[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef) [Template:Use mdy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_mdy_dates) [Template:Coord](/wiki/Template:Coord) [Template:Infobox country](/wiki/Template:Infobox_country)

**Cuba**, officially the **Republic of Cuba** ([Template:Audio-es](/wiki/Template:Audio-es)), is a unitary [sovereign state](/wiki/Sovereign_state) comprising the island of Cuba as well as [Isla de la Juventud](/wiki/Isla_de_la_Juventud) and several minor [archipelagos](/wiki/Archipelagos). Cuba is located in the northern [Caribbean](/wiki/Caribbean) where the [Caribbean Sea](/wiki/Caribbean_Sea), the [Gulf of Mexico](/wiki/Gulf_of_Mexico), and the [Atlantic Ocean](/wiki/Atlantic_Ocean) meet. It is south of both the [U.S.](/wiki/United_States) state of [Florida](/wiki/Florida) and [the Bahamas](/wiki/The_Bahamas), west of [Haiti](/wiki/Haiti), and north of [Jamaica](/wiki/Jamaica). [Havana](/wiki/Havana) is the largest city and capital; other major cities include [Santiago de Cuba](/wiki/Santiago_de_Cuba) and [Camagüey](/wiki/Camagüey). Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean, with an area of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), and the second-most populous after [Hispaniola](/wiki/Hispaniola), with over 11 million inhabitants.[[1]](#cite_note-1) Prior to Spanish colonization in the late 15th century, Cuba was inhabited by [Amerindian](/wiki/Amerindian) tribes. It remained a colony of [Spain](/wiki/Spanish_Empire) until the [Spanish–American War](/wiki/Spanish–American_War) of 1898, which led to [nominal independence](/wiki/Platt_Amendment) as a *de facto* [United States](/wiki/United_States) protectorate in 1902. As a fragile republic, Cuba attempted to [strengthen its democratic system](/wiki/Cuban_Constitution_of_1940), but mounting political radicalization and social strife culminated in the dictatorship of [Fulgencio Batista](/wiki/Fulgencio_Batista) in 1952.[[2]](#cite_note-2) Further unrest and instability led to [Batista's ousting in January 1959](/wiki/Cuban_revolution) by the [July 26 Movement](/wiki/July_26_Movement), which afterwards established a government under the leadership of [Fidel Castro](/wiki/Fidel_Castro). Since 1965, the state has been governed by the [Communist Party of Cuba](/wiki/Communist_Party_of_Cuba). A point of contention during the [Cold War](/wiki/Cold_War) between the [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union) and the United States, a [nuclear war](/wiki/Nuclear_war) nearly broke out during the [Cuban Missile Crisis](/wiki/Cuban_Missile_Crisis) of 1962.

Culturally, Cuba is considered part of [Latin America](/wiki/Latin_America).[[3]](#cite_note-3) It is a [multiethnic](/wiki/Multiethnic) country whose [people](/wiki/Cubans), [culture](/wiki/Culture_of_Cuba) and customs derive from diverse origins, including the aboriginal [Taíno](/wiki/Taíno_people) and [Ciboney](/wiki/Ciboney) peoples, the long period of [Spanish colonialism](/wiki/Spanish_Empire), the introduction of [African slaves](/wiki/Slavery_in_the_Spanish_New_World_colonies), and a close [relationship with the Soviet Union](/wiki/Cuba-Soviet_relations) in the [Cold War](/wiki/Cold_War).

Cuba is a [Marxist–Leninist](/wiki/Marxist–Leninist) [one-party republic](/wiki/One-party_state), where the role of the vanguard Communist Party is enshrined in the [Constitution](/wiki/Constitution_of_Cuba). Independent observers have accused the Cuban government of numerous [human rights](/wiki/Human_rights) abuses, including [arbitrary imprisonment](/wiki/Arbitrary_imprisonment) and torture.[[4]](#cite_note-4) Cuba is a [developing country](/wiki/Developing_country) with a [planned economy](/wiki/Planned_economy) that is dominated by the exports of sugar, tobacco, coffee and skilled labor. It ranks highly in some metrics of national performance, including [health care](/wiki/Cuba#Health) and [education](/wiki/Cuba#Education).[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6)

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## Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

The name *Cuba* comes from the [Taíno language](/wiki/Taíno_language). The exact meaning of the name is unclear but it may be translated either as 'where fertile land is abundant' (*cubao*),[[7]](#cite_note-7) or 'great place' (*coabana*).[[8]](#cite_note-8) Authors who believe that [Christopher Columbus was Portuguese](/wiki/Origin_theories_of_Christopher_Columbus) state that *Cuba* was named by Columbus for the [town of Cuba](/wiki/Cuba,_Portugal) in the district of [Beja](/wiki/Beja_(Portugal)) in [Portugal](/wiki/Portugal).[[9]](#cite_note-9)[[10]](#cite_note-10)

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

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### Prehistory[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[left|thumb|upright|Monument of](/wiki/File:Hatuey_monument,_Baracoa,_Cuba.JPG) [Hatuey](/wiki/Hatuey), an early [Taíno](/wiki/Taíno) chief of Cuba Before the arrival of the Spanish, Cuba was inhabited by three distinct tribes of [American Indian](/wiki/Indigenous_of_the_Americas) people. The [Taíno](/wiki/Taíno_people) (an [Arawak](/wiki/Arawak_peoples) people), the [Guanajatabey](/wiki/Guanajatabey), and the [Ciboney people](/wiki/Ciboney_people).

