

Guide to questions from “La búsqueda de información sobre viajes a Cuba”

Answers found below are a guide. They represent the information that I have learned from my personal research. Please consult the sites listed in the lesson resource material to become more comfortable with this information and to learn more.

1. ¿Quién puede viajar a Cuba?

- Non-U.S. citizens
- U.S. citizens travelling as part of an educational, religious or humanitarian group. Journalists and other people who obtain special visas may also go. Currently the restrictions for travel are tighter than ever.

2. ¿Por qué no es fácil viajar a Cuba para los estadounidenses?

- Because of the embargo enacted in 1962 and continued travel restrictions presently, travel is restricted.

3. ¿Por qué hay un embargo?

- These are the basic reasons for the embargo. When Castro took over the Cuban government in 1959, he expropriated property that belonged to U.S. businessmen and citizens. Also, in the early 1960s Castro began to ally his country with the former Soviet Union. Cuba's alliance with the Soviet Union was another cause of the embargo as the United States does not support communism.

4. ¿Qué impacto tiene el embargo en la gente de Cuba? en la gente de los Estados Unidos?

- U.S citizens will travel illegally to Cuba via Mexico or other countries
- Cuba cannot get goods produced in the United States. This is especially detrimental when there are some medical supplies only produced by the United States. Lack of access to medicine only produced in the U.S has caused the death of many Cubans.
- The embargo weakens the Cuban economy.
- Prostitution, which was previously eradicated in Cuba has returned due to economic struggle and the desire to have access to the U.S. dollar. Access to the dollar allows Cubans to purchase needed goods (many things as simple as basic hygiene products) in dollar stores or on the black market.
- The economic struggle in Cuba has created a dependence on the tourist sector. Many Cubans have left their jobs as paid professionals to work in tourism because they have access to the dollar and many who work in hotels receive toiletries that are at a premium, as perks
- There is an increasing need for humanitarian aid which helps solve short term deficiencies, but does not solve the long-term problems created partially by the embargo.
- US businesses, farmers etc. are not able to do business in Cuba. Many businesses are pushing the government to drop the embargo as they are missing

out on lucrative investments on the island.

- By having travel restrictions as part of the embargo, the U.S. is in violation of its own constitution and international law as travel restrictions are a breach of citizens rights to travel freely.

5. ¿Qué dice (say) el embargo sobre los viajes a Cuba ahora?

- As of late 2000, the U.S. government approved the sale of medicine and food to Cuba if the sale is not conducted utilizing U.S. banks and as long as the goods are bought in U.S. dollars in cash. Castro was insulted by the stipulation and has refused to purchase goods under those provisions.
- For current information on the embargo, see the U. S. government site listed in the resources as well as any of the others listed. CNN.com as well as other news sites will give the most up to date information as well.

6. ¿Cuál es la opinión de los miembros del “Cuban American National Foundation” (CANF)) sobre el embargo?

- The Cuban American National Foundation has a website which is listed in the resources section. This group has managed to be very influential in decisions regarding the maintenance of the embargo. The CANF does not want the embargo lifted.

7. Escribe una lista de los argumentos en contra de y en pro del embargo (Incluye 8 argumentos en total).

Here are few pros and cons to get you started.

Pros

1. Cuba will be forced to end its communist tendencies when it is economically unable to support itself.
2. Cubans will become so upset by the conditions in their country that they will revolt from within.

Cons

1. The embargo is inhumane. Many Cubans suffer from a lack of medicine and medical supplies only available from the U.S. Cubans also lack sufficient food and hygiene products.
2. The embargo has been in existence for nearly 40 years and it has not worked. Why continue it?
3. The U.S. government's imposition of travel restrictions contradict its own constitution.
4. U.S. businesses and farmers would benefit from the opportunity to trade with and participate in business ventures in Cuba.

8. Considering that China is also a communist country, why is it that we have not imposed an embargo on it?

- This is another example of the U.S contradicting its own policies. Most likely, we do not impose sanctions on China because we benefit from having open trade relations with them. Definitively, there is more to it than that, but more than anything this question is designed to get the students to think critically.