba and be present throughout the program until its completion.

Preparation For Departure

PASSPORT

Your passport must be valid for six months after your return from Cuba. Once you have verified that your passport is valid and
in order, make three color photocopies of it. The copies of your passport are important for two reasons: first, as a back-up in case your passport is lost or stolen (keep a copy separate from your passport), and second, as your daily identification. You should keep the passport itself in a secure place, such as the hotel safe, and carry only the photocopy as identification. We recommend that you leave one copy of your passport with your parents or a friend in the U.S.

**FLIGHT TO HAVANA**

You will be responsible for purchasing your own flight to Havana, Cuba. We recommend you use a U.S.-based charter company like Marazul. Included in your acceptance letter is an authorization letter which you will provide to the charter company. After you purchase your flight, be sure to update your arrival information in your online student account.

On the flight to Havana and in the José Martí Airport in Havana, tell yourself to relax. Get into the rhythm of life in Cuba. Things have purpose in Cuba but rarely is there any rush.

**STUDENT VISAS**

Travel to Cuba and participation in our program is conducted under the auspices of License CT-18109-1 issued by the Office of Foreign Assets Control, Department of the Treasury. All students are responsible for obtaining their student visa directly through the Cuban Interest Section (CIS) in Washington, DC. Instructions on how to obtain your visa will be provided in your acceptance letter. The document you will need in order to enter Cuba is your student visa, issued by the Cuban government. **You must be available to receive your student visa before the start of the program.** If you will not be at your home address during the time when your student visa will be mailed, you must make alternate arrangements to receive it.

Spanish Studies Abroad’s license authorizes you to travel to and in Cuba for the duration of the academic program you are attending. Travel in Cuba before or after the program is illegal according to U.S. laws. Spanish Studies Abroad does not condone and is not responsible for any student who chooses to travel or stay in Cuba outside the program dates. You MAY NOT travel outside of Cuba during your time in the country.

**IMPORTANT**: When you arrive in Cuba, the immigration officer will stamp your visa with the date of your entry into Cuba. Keep the visa stub with your passport since you will have to present it when leaving the country.

Make sure you do not lose your student visa. You will need it the first few days you are in Cuba to confirm your immigration status in the country, and apply for a university identification card.

**PACKING**

This is the most up-to-date information we have on luggage weight limits:

As of 2013 there is no longer a weight limit on accompanied baggage. However, this may or may not be honored by the group flight carrier at this time; you must always read the information accompanying your airline ticket for current updates and changes to regulations relating to baggage and excess fees. Airlines may charge up to $1-$2 per pound for baggage over 44lbs.

**WHAT TO TAKE:**

- [ ] Visa issued to you by Cuban Government
- [ ] Copy of our U.S. Government License
- [ ] Copy of Authorization Letter
- [ ] A suitcase with a good lock
- [ ] Water filtering pitcher (see info sheet)
- [ ] School backpack
- [ ] This Student Handbook
- [ ] Course syllabi
- [ ] All required course readings
- [ ] A Spanish-English dictionary
- [ ] Plain paper and notebooks
- [ ] White out, tape, pens, pencils, highlighter
- [ ] Battery-powered alarm clock
- [ ] Casual clothes
- [ ] 1-2 dressy or semi-dressy outfits
- [ ] Enough underwear for a week
- [ ] Comfortable walking shoes
- [ ] Hat, bathing suit, sun screen
- [ ] 1 beach towel
- [ ] 2-3 memory sticks
- [ ] *Medicines, first aid kit, vitamins*
Suggested Items:

- Camera, extra memory card
- Sneakers or running shoes
- Washcloth, nail brush & clippers
- Shampoo, cosmetics
- An umbrella or rain poncho
- Earplugs
- Flashlight
- Bug spray
- Snacks (granola or power bars, nuts, etc.)
- A few zip-lock bags
- Pocket Kleenex
- Handi-pack toilet paper for public restrooms
- Lap-top computer/ printer
- Water bottle
- Pictures of family and friends
- Cuba Handbook (Moon)

*Medicines: Take a sufficient supply of any prescription or other medicine you use for your entire stay in Cuba. You should pack a small, personal first-aid kit which includes: medication for upset stomach, diarrhea, headaches; also include rubbing alcohol, Band-Aids, antibiotic ointment, antihistamines, anti-itch medication, sunblock, etc.

Remember: Over the counter products we take for granted, such as contact lens supplies and tampons, are not generally available in Cuba. Please take such necessary items with you. Favorite brands of personal care items such as deodorant and shampoo are not likely to be available either, although acceptable substitutes can sometimes be found. You should take any items of this type that you cannot do without. You may want to bring along some toilet paper handi packs for when you go out. (Toilet paper will be provided in student residence)

 Courtesy Gifts: Even basic supplies are rationed and always in short supply. You might want to donate pencils to a school or offer soaps to a clinic or family. You will doubtless make Cuban friends or be invited to homes. In such instances, any of the following will always be appreciated: Pocket Spanish-English dictionaries, books in English or Spanish (non-political & non-religiously proselytizing, please), notebooks, pencils and pens, CD’s, mix tapes, over-the-counter medicine, vitamins, toys, fancy soaps, shampoos, cosmetics, baseball caps, T-shirts, sunglasses, reading glasses and used clothing and shoes.

 Course Readings and Syllabi: You will receive a packet of readings for the Cultural Realities of Cuba course that you will take. The instructor will make frequent references to text in the packet so make sure you complete the reading assignments before class.

The syllabus for your course in Cuba may be sent to you in one of the mailings you receive. Otherwise, you will be provided with a syllabus when you arrive in Havana. Course syllabi are not as readily available in Cuba as they are in the US so it might be difficult to obtain a copy.

What not to take:

- Books and pamphlets that preach a political or religious creed, other than for your personal use
- More than you will need for your stay in Cuba
- Expensive jewelry and other valuable belongings

Preliminary Reading

A great deal of reading material about Cuba is available. Some limited suggestions follow. We strongly urge you to read extensively prior to arriving in Cuba so that you will be prepared for the reality which awaits you. We suggest you read the newspapers carefully in the time before your trip so you are updated about current events in Cuba and U.S./Cuba relations. Be sure to check out our Cuba Google Community Group (https://plus.google.com/communities/105630562497580291456). Here are a few suggestions, including some books in Spanish to prepare you for all the reading you will be doing for class:

- Alan Ryan (editors) The Reader’s Companion to Cuba
- Tom Miller, Trading with the Enemy (a travel narrative)
- Pedro Pérez Sarduy and Jean Stubbs, Afro-Cuban Voices
- Louis Pérez, On Becoming Cuban
- Gabriel García Márquez, Cien años de soledad
- Manuel Puig, El beso de la mujer araña
- Rosario Ferre, Maldito amor y otros cuentos
- Ann Louis Bardach, Cuba Confidential
- Aviva Chomsky, The Cuba Reader
- Esteban Morales Domínguez, Race in Cuba
- Wendy Gimbel, Havana Dreams
- Graham Greene, Our Man in Havana
- Jonathan Kozol, Children of the Revolution
- Geraldine Lievesley, The Cuban Revolution: Past, Present and Future Perspectives
- William Luis, Culture and Customs of Cuba
- Mandy McDonald, Cuba—Culture Smart!
- Louis Pérez, Cuba: Between Reform & Revolution
- Yoani Sánchez, Havana Real
- Julia Sweig, Cuba: What We Need to Know
- Isadora Tattlin, Cuba Diaries: An American Housewife in Havana

