

Describe something that has a major impact in your life, no matter how big or small it might be.

During my time in Havana, Cuba, I completely submerged myself into the culture and learned how to live like a Cuban. I ate strange foods, had a lot of sweets, traveled the island through the Cuban bus system, rode city buses, went to a common hospital, and had many different political, religious and frivolous conversations with people my own age, older and younger.

One of the most interesting things I came to learn how to do while in Cuba was spend my money wisely. The government functions around two different currencies, Cuban pesos (CUP) and Cuban convertible pesos (CUC); 1CUC is equivalent to about one American dollar, and 1CUC is worth about 44 Cuban pesos. Although Cubans need CUC to buy novelties such as bathing soap, they do not get paid in CUC; they receive their checks in Cuban pesos.

The taboo that is this Socialist government comes about when considering the control over the currency and what people can access. Aside from monetary concerns, Cubans are some of the most optimistic people I have ever surrounded myself with. They try their best to make things work regardless of their living conditions, and one of those ways is with Coppelia.

Coppelia is a national ice cream parlor that serves one ice cream scoop for 1 Cuban peso. Cubans use this place to go out and enjoy any day or night. Although the lines are long at times, it is an activity that I was able to appreciate. My favorite memory of Cuba was learning how to enjoy myself without technology and reinvent fun with the people and places that were at my avail. Going to places such as Coppelia allowed me to appreciate not only what I had in Cuba, but also what I have at home.