



# NOTE ON PERSONAL TRAVEL TO CUBA

As of March 12, 2018

This note addresses personal travel to Cuba unrelated to any University purpose or program. Because NYU does not provide legal advice regarding personal travel to Cuba, this note is being provided for informational purposes only. You are solely responsible for complying with any legal requirements and obligations for personal travel to Cuba, including with respect to any items brought with you to, or imported from, Cuba. NYU encourages you to consult with a lawyer or other advisor for further information or to answer any questions you may have.

If you plan to travel to Cuba for NYU purposes (e.g., an academic course, research or a conference), please read the Office of General Counsel Memorandum on Traveling to Cuba for Academic Purposes (available [here](#)) or contact the [Office of General Counsel](#).

## Background On U.S. Regulations On Personal Travel to Cuba.

U.S. government sanctions restrict travel from the United States to Cuba by U.S. persons, including NYU students, faculty and staff, regardless of nationality (i.e., the sanctions regulations apply to foreign nationals studying and working at NYU in New York, NYU Washington, DC or at other locations in the U.S.). Violations of the sanctions regulations can lead to civil and criminal penalties.

The sanctions regulations prohibit travel to Cuba for tourist purposes from the U.S., regardless of your nationality. Pursuant to the sanctions regulations, in order to travel to Cuba, your travel must qualify under one of the 12 categories of travel to Cuba authorized by the U.S. government (family visits; official U.S. government business; journalistic activity; professional research and meetings; educational activities; religious activities; public performances, clinics, workshops, athletic or other competitions, and exhibitions; and support for the Cuban people; humanitarian projects, activities of private foundations or research or educational institutes; exportation, importation or transmission of information or informational materials; and travel related to certain authorized export transactions).

## Note on Support for the Cuban People.

Many people traveling to Cuba for non-academic purposes choose to travel under the 'Support for the Cuban People' category. The 'Support for the Cuban People' category requires travelers to engage in a full-time schedule of activities that "(i) enhance contact with the Cuban people, support civil society in Cuba, or promote the Cuban people's independence from Cuban authorities; and (ii) result in meaningful interaction with individuals in Cuba." (31 CFR §515.574)

Examples of activities that qualify under this category include staying in a room at a rented accommodation in a private Cuban residence (casa particular), eating at privately-owned Cuban restaurants (paladares), and shopping at privately-owned stores run by self-employed Cubans (cuentapropista). However, additional activities are required to constitute a full-time schedule of authorized activity. More information on the 'Support for the Cuban People' category, including notes and additional examples of qualifying activities, is available at 31 CFR §515.574 ([see link](#)).



## Restricted Entities List.

In addition to qualifying under one of the 12 permitted categories described above, travelers to Cuba may not engage in direct financial transactions with Cuban entities (e.g., hotels, restaurants, stores, tourist agencies, rum companies) on the U.S. Department of State List of Restricted Entities and Subentities Associated with Cuba ([see link](#)). Travelers may not stay at hotels on the list, purchase from stores on the list or otherwise enter into financial transactions with entities on the list.

## Additional U.S. Requirements.

There may be additional restrictions on and requirements related to technology (e.g., laptops and mobile phones) that may be brought to Cuba and merchandise that may be brought back from Cuba. All travelers to Cuba are required to maintain records and receipts of all transactions related to Cuba travel for five years following the completion of travel.

## U.S. Visa Questions.

Contact NYU's [Office of Global Services](#) for questions regarding your U.S. visa.

## Cuban Regulatory Issues.

Travelers to Cuba should also be aware that there may be Cuban regulations that apply to their travel. For instance, Cuba requires that travelers purchase Cuban medical insurance and a tourist card. U.S. airlines often include the price of medical insurance in the ticket price, and tourist cards are often available for purchase at the airport prior to departure. Specific procedures should be confirmed with the airline.

## Further Resources

- A more detailed summary of Cuba Sanctions can be found at the Department of Treasury's [Resource Center](#).
- [Treasury Department Cuba Sanctions FAQs](#).
- Travelers may want to consult travel agencies that specialize in Cuba travel and organize trips that are intended to be consistent with the U.S. sanctions regulations. The two travel agencies below are provided for your reference only. (NYU does not endorse or recommend these or any other travel agent).

[ViaHero](#)  
[WowCuba](#)

- In addition, the following airlines provide information on travel to Cuba. (NYU does not endorse or recommend these or any other airlines).

[Delta](#)  
[JetBlue](#)  
[United](#)

## Disclaimer

*Nothing herein is intended as, nor constitutes, legal advice. It is being provided for general informational purposes only.* NYU encourages you to seek the advice of a lawyer or other expert with any questions or to obtain additional information.