MOVIES

- Comandante (2005), Directed by Oliver Stone
- Greener Grass (1999), Directed by Aaron Woolf
- Guantanamera (1997), Directed by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Juan Carlos Tabío
- Habanastation (2011), Directed by Ian Padrón
- Juan of the Dead (2012), Directed by Alejandro Brugués
- La muerte de un burócrata (1966), Directed by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea
- La ultima cena (1976), Directed by Tómas Gutiérrez Alea
- La vida es silbar (1998), Directed by Fernando Pérez
- Lista de espera (2000), Directed by Juan Carlos Tabío
- Lucía (1968), Directed by Humberto Solás
- Soy Cuba (1964), Directed by Mikhail Kalatozov
- Strawberry and Chocolate (1994), Directed by Tómas Gutiérrez Alea
- Suite Habana (2003), Directed by Fernando Pérez
- Viva Cuba (2005), Directed by Juan Carlos Cremata
- Voices from Mariel (2011), Directed by José García
- Una Noche (2013), Directed by Lucy Mulloy

MUSIC

- Pablo Milanés
- Silvio Rodríguez
- Polo Montoñez

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE IN CUBA

Be sure to arrive at the airport several hours early. You will be surprised how quickly lines will form. When you check in to receive your boarding pass, you will be asked to fill out a customs form and a document titled “Anexo 1” which is the Cuban Ministry of Public Health’s “Declaration of Health for Travelers.” It is written in English and Spanish and is straight-forward.
Once you present your documents at the desk (ticket, copy of the Spanish Studies Abroad Academic License for Cuba, etc.) you will pay $26 to check in your luggage (maybe more depending on how heavy your suitcase is). Once you have your boarding pass and your check-in luggage stickers, proceed to the gate. Enjoy your flight!

ONCE YOU ARRIVE IN CUBA

After you get off the plane you will go through Immigration. They will look at your passport and documents and take a picture of you. You will then go through security and go to the carousel to pick up your luggage. **Note: sometimes luggage retrieval can be slow and can take up to one-and-one-half hours to pick up your suitcase.** Please be patient. You will see that what Cuba offers more than compensates for this minor inconvenience.

Orientation

Prior to the start of your studies at the University of Havana, Spanish Studies Abroad will lead you through an important orientation to help you adapt to your new home. Topics will include an overview of the city including a tour, health and safety, customs, social interactions, behavior policies for the casa particular where you will be staying, and university course work.

It is also during this time that we will work to arrange your immigration papers and begin the process to obtain your Cuban identity card, so you must not miss the orientation. **IT IS REQUIRED.** Since you will be studying in Cuba for the semester you will have to fill out some paperwork that will need to be submitted to immigration. Spanish Studies Abroad will help you with this.

HEALTH INSURANCE

**For Summer Term Students:**
Please note that 30 days of health insurance is required as part of your flight purchase, and thus your health insurance for the program will be provided by your flight provider. Marazul Charters offers flights with health insurance through Asistur. You may wish to purchase your flight through another provider, in which case you must confirm the inclusion of health insurance. Health insurance benefits summaries are provided by the charter companies. Please make sure that you have all the necessary health insurance documentation with you when you depart for Havana.

**For Semester Students:**
Please note that 30 days of health insurance is required as part of your flight purchase. Thus, for the initial 30 days of your program, your health insurance will be provided by your flight provider. After the 30 days, your health insurance will be provided through Spanish Studies Abroad, and the plan will be Asistur. A description of benefits is included in your online Acceptance Packet.

Be aware that if you require treatment for any preexisting condition, you will be required to pay for such medical services in **cash** and then file a claim for reimbursement by your insurance company when you return home.

HOSPITALS

Sira Garcia Hospital for Foreigners
Calle 18 #4304
Tel. 204-0330 and 2811-1828

Hospitals near the university:

Calipto García
Sala Borges (non emergencies)
Practical Information

MONEY

The best way to take money to Cuba is in cash. We recommend including some smaller bills such as $1’s, $5’s, $10’s and $20’s for initial expenses as larger bills are sometimes harder to break. Due to US policy, credit cards issued by U.S. banks CANNOT be used in Cuba. Banks cannot transfer funds from the U.S. to Cuba. Travelers checks, including American Express travelers checks, can be used for payment in Cuban hotels, and can be cashed at banks including Banco Financiero Internacional, CADECA, Banco Metropolitano and Banco Popular at a cost of 3-4% commission. Also, some non-U.S. traveler's checks such as Thomas Cook’s or Barclay’s can be cashed.

EXPENSES

Below you will find a detailed estimate, which explains how to budget for personal expenses and other costs not covered by your Spanish Studies Abroad program fees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Short-Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>$150</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus/Taxi transportation</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals-Lunches</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa Expense</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$4,400</td>
<td>$2,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The program recommends budgeting a minimum of $2,400, but perhaps up to $3,000 (US$) for the semester you are in Cuba. These figures are only estimates, and you are the best judge of your spending habits. Plan accordingly. While some restaurants are highly priced by U.S. standards, meals and snacks from street vendors are very cheap. For a few dollars you can buy small pizzas and cajitas – a filling meal of rice, beans, and meat with a little salad garnish boxed to go. Licensed paladares (family-run restaurants) can be expensive: for example, US$8 to $12 for a large, good lunch.

The United States Department of the Treasury limits licensed travelers to Cuba to a maximum of US$188 a day (as of May 1, 2013) for all expenditures. Persons authorized to travel to Cuba are NOT permitted to purchase merchandise in Cuba to be brought back to the U.S. You cannot buy cigars, liquor or handicrafts, for instance. The only exceptions are “informational materials” for your own use. These include books, periodicals, paintings, sculpture, records, tapes, C.D.s, films, video cassettes, photographs, posters, etchings, lithographs, serigraphs, microfilm, microfiche, and other informational materials.

EXCHANGE

United States dollars (US$), often called divisa, are the standard second currency of Cuba, and can be used at many stores, in all tourist taxis, in bars and restaurants, and privately for purchases and tips. Sometimes you may be given pesos convertibles as change for US$. You can use these convertible pesos in the same places and at the same value - that is, one-for-one - as the US$. If you have any pesos convertibles left over, you can exchange them at the airport in Havana for the same number of US$.

Cuban pesos, often called moneda nacional, are used for everyday purchases by the Cuban population and may be bought at exchange bureaus called “CADECA” (short for Casa De Cambio) currently at the rate of 1 Cuban peso to US$1. Moneda nacional is very useful for small purchases, such as produce at the farmers’ market and snacks from street vendors.
WESTERN UNION

It is possible to have money wired to Cuba through Western Union, but Spanish Studies Abroad encourages you to only use this option in case of an emergency. Foreigners are only allowed to receive $300 every four months and there is a significant charge for each transaction (approximately $30).

SECURITY OF MONEY AND VALUABLES

For carrying cash to Cuba, we recommend using a hidden money belt that can be worn invisibly under a shirt or pants. Usually, hidden money belts don’t need to be removed when going through airport security.

There will be a safe in your room at the Casa Vera for storing your passport, money, and plane tickets. While traveling or walking about the city, it is best to carry only a copy of your passport and leave your passport and other valuables in the hotel safe.

Additionally, we recommend taking a suitcase that has a strong lock for leaving things of some value in your room (camera, MP3 players, etc.). If you bring a laptop, you may want to get a cable lock for it as well. We also suggest that you take only a minimum of valuables, leaving at home most of your credit cards, ID or membership cards and other items that are hard to replace.

U.S. INTERESTS SECTION ASSISTANCE

U.S. Interests Section Assistance is available in Havana, at a limited level, at the United States Interests Section. Their hours are Monday – Thursday, 8:30 – 5:00 and Friday, 8:30 – 4:00.

