



CUBA HIKING CHALLENGE 2013

Everything you need to know...

Bags & Packing

Please refer to the kit list sent with your fundraising pack. This will be invaluable when packing.

A 2 season sleeping bag is ideal but if you already own a 3 or 4 season sleeping bag don't waste your money on a new one - you can simply open it up and use it like a blanket if it gets too warm.

A cotton (or silk) liner is advised – it keeps your sleeping bag clean and if it gets very warm you can use this instead of your sleeping bag.

NB We've recently been informed that sleeping mats will be provided – not essential to bring your own.

Hold Luggage (hiking bag)

Take 1 large rucksack / soft holdall (**not** a hard suitcase with wheels) containing everything you want while you're away. Airline allowances vary but if you keep to 20kg you can't go wrong. But you really shouldn't need to take this much. This will double up as your Hiking bag. We will not be able to leave anything at the hotel in Havana because we're finishing the trek in Trinidad. So you might want to bring a....

...Small bag for non-trekking gear

Pack any items not needed while trekking e.g. celebration meal clothes in this spare bag then this can be left on the support vehicle for the duration of the trek.

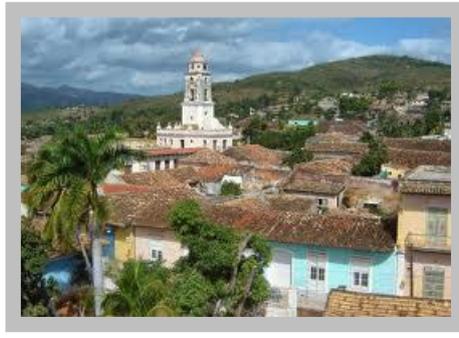
Hand Luggage (day pack)

Take a 25 -35 litre rucksack with a wide hip band as your hand luggage. This will also double up as your personal day pack on the hike.

Other top packing tips:

- Wear your hiking boots on the plane (these should have been bought and well-worn in by now!)
- Bring plastic bags to keep your clothes dry within your holdall and zip-lock type bags for valuables such as your camera or ipod.
- Make sure you can carry at least 2 litres of water with you on the hike, either in bottles or in a platypus system within your rucksack.
- Bring spare batteries for torch, camera etc
- Don't forget you can get a discount off full-priced kit when purchasing from our partners, Cotswold Outdoors (quote AF-MACCS-NC) and Snow & Rock.





Life on the Cuba Challenge

Discover Adventure have put together a presentation on what you'll be getting up to and experiencing on each day of your epic challenge. Check it out on your [Cuba resource page](#).

Camping

Cuba is still largely a controlled environment so we'll be camping at Haciendas (a kind of rural home-stead) in large 2-person tents, which will be put up for us by the local crew. Alternatively, if you buy yourself a mozzie net you can sleep outside under the stars. There may be a shower or two at some of the Haciendas but please bear in mind that water is limited (and very cold!) and wet wipes do a pretty good job.

NB Ear-plugs can be a godsend if you're a light sleeper!

Toilets

Whilst in camp, you have the luxury of flushing toilets – unheard of on most challenge events! Don't forget a head-torch for night-time visits and anti-bacterial hand-wash for hygiene purposes.

During the day, you will need to go off the track and find a quiet spot. Please remember not to leave any toilet paper on the ground. Scented nappy sacks are useful for used paper, which can be thrown away at camp.

Water

The water will be bottled and completely safe to drink. You will be able to top up each morning and sometimes at lunch but for the majority of the trek you will need to carry enough with you to get you through the day (i.e. at least 2 litres).

Swimming

Throughout the trek there will be numerous opportunities to have a dip in some natural swimming holes so don't forget to pack your cozzies and possibly a small travel towel.

Spare shoes that you can wear in water e.g. crocs, old trainers, sandals are essential if you plan to go for a dip.

Food

All the cooking and washing up will be done for us. The meals they produce are good, hearty and plentiful – but please don't expect gourmet cuisine! Here's an idea of what you'll get...

