

Cuban American Friendship Society – Essential Information for Cuba Education Trip

Logistics - Our first 2022 trip will be 8 days and 7 nights: April 16 -23 (If you want to stay an extra day your visa will allow you to do that as it will be good for 30 days). The trip is not sponsored by, nor affiliated with, any VT school district. It is jointly sponsored by The Cuban American Friendship Society and, in Cuba, the Center for Psychological and Sociological Research. You will receive a certificate for 3 recertification credits from these two organizations.

***Anticipated Cost** - The anticipated trip cost is \$2,000 (double room) or \$2,200 (single room) plus airfare. The BSD master agreement allowed teachers on the 2019 trip to have the 3 recertification credit workshop costs (\$1,750) reimbursed by the district (BSD contract doesn't reimburse housing costs for a workshop). Teachers in each district have their own reimbursement processes to go through.

The only costs NOT covered by the trip are: 6 dinners (on average a nice dinner in Havana was \$15 in 2020, the last year we went), your airfare and your spending money (anywhere from \$50 -100 a day depending on what "souvenirs"/clothes etc you choose to buy). *The cost is listed as "anticipated" as a few costs like transportation on the air-conditioned coach bus are dynamic since Cuban fuel costs have been volatile.

How many people will be on a trip? A minimum of 11 participants and maximum of 20. Additionally, 2 CAFS members attend. We stay in the Vedado district of Havana in AirBNB houses. Everybody will be in a house with other trip participants and we'll all be near each other. Every room has its own bathroom.

What is the status of Cubans being vaccinated against COVID-19? Cuba has developed their own Covid vaccines: Soberana (Spanish for sovereignty) Plus, Soberana 02, and Abdala. About 89% of the country's population has received at least one dose, and about 80% is completely vaccinated with 3 doses.

What next steps do I take if I want to go on the Cuba trip?

1. Check to ensure that you (and a family member if they are going) have a passport that is valid for 6 months after the trip ends. If it is not, start your passport renewal ASAP.
2. Mail a refundable \$300 trip deposit check to CAFS, PO Box 8486, Burlington, VT 05402. Your deposit is fully refundable until 10 weeks before the trip when the remaining trip costs are due.
3. Spaces on the trip are secured on a first-come basis upon receipt of your refundable \$300 deposit. Once CAFS receives deposits from 11 participants, we notify participants and then participants begin making their flight reservations.
4. Don't buy health insurance. It comes with the airplane ticket and CAFS also carries insurance for all its trips to Cuba.

If a family member or partner participates on the trip, do they have to attend the events? YES!

Your trip cost includes CAFS purchasing your visa. It is issued by the Cuban government for the education purposes of the trip articulated in the itinerary submitted by CAFS. That said, in 2019 two spouses who worked outside of education arranged, on one day, events specific to their field (CAFS had listed those details when applying for visas for those two participants).

Do CAFS trips bring school supplies or other goods to give to the schools we visit? Yes, it is optional and organized by the participants, more information on this to follow.