United States Interests Section
On Calzada (nr. Malecón), between L and M
In the Vedado section
Telephone: 33-3551 or 33-3552 through 59

OFFICE IN HAVANA

Calle G, No. 155 (Bajos),
e/ Calzada y 9na, Vedado
Havana, Cuba
Tel. 53-7-832-5093

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Calling from the U.S.</th>
<th>Calling from Cuba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPANISH STUDIES ABROAD U.S.</td>
<td>1-413-256-0011</td>
<td>(119) 1-413-256-0011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFFICE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASA VERA</td>
<td>(537) 835-3991</td>
<td>(7) 835-3991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or (537) 832-8771</td>
<td>(7) 832-8771</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPANISH STUDIES ABROAD RESIDENT DIRECTOR in Havana</td>
<td>(537) 831-63-79</td>
<td>831-63-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. INTERESTS SECTION</td>
<td>011-537-33-3551 (through 59)</td>
<td>33-3551 (through 59)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EMERGENCY MEDICAL HELP

Medical attention is available at an excellent clinic for foreigners (Clinica Cira García, tel. 537-24-2811 through 14). You may also be treated at a number of other facilities throughout the city and of course in an emergency, you will be seen at the
closest possible clinic or hospital. Cuba's standards of medical science and practice are recognized as the highest in Latin America.

If you need to go to the clinic inform the resident director. He will accompany you in the case of an emergency or if you are unfamiliar with the procedures of the clinic.

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**Living In Havana**

**WEATHER AND DRESS**

Comfortable is the word that best describes the climate and dress in Cuba. June will be very hot (upper 80s and 90s) with high levels of humidity. Breezes blow in Havana throughout the year, especially along the waterfront Malecón, and the rainy season (May – October) tapers off as winter approaches. Always remember that the sun can be quite intense and come prepared for that probability.

Clothing is casual for going to classes at the university. Lightweight semi-dressy or dressy clothes are appropriate for an evening out at a special restaurant or a nightclub. Rain gear should be lightweight and comfortable to use in the hot weather.

**LODGING AND MEALS**

While in Havana, participants in our program will live in homestays. Your homestay assignments will be sent to you prior to your program start date.

It is important, to understand that the living conditions in a developing country are neither luxurious nor fully functioning. Therefore be prepared for minor inconveniences such as occasional cold showers or low water pressure, a noisy air-conditioning unit or a malfunctioning television. It is important to remember that these minor inconveniences are an integral part of “the Cuban experience” and can be rich in their educational value.

For legal and safety reasons, students are required to live in Spanish Studies Abroad housing for the duration of the program. Contracting private housing is not permitted of students enrolled in programs taking place under the auspices of the University of Havana and may be illegal as well. Students entering into a housing agreement are therefore committed to living in their homestay for the duration of their Spanish Studies Abroad program.

**BREAKFAST (DESAYUNO)**

Breakfast is typically a small amount of strong coffee with hot milk, bread, fresh fruit, and eggs.

**LUNCH (ALMUERZO)**

Your class schedule will determine your lunch schedule. Depending on your schedule you may wish to buy your lunch in one of the modestly priced cafetería snack stands near the university, to return to the casa particular or to eat at a paladar or other restaurant. (You will find a few suggested cafeterías near the university in the reference section of this Handbook.) Remember to budget for lunch, as it is not included in your program fees.

**DINNER (CENA OR COMIDA)**

Dinner typically consists of a soup or small salad, followed by rice and beef, chicken, pork or fish in a salsa criolla, that is, a typical Cuban sauce, and is accompanied by a beverage of your choice. Cuban food is not spicy, but mildly flavored.
NOTE TO VEGETARIANS AND VEGANS

Meals in Cuba can be repetitive with lots of pork and rice, and very few vegetables. We recommend that all our students be careful about their health, but vegetarians and vegans especially should make sure they are getting enough food and protein. We suggest bringing multi-vitamins with you, as well as granola or power bars, peanut butter or other supplementary snacks.

Some vegetarian restaurants in Havana are:

- **Biki Vegetarian Restaurant** (corner of Infanta and San Larazo)
- **Restaurant Vegetariano Carmelo** (Calzada between Calles C and D)
- **Restaurante El Bambu** (Jardin Botanico)

You must let Spanish Studies know about any dietary restrictions or food allergies. You can do that by including this information on your housing and health forms, emailing info@spanishstudies.org, or calling (413) 256-0011.

HOUSING RULES

You will find the environment where you will be living to be very hospitable, but there are some rules to follow:

- No overnight guests.
- No drugs. Any consumption of drugs may result in arrest and expulsion from the program and the country.
- You may use the phone to make local and national calls, but for international calls, please go to an ETECSA center and purchase a calling card. If your family or friends would like to call you be sure to coordinate with them on a time and date.

Facilities

**DRINKING WATER**

The water supply in Cuba has been known to contain *giardia*, a parasite which if ingested can cause diarrhea, loose or watery stool, stomach cramps, gas, malaise and upset stomach. Vomiting, chills, headache, and fever may also occur. Symptoms generally begin 1-2 weeks after being infected and may last 2-6 weeks, sometimes longer. We firmly recommend that you drink water that has been treated against giardia.

There are several forms of water that you can drink safely:

- **bottled water** which you may purchase in a variety of Cuban stores for about US $1 a liter. Casa Vera will provide bottled water for you, but since you will be living with other students you might want to buy bottles for your own use.

- **water that has been boiled** for a minimum of one full minute. (Note: you will not have access to the means to boil your own water).

- **water that has been filtered using a system that has been tested and certified by NSF International** (National Sanitation Foundation) as meeting Standard 53. Spanish Studies Abroad recommends that you consider taking such a filtering system with you to Cuba so that you may prepare safe drinking water yourself. Spanish Studies Abroad recommends the NSF certified PUR Ultimate pitcher-style water filtering systems (found in stores or on line) that can be kept in your room (model numbers CR-800, CR-830, DS-1800, CR-900, and CR-930). These pitchers come with a filter which can treat up to 40 gallons/151 liters of water (approximately 1-2 month supply) so you should bring at least one replacement filter for your pitcher. Beware: the Brita pitcher-style water filtering systems DO NOT eliminate giardia, nor do all of the PUR pitchers. Make sure you get the Ultimate PUR or another pitcher certified by the NSF against giardia cysts.
**LAUNDRY**

Laundry service will be provided to you by the staff at your casa particular. Remember that you will be living with other people in the casa particular and they will also have their laundry done. Don’t expect to receive your laundry back on the same day.

**ELECTRICITY**

Any electrical appliances used in the US may be used in Cuba. Most but not all electricity in Cuba is 110 volts, and the outlets and plugs are also the same shape as in the U.S. Because both 110v- and 220v-currents are used in Cuba, and because the different outlets within a given room might provide either voltage, always ask about the voltage before you plug in any apparatus. **If you plug a 110v appliance into a 220v outlet it will be permanently damaged.**

**TELEPHONE CALLS**

Telephone calls are the surest means for communication. If someone wishes to call you remember the country code for Cuba is 53 and the city code is 7. The cheapest way to call from Cuba is to direct dial from a blue ETECSA pay phone that operates with a pre-paid Cuban phone card. You may purchase ETECSA telephone cards for 5 CUC, 10 CUC or 15 CUC. The rate to call the US from Cuba with an ETECSA calling card is about 1.4-1.60 CUC per minute.

You may also place collect or direct dial calls at telephone centers in the Hotel Nacional and the Habana Libre Hotel with the assistance of a hotel operator. Be aware that these rates will be expensive (up to 2.70 CUC per minute). **Do not make international phone calls from the Casa Vera.** Remember, telephone minutes pass very rapidly and calls can become quite expensive.