- Breakfast - toast, eggs, fruit
- Lunch - a basic packed lunch with a sandwich, cake, fruit etc
- Upon arrival at camp - tea, coffee and biscuits.
- Evening meal - soup, followed by (typically) a chicken or pork based dish with potatoes and vegetables.
- Snacks will be provided throughout the day to keep your energy levels up but feel free to bring a small supply of your favourite pick-me-ups to keep you going.

Evening tippie

There will be a basic bar at most haciendas where local drinks are available to buy.





IMPORTANT INFO ALERT– Cuba Tourist Card

It is essential to purchase a Cuba tourist card before you travel. In order to avoid paying expensive postage fees our Cuban ground crew has kindly offered to organise these for us. Simply email Havana Tours at nuria@havanatour.co.uk with your name, address, contact number, dates of travel and attach a copy of your passport details page. Nuria will then call you directly to take the £15 payment. **Please organise this by 2 Feb 2013.**

Electricity

Some haciendas do have an electricity supply but please don't rely on this and only use if desperate. We don't want to use up their electricity for non-essential purposes and it'd be impossible for everyone to recharge things every night. So please bring spare batteries for electrical items where possible.

NB the plug sockets are the two pin (flat) types.

Spending money

We recommend you take a minimum of £150 with you in sterling or euros (NOT dollars) which you can change at the airport or hotel.

Cuba operates a dual currency system. Visitors use the Cuban Convertible Peso (CUC), as opposed to the Cuban Peso (CUP) used by locals.

There will be little to buy once you are actually trekking (other than the odd beer), however it is very easy to spend in Havana and Trinidad where you might want to buy souvenirs.

Costs you will incur whilst on the trip are:

- We collect a discretionary tip to show our appreciation for our local guides and crew at the end of the hike. We suggest £35 each.
- Cuban tourist card (see above) for £15
- Celebration dinner on Day 7, lunch and evening meal on Day 8
- Airport Departure Tax of \$25CUC

Fitness and Terrain

Don't forget to keep referring to your Training Guide to make sure you're keeping up with the programme. Being fit will definitely increase your enjoyment of the challenge.

The terrain out in Cuba will be varied, with jungle, mountains, fruit orchards and banana plantations all featuring throughout the trek. The route can be steep with lots of ups and downs and an ascent of nearly 800m on one day. The heat and humidity will add to the challenge!





Weather

The weather should be sunny, hot and humid - with temperatures reaching 25-30°C during the day. The temperature will drop in the evenings but it's unlikely to get very cold. Keep up-to-date at:

<http://www.weather.com/weather/5-day/Havana+CUXX0003:1:CU>

<http://www.weather.com/weather/5-day/Trinidad+CUXX0013:1:CU>

Support

Macmillan Rep

Sarah from the Macmillan Challenge Team will accompany you on the trip. She'll meet you at Heathrow and will be trekking with you throughout the challenge. Sarah's there to help in whatever way she can, so please feel free to approach her at any stage for a chat or to learn more about Macmillan.

Discover Adventure Leader and Assistant Leader

The trip will be led by two highly experienced leaders from Discover Adventure. They will have a proven track record in the outdoor and/or adventure travel industries and are there to make sure you have the most amazing time. A leader really can make or break a trip and we are extremely lucky to have some of the best people in their field working for DA.

Doctor

We will be accompanied by one UK based doctor. They will look after your health and well-being and carry a comprehensive medical kit to deal with all eventualities.

Communication

There will be radio-contact between the leaders and doctor so the DA team will always know what's going on in the group. The leader will also have a satellite phone and can make calls at any time if outside help is required.

Local support

Along the way we'll be supported by a whole team of local support crews. They'll drive the vehicles, put up our tents, cook our meals, clean up after us and provide expert local knowledge and, often, the evening entertainment! They're a fantastic bunch of hard-working, enthusiastic people so please take time to get to know them.

You

The best thing about Macmillan Challenges is the camaraderie and team spirit amongst you and your fellow trekkers. Our hiking challenges are not races. The aim is for everyone to complete the challenge at your own pace and have a great time. There's no medal for coming first so encourage and help each other along the way.

Most of all have a fantastic time and enjoy every moment!