Remember that it can be very expensive for Cubans to receive phone calls. If a Cuban receives a phone call on their cell phone from someone using a landline, THEY are charged for the phone call. If you are going to call someone, make sure you use a cell phone. You will also notice that many Cubans communicate via text messaging.

**E-MAIL**

Students who are studying at the Universidad de La Habana should NOT bring Macs or any other laptop produced by Apple. For some reason, these devices are not compatible with the university network. Apple iPhones are able to connect yet laptops for some reason have not worked on site here. Students (with non-Apple laptops) can connect to Wi-Fi on campus via: [www.wifi.uh.cu](http://www.wifi.uh.cu) after they have had their laptops certified by the UH IT department.

Outside of the university, internet access is available at a cost of between 4 CUC and 6 CUC per hour. At places like Hotel Nacional and Havana Libre, expect to pay 10 CUC for one hour of Internet time. You can usually access the Internet through cards sold by ETECSA. Students also will have limited access to email and the Internet through the University; however, technical problems and maintenance delays make the system unreliable. Internet access is very limited and expensive in Cuba.

If you choose to check your email regularly at a hotel, be respectful of hotel guests who may want to access the Internet as well. Hotel guests **HAVE PRIORITY** over non-guest Internet users. Sometimes there will be a shortage of Internet/Wi-Fi cards, in which case the hotel will restrict their sales to hotel guests. Other things to keep in mind if you are checking your email or accessing the Internet at a hotel:

- Many people choose to work on their laptop in the bar area of a hotel because of the convenience of having a table and a chair. You are free to do this, but be respectful of the bar and its guests and patrons and order something while you use the Internet there, such as a coffee or soda, for example.

  Chairs and tables can sometimes be scarce in hotel lobbies. If you go to the hotel with friends make sure you divide yourselves one person/laptop per table. It is a disservice to the hotel and its guests if three or four students are using their laptops at the same table, especially if they are not purchasing anything from the bar. **Keep in mind that sometimes hotel guests might want to sit at a table and have a drink or eat a meal. By taking all the available tables and chairs you deny them the chance to sit down and you deprive the bar from making business. Be respectful and cordial, you never know who you might meet by sharing your space with others**
MAIL AND PACKAGES

The ordinary mail between the U.S. and Cuba takes about one month for delivery, sometimes longer, and is very unreliable. Only letters and other documents can be sent through the mail. No packages are accepted.

There is a post office (Correos) not far from the university. Go down the main stairs of the university and proceed down San Lázaro Street. Go the first street light and to your right, across the street is the Correos.

GYM

There is a synagogue not far from where you will be living that has a gym in its basement. The Centro Sefaradi de Cuba is located on calle 17 #462. It is on the corner of calle 17 and calle F. Rates are reasonable but vary from month to month.

MARKET

There is an open air food market on the corner of calle 17 and K (a ten-minute walk from your casa particular). Two blocks away, there is a market at Focsa and there is another larger market at the Galerias on Paseo, about a 12 minute walk from where you will be living.

Transportation And Travel

Transportation is one of the island nation’s greatest problems. The lack of vehicles and the shortage of fuel contribute to difficulty in getting around. As a result, public bus traffic in the capital or elsewhere is extremely crowded and involves waits of an hour or two at busy times. For the average Cuban, it can take days of waiting at a bus terminal to obtain a seat on an inter-provincial bus. Trains have similar problems. In light of these difficult conditions, the Spanish Studies Abroad program charters buses through a travel service to provide reliable transportation for group excursions and study visits.

TRANSPORTATION IN AND NEAR HAVANA

For getting around Havana, you may choose to walk or use taxis. If you have a surplus of time and a shortage of money you can navigate your way on the metropolitan buses for only 40 centavos (2 cents US$), though there are no printed route maps or schedules. For a true Cuban experience (i.e., waiting in line for an hour or two and being packed in like sardines), you can take the camello buses, which are the cheapest form of transport at about 20 centavos. Beware of pickpockets when riding in a camello or any other bus!

When you don’t have the time to spare, there are a variety of taxi services that provide prompt and cheap service. There are three types of taxis, though only one kind of taxi that is officially authorized to carry foreigners. The various “tourist” taxi companies use modern cars in good condition and use meters to calculate the fare. Beware that the rate that is charged on the meter is higher for luxury taxis like Mercedes Benz cars, and lower for smaller cars. Several companies also offer ”microbuses” seating up to 14 people for a flat $10 fee to any location within 15 kilometers.

The two other types of taxis are not supposed to accept foreign passengers other than students and other temporary residents. Private taxis, or boteros (also called máquinas), usually the old, 1950s American cars, will stop for passengers along predetermined highly-traveled routes, and pick up as many passengers as will fit. Once you manage to stop a botero, you ask the driver if he is going in your general direction (choosing a main street near your destination) and if he is, then he will let you in. The fare is always 10 monedas nacionales regardless of the distance.

The third type of taxis are the government owned black and yellow Lada cars, which are supposed to service the general population and charge the price on the meter in moneda nacional, but you will have better luck getting a ride in one if you offer the driver 20 pesos up front (and 10 pesos more for each additional passenger).

TRAVEL AROUND CUBA
IMPORTANT: Regarding travel outside of Cuba during the semester, students may not travel out of Cuba while they only have the student visa issued to them by the Cuban Interests Section. Once they receive their carné de identidad (national ID card), they may travel in and out of Cuba. It usually takes students four weeks to receive their carné.

You cannot travel outside of Havana without your passport AND visa or your national ID card which you will receive several weeks after your arrival in Cuba. If the owner of a casa particular outside of Havana notices that you do not have a visa with your passport or your national ID card, he/she will take you to the local Immigration office, where you will have to explain why you do not have it. Avoid the hassle and inconvenience by always travelling with your passport, student visa and national ID card.

There will be an overnight trip to another province during your program in Cuba. Students may also want to plan their own independent travel on the free weekend. If you would like to travel to other regions of the island, you have a few options for transportation: rent a car, fly, take a train, or take either the Viazul buses (paid in CUC) or the Astro buses (in moneda nacional), which are the cheapest and slowest with the longest wait-lists of all these options.

Flying is a good option for going to Santiago de Cuba because it is so far. The trains are another possibility and can be paid for in Cuban pesos, but again, you will have to endure long lines to get a ticket.

Obviously renting a car gives you the most flexibility to go where you want, when you want, but it is expensive (approximately 60 CUC per day, plus gas). We must stress that if you do choose to rent a car, that you use extreme precaution and exercise safe driving practices. You should strictly avoid driving on the highway at night as it is highly dangerous. For traveling to towns closer to Havana, our students have also hired a taxi or a private car owner to take them for a day trip. Be sure to negotiate the cost beforehand.

Keep in mind that attendance at all classes is required. Students that opt to take independent trips outside of Havana are expected to use free days for such activities and not plan trips on days when classes are in session.

IMPORTANT: Students are required to leave full contact information with the Resident Director when they travel outside of Havana, indicating destination, mode of transportation, and lodging arrangements.

DISTANCES TO PROVINCES (IN KILOMETERS)

Havana-Pinar del Río........................................................................................................147
Havana-Matanzas .............................................................................................................98
Havana-Cienfuegos .........................................................................................................256
Havana-Santa Clara .........................................................................................................270
Havana-Sancti Spíritus ....................................................................................................348
Havana-Ciego de Ávila ....................................................................................................423
Havana-Camagüey ..........................................................................................................533
Havana-Las Tunas ..........................................................................................................657
Havana-Holguín ..............................................................................................................734
Havana-Bayamo .............................................................................................................757
Havana-Santiago de Cuba ...............................................................................................860
Havana-Guantánamo .....................................................................................................910
Havana Isla de la Juventud .............................................................................................142

Entertainment And Sports

The opportunities for entertainment and sports abound in and around the program. Cuban music and performing arts are offered in great variety, and many genres are represented. You may have to go beyond the offerings at establishments geared toward tourists in order to find what you are looking for. Excellent concerts, plays and dance performances take place on a regular basis and a wide range of films are offered daily in theaters throughout the city. Be sure to consult this
Student Handbook or ask the resident director for locations of theaters and events. Frequently cultural events are announced on television.

For running, the sea-wall promenade of the Malecón offers sea and city views, meditative distances and the company of fisherman and a few other runners.

Although there are no beaches in Havana itself, there are very beautiful beaches nearby, the Playas del Este. The fastest way to get to the Playas del Este is to share a taxi with up to four people or a Panataxi microbus that can take up to 14 people (30 to 35 minutes each way by taxi). You can also take a combination of camellos and buses, but allow an hour or two each way.

**EL CHOTEO CUBANO**

This attitude of Cubans is one of the most remarkable features that distinguishes them most markedly from Americans. It is a positive attitude, a defiant resistance to the despair and adversity that permeate their lives. How do Cubans express their “choteo?” By sharing stories (often very humorous!), telling jokes, playing or listening to music, or complimenting a beautiful woman. A Cuban writer said it best when he wrote, “En esas levedades, a veces sanas, otras premeditadas, el cubano desarrolla una resistencia que le permite encontrar luz donde todo parece apagado.” This best captures the Cuban choteo: to find light where there is total darkness. Perhaps the biggest lesson that American students can learn when they go to Cuba is one regarding perspective of life.

**CUBAN SOCIAL LIFE**

Aside from the considerable entertainment of just walking around and watching people in this safe city, there is much popular music. The cafes and restaurants in areas popular with visitors all seem to have groups of guitar, bongo and flute players drifting in and out.

Participants in the Spanish Studies Abroad program are introduced to Cuban students through the University of Havana’s student association, the Federación de Estudiantes Universitarios (FEU). The FEU students are a great resource for getting to know the city, and are generally very excited to make American friends. You should plan to take advantage of the opportunity to meet Cuban students. They are familiar with the Spanish Studies Abroad program and will help you to feel more at home in Havana.

Over the course of the program, Spanish Studies Abroad will offer numerous opportunities for social and cultural interaction with the FEU students. Some of your activities may include: an Afro-Cuban rumba block party, a rap concert, a club where local rock bands perform, a play, the ballet, gallery openings and museum visits. In addition, you will have the opportunity to participate in the many festivals and events that take place from time to time in Havana such as the film festival and the jazz festival.

Apart from organized activities, many young people get together at neighborhood meeting places to play dominoes in the daytime and to dance salsa and rumbas in the evening. In addition, there are several popular salsa dance halls and discos in Havana, with entrance prices from 5-20 CUC. Dancing is something that moves all Cubans and they love to have you join in!

**Culture Shock**

Culture Shock hits most people who go to another country to visit, work or study for a while. It is a persistent disorientation in circumstances that are somewhat similar to the familiar surroundings back home but different enough to be upsetting. At first, these differences may seem charming and even thrilling, especially while enjoying the beautiful climate and natural setting of Havana, as well as the grace of its layout and of the refurbished sections of town.

The novelty of your first days might keep culture shock at bay for a time; however, don’t be surprised if you suddenly
question your own wisdom at leaving home. You may feel depression at the bombed-out look of much of the city that has endured decades of economic embargo. You may feel impatience with the gentle, passive-seeming people who - despite the embargo – could perhaps do a bit more to clean up and brighten their neighborhoods. You may resent the degree to which they lay the blame for their shocking condition on the United States, and you may shake your head at their loyalty to their government. You may find yourself irritated by the different customs and mores.

If you find yourself wishing that you could soon leave and get back to where things are "right" again, remember that you have come for cross-cultural study. Keep busy. Read and look deeply: look outside yourself. Try to discern the values, the priorities, that are different from yours and to learn the surprising personal lessons in them. Cross-cultural study requires you to "become" another self for the time, to imagine yourself born and raised here, bearing the burden of history, and facing the opportunities and the restrictions of a young Cuban person today. If the United States and its policies seem to loom overly large in Cuban eyes, try to see the neighbor north of the Florida Straight as if you were from a country whose population is only 0.5% the size of that powerful country. Remember that you are in Cuba for a limited time and a positive, open mind will enable you to make the most of your stay.

Study At Spanish Studies Abroad

UNIVERSIDAD DE LA HABANA

Founded in 1728, the Universidad de La Habana has become one of the most important symbols of Cuban culture, philosophy and history establishing a strong connection between student political activity on campus and the course of history that the country has followed. This is especially true regarding Fidel Castro when he was a student there.

With over 60,000 students and 300 academic staff, the Universidad de La Habana has become the cultural, political and educational pulse of the country. It has 15 faculties (facultades) divided into three fields: Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities and Economic Sciences. It also has a growing distance education program.

Unlike most university campuses located in the United States, the Universidad de La Habana does not have a sprawling and manicured landscape punctuated by lush verdant fields, trees or lakes. In fact, it has something unique on campus: a tank!

Another fact that distinguishes it from US campuses is the role of the student population. Inheriting a tradition from Europe that you can see in most Latin American universities, the student body of the Universidad de La Habana are very active in politics and very well informed about what is going on in the country and in the world, which naturally extends to the role played by the United States. The Federación Estudiantil Universitaria (FEU), or University Federation of Students is a very prolific organization that played a prominent role in the 1950s. It was founded in 1922 by Julio Antonio Mella, a student, who led students to take control of several buildings on campus and demand university reforms and free higher education among other things. Since then the FEU has become a prominent part of the university and you shouldn’t be surprised if you see a FEU banner waving in locations around Havana.

You will have two options for a semester of study:

- **Spanish Studies program** - allows students to take courses taught by Cuban faculty with a focus on language and culture. You will be able to take courses with other international students who are in Cuba like you to perfect their Spanish.

- **Integrated Studies program** - this program offers you the opportunity to take classes with Cuban students. You will need to have a very good level of Spanish for this option. We recommend that you have at least three semesters of college-level Spanish.

At **Universidad de la Habana** (ULH) classes are organized for the Spanish Studies Abroad program at the Facultad de Lenguas Extranjeras (FLEX) and taught by professors from several faculties.

The Spanish Studies Abroad program places emphasis on reasoned discussion among students and professors during about half of each class period. Keep in mind that a good portion of your grade is determined on how often you participate in
CONDITIONS FOR STUDY AND COMPUTERS

In the main library there are a limited number of computers for writing, available to and shared amongst all students. There are some computers in the Facultad de Filosofía e Historia as well. Almost all computers at the university have an array of program applications, such as MS Word and MS Excel. Computers may be very slow.

Paper is in very short supply and expensive. Keeping in mind that a ream of paper weighs about 5 pounds, you may want to consider packing some plain paper (size 8 1/2" x 11") in your luggage, for your own writing and to share with Cuban students upon your departure.

You should take your laptop with you. If you have your own laptop and portable printer, we recommend that you take it as carry-on luggage. We also recommend that you take special care in keeping your laptop safe and locked.

PRINTING, PHOTOCOPYING AND SCANNING

It can be expensive to print documents, make photocopies or scan something. Hotel Nacional offers printing services but the rate is 50 centavos per page. There is an office not far from the university where you can have photocopies made and documents printed out at a cost of only a few monedas nacional.

Tito.com
San Lázaro No. 162 (frente a la Plaza Mella, frente a la escalinata de la UH)
La Habana, Vedado
Tel. 8732974  cel. 53558095
Hours: Monday-Saturday from 7:40am-7pm, Sundays from 9:30am-5:00pm

ATTACHMENTS

Many attachments you receive by e-mail may be unreadable on the computer you are using. Save them onto your flash drive and review them later on your laptop. In Cuba flash drives are a premium and software is used to convert large files into smaller sized documents such as cmd.exe. Don’t be surprised if you lend someone your flash drive that your documents are converted into cmd.exe format. They will still be readable, but you will not be able to forward them by e-mail or convert them into other formats on file conversion software on the Internet. What you will have to do is open each document and save it in the format you want.

ROUTERS AND HARD DRIVES

DO NOT bring any routers or hard drives with you. You will be immediately stopped and questioned by immigration officials and you will bring unwanted attention to the program and you might place your time in Cuba in jeopardy.

BOOKS FOR CLASSES

During the first couple weeks of classes you will receive a piece of paper from the Registrar. Take this paper to the bookstore to obtain the appropriate books for your classes. You do not need to pay for your books; you are borrowing them for the semester and you must return them before you leave for the US. Since other students after you will be using the books, please do not write on them or deface them in any way.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, STUDY VISITS AND excursions

Classes are scheduled in the mornings and afternoons. Some study visits will take place during class time, other complementary course activities will be scheduled outside of regular class meeting times. Sometimes students and teachers can arrange tutorials, where the student meets privately with a professor. Class attendance and class-related activities are
Students are allowed six (6) absences during the semester. Any more absences then that and you will fail the class. You will receive a tentative schedule of classes, study visits and excursions during the orientation. Each semester has a two-week window called “shopping” during which time students may add or drop classes.

**REFERENCE SECTION**

A. SHOPPING

- **Foods & Beverages**: Most food items are bought with CUC but some locations also accept moneda nacional currency in convenience-like stores at gas stations or small supermarkets.
  - **Cupet** gas station across the street (corner of L y 17)
  - Supermarket at the **Edificio Focsa** (c/17, entre M y N).
  - Farmers’ market Mercado Agropecuario, **El Agro** (on calle 19th & B);
  - Dollar stores in large hotels, often part of the **Caracol** chain (H. Libre, H. Nacional, H. Sevilla, etc).
  - University cafeteria (moneda nacional)

- **Clothing or Department Stores**: **Centro Habana** is one of the main shopping areas, along **Calle Neptuno** as well as the area behind the Capitolio, along the Bulevar.
  Other shopping streets:
  - Ave. de Italia (called **Galiano**) in Centro Habana.
  - **Calle Obispo** in Old Havana and the area between Obispo and the Hotel Plaza have many shops.
  - Department store, **La Época**, Ave. de Italia, or Galiano, esq. Neptuno in Centro Habana

- **Posters**: Film posters at **ICAIC** (Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry), or at Cine Yara on 23rd and M.

- **Books**:
  - **Librería Fernando Ortiz** (L y 27)
  - Mercado de libros antiguos (Plaza de Armas)
  - **Moderna Poesía** (Calle Obispo)
  - Also check out offerings at bookstores selling in moneda nacional such as the one at the bus terminal or on Línea and 8th.

- **Music**:
  - **Habana Sí** on corner of 23 & L
  - Street stands along calle L and on La Rampa
  - **EGREM** store on calle Obispo
  - **Casa de la Música** in Miramar.

- **Cigars**:
  - Large hotels
  - Partagás Factory (near Capitolio)
  - Pinar del Rio tobacco factory
  - Fundación de las Islas Canarias (Old Havana)

- **Crafts markets**:
  - Cathedral area
  - Malecón & D
  - La Rampa
  - Market in Old Havana

B. LIBRARIES

- **Biblioteca Nacional**, Avenida Independencia y 20 de Mayo (near Plaza de la Revolución).
  Open: Monday-Friday, 8:00am - 9:00pm, Saturday 8:00am-6:00pm.

- **Biblioteca de la Universidad de La Habana**, on the main quad of the central campus **La Colina**. Open: Monday-Friday, 8:00am - 8:00pm.
C. MUSEUMS & CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

(For more information such as addresses and opening hours, consult the complete list at the end of this handbook, or your Cuba guide book.)

- Casa de la Américas, Calle 3 between G & F, Vedado
- Museo de Bellas Artes, Trocadero between Monserrate & Zulueta, La Habana Vieja
- ICAIC, (Cinema) Calle 23 between 10 & 12
- UNEAC (Union of Cuban Writers and Artists), Calle 17, corner of H, Vedado
- Casa de Africa, Obrapia between San Ignacio and Mercaderes, La Habana Vieja
- Memorial José Martí, Plaza de la Revolución
- Museo de la Ciudad, Plaza de Armas, La Habana Vieja
- Museo de Arte Colonial, Plaza de la Catedral, la Habana Vieja
- Museo de la Revolución, Refugio between Monserrate & Zulueta, La Habana Vieja
- Capitolio, now houses science museums: M. de Ciencias Naturales, M. de Ciencias y Técnicas
- Centro de Prensa Internacional del Minrex, Calle 23 e/O y N
- Cine Charles Chaplin, Calle 23 between 10 & 12, Vedado, Special film programs
- Fábrica de Tabacos Partagás, Calle Industria 502, behind the Capitolio
- Casa de la Amistad, Paseo between 17 & 19, Vedado. Live music two or three nights a week.
- Teatro Sótano, Calle K between 25 and 27, Vedado, contemporary plays.

D. SWIMMING

- Hotel Nacional: fee approx. $15 (the fee entitles you to $15 worth of food and drink by the pool)
- Hotel Habana Libre: they don’t always allow non-guests, but try. Fee approx. $5
- Hotel Vedado: fee for non-guests
- Playas del Este: travel time 30 minutes by taxi

E. NIGHT LIFE / EVENING ACTIVITY

Always consult La Cartelera, a weekly guide to cultural activities, available at either H. Nacional or Habana Libre. For the local Cuban Cartelera ask at a Correos de Cuba kiosk, available only early Friday mornings but much more thorough.

- Café Cantante Mi Habana (below Teatro Nacional)
- Casa de la Amistad
- Discoteques at large hotels (Turquino in H. Libre)
- La Madriguera, Quinta del Molino
- Salón Rosado Benny More de la Tropical
- UNEAC (calle H and 17) on Wed. & Sat.
- El Gato Tuerto, live music (calle O, e/17 y 19)
- La Zorra y el Cuervo, live jazz (calle 23 e/ N y O)

F. THEATERS & MOVIES

- Teatro Nacional (concerts, plays)
- Teatro Amadeo Roldán, (jazz concerts, symphony)
Gran Teatro García Lorca (ballet, dance)
Teatro Mella (modern dance, comedy, theater)
Hubert de Blanck (theater)
El Sótano (theater)
Cine Yara (film premiers)
Trianon (theater, film)
ICAIC’s Cine Chaplin (art films)
Cine Rampa (films)

G. OTHER THINGS TO DO FOR ENTERTAINMENT

Callejón de Hamel, an alleyway between Salud and Hospital streets behind San Lázaro St., Sundays, 12-3 pm, live Afro-
Cuban music and dancing. A must!
Las Vegas Cabaret, on Infanta at 25th St., hiphop and rap groups perform Fridays 5-8pm
Coppelia Ice Cream. The least busy time to go is between 9 and 11pm when most people are at home watching soap
operas and lines are shorter.
Walk along the Malecón
Afternoon or evening drink at Hotel Nacional. (Be sure you check out the small Hall of Fame.)
Have a mojito in the Bodeguita del Medio or a daiquiri at El Floridita, a Hemingway hangout

H. FESTIVALS

Feria internacional del Libro (February-March), located on Fortaleza de San Carlos de la Cabaña, this fair features new
international and Cuban books and includes poetry readings and concerts.
International Jazz Festival (third week in December), see some of the jazz greats play alongside jazz master Chucho
Valdés.
Parrandas de Remedios (8-24 December), Remedios. This is an amazing folk celebration featuring parades, floats and
fireworks.
Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano (first half of December), ICAIC. This is a must see if you enjoy
films made in Latin America.
Festival Internacional de Música Contemporánea (late-October/early November), La Habana. This festival features all
forms of music from classical to electronic and appeals to many generations of Cubans. To learn more visit its website:
www.musicacontemporanea.cult.cu.

I. TRANSPORTATION & TRAVEL  (Refer to your Cuba guide book.)

TAXI COMPANIES for FOREIGNERS (using metered taxis, 4 people maximum)

Panataxi: Tel. 55-5555 thru 59. Recommended, least expensive, with meter and air-conditioning. 4 people
maximum, unless you rent a van. (Approx. fare from Vedado to Old Havana is 6 CUC to 8 CUC.) Call 33-2020
for a Microbus (up to 14 people for a 10 CUC flat fee within 15 kms.)
Taxi OK: Tel. 204-0000. When calling, ask for an Oferta Especial for rates even lower than Panataxi.
Habana Taxi: Tel. 53-9086. Offers the same low rates as Panataxi.
Habana Auto: Tel. 32-3232. Just as cheap as Panataxi, or Habana Auto, but a little more expensive for the
bigger cars. May be slow to respond to a called-in request.
Turistaxi: Tel. 33-5539 thru 42. Price depends on size of cars, charging more for luxury cars. Taxi meter. Air-conditioning. 4 people maximum. (Approx. fare from Vedado to Old Havana is 4 CUC to 5 CUC.)

Fénix: Specialized in the Old Havana neighborhood but will go anywhere. May be more expensive than Panataxi.

WEEKEND TRAVEL

Travel agencies on la Rampa:
- Cubatur and Havanutur below H.Habana Libre on 23rd
- Airlines on la Rampa for domestic flights (C/23 y P):
  - Cubana de Aviación (Tel. 33-4949)
  - Aero Caribbean. (Tel. 33-5936).
  (Sample one way fares: Santiago de Cuba 135 CUC, Isla de la Juventud 60 CUC)

Car rental: Beware of extra charges, for example, being charged for the full tank of gas you start with.
- Buses:
  - Transtur, Calle 21, e/N y O, next to Hotel Capri. Tel. 33-4038.
  - Havautos, Tel. 24-0646
  - Viazul, the only bus company for reliable, fast service to cities throughout Cuba; Avenida 26 y Zoologico, Nuevo Vedado. Tel. 81-1108, 81-5652 or 81-14

WHERE TO STAY:
Casas Particulares are some of the cheapest places to stay while traveling in Cuba. The cost is about 40-60 CUC to rent a room for a night. Included in the cost are a private room with a lock, bathroom, fan and occasionally included are breakfast and access to the kitchen. (You will know a Casa Particular by the triangular symbol on the door)

Billing Details

Spanish Studies is affiliated with over 80 colleges and universities. For most affiliated schools, payment is made to us directly by the school. However, billing arrangements vary between universities, so we ask that you pay close attention to the information received in the acceptance packet.

PAYMENT OF FEES
The non-refundable deposit of $300 is due within 10 days of your acceptance to the program. In cases where the school is sending payment directly to Spanish Studies, you should ask your college or university to discuss this with us directly.

Note: The due date for the non-refundable deposit may not be deferred.

Payment must be received by our U.S. office no later than the due dates given in your statement of account. You will not be admitted to housing or classes until all payments have been received. Special arrangements are made only in exceptional cases and may include interest rates and service charges. Your transcript will not be released until all financial obligations you incurred during the school term have been satisfied, including payment for unreturned library books. If you anticipate that you will have financial aid to use toward your program payment, please contact the U.S. office of Spanish Studies Abroad regarding the necessary paperwork to defer your final program payment due date.

Note: All checks should be made payable to The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, Inc

FINANCIAL AID
You must speak with the financial aid office at your home university regarding the school’s policies for the transfer of financial aid for study abroad. If financial aid will transfer, there are some forms that must be completed in order to coordinate transfer of funds and the deferment of the final payment due date if aid will be disbursed after that time. The $300 non-refundable deposit due date may not be deferred, even if the amount is covered by financial aid.
The Spanish Studies Financial Aid Deferment Form, included in your acceptance packet, should be submitted to your home university’s financial aid office to be completed and returned to the Amherst office of Spanish Studies. You will also need to make sure that the financial office is able to coordinate with Spanish Studies regarding any forms that they need completed by Spanish Studies to transfer financial aid, such as a Consortium Agreement.

If you anticipate that you will have financial aid to use toward your program payment, please contact the U.S. office regarding the necessary paperwork to defer your final program payment due date.

Scholarships

SPANISH STUDIES ABROAD SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
The Spanish Studies Abroad Scholarship Program is open to all students enrolled in all of our San Juan programs. We offer four $1500 scholarships for semester programs, five $500 scholarships for summer programs, and one $500 scholarship for the January Term. Students may apply for only one of the two scholarship options: the Merit-Based Scholarship or the Diversity Scholarship.

Award recipients are chosen based on the submission of one original essay in English. For more information about the scholarship program and to download the application, visit www.spanishstudies.org/scholarships.

While all eligible students are encouraged to apply, the Spanish Studies Abroad Scholarship Program is very competitive and only a handful of awards are made per term. Students will be notified before leaving for Puerto Rico if they will receive a scholarship. A check is sent to the student’s permanent home address after arrival in San Juan and is not used toward payment of program fees.

VIDEOGRAPHER GRANT
Spanish Studies Abroad will award a $50 grant to ten semester and summer students who are willing to create a brief video sharing their enthusiasm about study abroad prior to their program start date, as well as a second video upon return from their study abroad program. For more information about this opportunity, visit www.spanishstudies.org/scholarships.

SPANISH STUDIES ABROAD ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP FUND
The Spanish Studies Abroad Alumni Scholar Fund was developed in 2004 and designed to benefit returning students wishing to embark on an additional cross-cultural adventure with Spanish Studies Abroad. Spanish Studies now offers all alumni students a stipend to apply towards another Spanish Studies Abroad experience in Spain, Argentina, Puerto Rico, or Cuba. Please note that all Spanish Studies Alumni who choose to attend an additional program with Spanish Studies Abroad will automatically receive the Alumni Scholarship. Alumni who receive an Alumni Scholarship are also eligible to apply for the Spanish Studies Abroad Scholarship Program. Alumni scholarships are as follows:

- Academic Year: $1,000
- Semester: $500
- 7 Week Summer Term: $200
- 31/2 Week Summer or January Terms: $100
- May Term: $50

OUTSIDE SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
For a list of other study abroad scholarship opportunities not offered through Spanish Studies Abroad, please refer to our Scholarships Page at www.spanishstudies.org/scholarships.

Possible Additional Fees

TRANSCRIPT FEES
Students whose home college or university requires a transcript from a U.S. degree-granting institution may obtain academic credit and a transcript from our School of Record, Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio. An additional fee of $250 is charged by Heidelberg for this service. If the student has requested this transcript service due to a home institution
requirement, a request form is included with the Spanish Studies Abroad acceptance packet and must be returned to Spanish Studies Abroad before the start of the program. In order to facilitate the issuing of the transcript the student may be billed by Spanish Studies Abroad on behalf of Heidelberg University for the additional fee. Spanish Studies Abroad will then pay Heidelberg University for issuing the transcript.

Note: All checks should be made payable to The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, Inc.

REFUNDS
If you decide not to attend a Spanish Studies program after you have been accepted, please send us a written notification immediately. Inform us of your decision not to attend via email at info@spanishstudies.org.

Withdrawal from the program between the final payment due date and 30 days before the start of the program has a penalty of $500. Withdrawal from the program between 29 days before the start of the program and 1 day before the start of the program has a penalty of 25% of the room and board fee and 100% of the tuition, study tours and orientation, and general education fees. There is no refund for any portion of the program fees on or after the program start date. Please note, these penalties are in addition to the $300 deposit, which is non-refundable.

There is no withdrawal from room and board arrangements with Spanish Studies during the course of a program. Spanish Studies will change unsatisfactory lodgings but will not refund any portion of room and board fees after a student’s arrival to housing. If the student finds his or her housing to be unsatisfactory, he or she should notify Spanish Studies immediately; Spanish Studies will determine whether or not a change is warranted.

Academic Pledge & Program Conditions and Release
In the following pages, please find a copy for your records of the documents you signed as part of the application Spanish Studies Abroad.

ACADEMIC PLEDGE

Spanish Studies Abroad Code of Conduct
Studying abroad requires a significant commitment to personal responsibility. While on a Spanish Studies Abroad program, you are, in effect, a cultural ambassador for your home country, a representative of your home institution, and a member of your adoptive community.

In addition to the Program Conditions and Release Statement that all students sign as part of the application process to Spanish Studies Abroad, you also agree to apply the same standards of conduct and academic integrity while abroad as you would at your home institution. These standards include, but are not limited to:

1. following honest academic standards and maintaining your commitment to academic growth.
2. strict adherence to host country laws and customs.
3. respect for your host families and fellow program participants.
4. respect for Spanish Studies Abroad property, professors and staff.
5. general personal and academic practices in line with those outlined by your home institution.

Spanish-Only Policy
The Spanish-Only Language Policy is fundamental to the educational philosophy of Spanish Studies Abroad. It is a tool that promotes cultural integration and active learning, where students put into practice what they are learning. This is the best way to develop both fluency in Spanish and a deeper understanding of the Spanish culture. The benefits of adhering to the Spanish-Only Policy, no matter your initial language level, are great:

- You will improve your ability to understand and express yourself in Spanish.
- As fluency increases, you will gain a greater awareness of the local culture as you develop relationships with your host family,
Living abroad provides an opportunity for total immersion in the language and culture -- but only if each and every student actively seeks out this experience. The immersion experience begins NOW, as you get to know your fellow students on the Spanish Studies Abroad program. You may find that living only in Spanish is awkward and even somewhat isolating at first, but years of experience have proven that it is the best way to improve your language ability. While each student makes an individual commitment to using only Spanish, this is also a collective effort that contributes to the progress of every student. To help you get the most out of your experience in Seville, Alicante, Barcelona, San Juan and/or Córdoba, you and all of your fellow students attending programs with Spanish Studies Abroad are required to adhere to the Spanish-Only Policy.

Students are expected to use Spanish in all written and verbal communications while abroad. Students are NOT expected to speak in Spanish when they are faced with an emergency, when speaking with family members, and on occasions when it is absolutely necessary to use English. However, speaking English in the presence of other Spanish Studies students is considered a violation of the policy and must be avoided at all times -- for example, if you receive a call from your parents when you are near fellow students, you should lower your voice and step out of earshot.

**Academic Pledge**

1. In signing this Language Pledge, I agree to use Spanish as my sole language of communication while participating in Spanish Studies Abroad programs. I understand that failure to comply with this Pledge will result in a 5 point deduction from the final grade of the mandatory course required of that program and may also result in expulsion from the program without receiving a refund or academic credit.

2. I have read and understood the Language Pledge and Contract, and agree to the conditions.

Student’s name: __________________________

Student’s signature: ______________________ Date __________

**PROGRAM CONDITIONS AND RELEASE STATEMENT**

The Center for Cross-Cultural Study (CC-CS, also known as “Spanish Studies Abroad”) makes every effort to protect the welfare and safety of its students. However, CC-CS will not accept responsibility for damage to or loss of property, personal illness or injury, or death while a student is on the program.

In all matters relating to travel on CC-CS programs, The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, Inc., holds itself free of any responsibility for any delay, loss, or accident occasioned by the air and land carriers or their agents. The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, Inc., is not an agent for students at The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, S.L. or Edutavel, S.L. (Spanish Corporations), Seville, Spain — nor is Universidad de Alicante, its partner in Alicante, Spain, or Universidad de Sevilla or Universidad Pablo de Olavide, its partners in Seville, Spain, or Universidad Pompeu Fabra, its partner in Barcelona, Spain — and as such holds itself free of any responsibility for any loss or accident occasioned by the program of study and travel in Spain conducted by The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, S.L. The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, S.L., reserves the right to change any arrangement set forth in announcements of the program, offering substitutes of equal value, or to cancel the program entirely with full refund. Rates and schedules are subject to change.

In all matters relating to travel on the Cuba program, The Center for Cross-Cultural Study — and its partner Universidad Nacional de Córdoba — holds itself free of any responsibility for any delay, loss or accident occasioned by the air and land carriers or their agents.

Signature of a parent or guardian is required if the student is under 18. I further understand and agree that if I withdraw from the Program and/or Program housing after the start of the program I will receive no refund from CC-CS.

In the event that a student becomes incompetent for any reason, including (but not limited to) injury, accident, mental illness, disease, or loss of consciousness, he/she appoints CC-CS as his/her guardian, and authorizes CC-CS to take any action which it deems appropriate under the circumstances, including (but not limited to) arranging for medical or psychiatric treatment, administering prescription drugs, or transporting him/her to the United States.

CC-CS reserves the right to dismiss any student from its programs for misconduct, academic or otherwise, or at any time the student engages in conduct dangerous to him/herself or to others, or engages in criminal behavior. Academic misconduct includes (but is not limited to) cheating, plagiarism, and lying about any and all matters of academic substance. Whether or not the student's behavior justifies dismissal from the programs shall be within the sole discretion of CC-CS staff. CC-CS also reserves the right to share personal and academic information with a student's home institution.

I hereby authorize CC-CS to make payments on my behalf, drawing upon the amounts that I submit for food, lodging, and transportation expenses incurred during my stay in Cuba/Spain/Puerto Rico/Argentina as a student of said program.

I also understand and accept that CC-CS may use my image and/or likeness in any of its marketing material.

I do forever RELEASE, acquit, discharge, and covenant to hold harmless The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, Inc. and The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, S.L. and its agents, officers and employees from any and all actions, causes of action, and claims on account of, or in any way growing out of, directly or indirectly, all known and unknown personal injuries or property damage which I may now or hereafter have resulting from my participation in any CC-CS programs.
We hope that this Student Handbook has answered your questions and prepared you for your study experience in Cuba. If, after reading this handbook carefully, you have further questions please feel free to contact our Amherst office at (413) 256-0011, or by e-mail at info@spanishstudies.org.

[Note: If applicant is under 18 years of age, a parent or legal guardian must sign the following declaration and RELEASE]

I, the undersigned [father] [mother] [guardian] of

____________________________________________________________

We, the undersigned [father] [mother] [guardian] of

a minor, do hereby consent to [his] [her] participation in the CC-CS program and do forever RELEASE, acquit, discharge, and covenant to hold harmless The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, Inc. and The Center for Cross-Cultural Study, S.L. and its officers, agents and employees from any and all actions,

You for your study experience in Cuba. If, you contact our Amherst office at (413) 256-0011.