The ancestors of the Ciboney migrated from the mainland of South America, with the earliest sites dated to 5,000 BP.[[11]](#cite_note-11) The Taíno arrived from [Hispanola](/wiki/Hispanola) sometime in the 3rd century A.D. When Columbus arrived they were the dominant culture in Cuba, having an estimated population of 150,000.[[11]](#cite_note-11) The name "Cuba" comes from the native Taíno language. It is derived from either *coabana* meaning "great place," or from *cubao* meaning "where fertile land is abundant".[[12]](#cite_note-12) [Christopher Columbus](/wiki/Christopher_Columbus) commanded his three ships: *La Pinta,* *La Niña* and the *Santa María,* to land on Cuba's northeastern coast on October 28, 1492.[[13]](#cite_note-13) (This was near what is now Bariay, [Holguin province](/wiki/Holguin_province).) Columbus claimed the island for the new Kingdom of [Spain](/wiki/Spain)[[14]](#cite_note-14) and named it *Isla Juana* after [Juan, Prince of Asturias](/wiki/Juan,_Prince_of_Asturias).[[15]](#cite_note-15) [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:DiegoVelazquezCuellar.jpg)[Diego Velázquez de Cuéllar](/wiki/Diego_Velázquez_de_Cuéllar), [conquistador](/wiki/Conquistador) of Cuba In 1511, the first Spanish settlement was founded by [Diego Velázquez de Cuéllar](/wiki/Diego_Velázquez_de_Cuéllar) at [Baracoa](/wiki/Baracoa). Other towns soon followed, including [San Cristobal de la Habana](/wiki/Havana), founded in 1515, which later became the capital. The native Taíno were forced to work under the [encomienda](/wiki/Encomienda) system,[[16]](#cite_note-16) which resembled a feudal system in Medieval Europe.[[17]](#cite_note-17) Within a century the indigenous people were virtually wiped out due to multiple factors, primarily Eurasian [infectious diseases](/wiki/Infectious_disease), to which they had no natural resistance (immunity), aggravated by harsh conditions of the repressive colonial subjugation.[[18]](#cite_note-18) In 1529, a [measles](/wiki/Measles) outbreak in Cuba killed two-thirds of those few natives who had previously survived [smallpox](/wiki/Smallpox).[[19]](#cite_note-19)[[20]](#cite_note-20) On May 18, 1539, Conquistador [Hernando De Soto](/wiki/Hernando_De_Soto) departed from Havana, Cuba at the head of some 600 followers into a vast expedition through the Southeastern United States, starting at La [Florida](/wiki/Florida), in search of gold, treasure, fame and power.[[21]](#cite_note-21) On September 1, 1548, Dr. Gonzalo Perez de Angulo was appointed governor of Cuba. He arrived in Santiago, Cuba on November 4, 1549 and immediately declared the liberty of all natives.[[22]](#cite_note-22) He became Cuba's first permanent governor to reside in Havana instead of Santiago, and he built Havana's first church made of masonry.[[23]](#cite_note-23) After the French took Havana in 1555, the governor's son, Francisco de Angulo, went to Mexico.[[24]](#cite_note-24) Cuba developed slowly and, unlike the plantation islands of the Caribbean, had a diversified agriculture. But what was most important was that the colony developed as an urbanized society that primarily supported the Spanish colonial empire. By the mid-18th century, its colonists held 50,000 slaves, compared to 60,000 in [Barbados](/wiki/Barbados); 300,000 in [Virginia](/wiki/Colony_of_Virginia), both British colonies; and 450,000 in French [Saint-Domingue](/wiki/Saint-Domingue), which had large-scale sugar cane plantations.[[25]](#cite_note-25)[thumb|Map of Cuba by Cornelius van Wytfliet in 1597 (National Library of Sweden)](/wiki/File:Descriptionis_Ptolemaicæ_avgmentvm_siue_Occidentis_notitia_breui_commentario_illustrata_p193.tif)

The [Seven Years' War](/wiki/Seven_Years'_War), which erupted in 1754 across three continents, eventually arrived in the Spanish Caribbean. Spain's alliance with the French pitched them into direct conflict with the British, and in 1762 [a British expedition](/wiki/Battle_of_Havana_(1762)) of five warships and 4,000 troops set out from [Portsmouth](/wiki/Portsmouth) to capture Cuba. The British arrived on June 6, and by August had Havana under [siege](/wiki/Siege).[[26]](#cite_note-26) When Havana surrendered, the admiral of the British fleet, [George Keppel](/wiki/George_Keppel,_3rd_Earl_of_Albemarle), the 3rd [Earl of Albemarle](/wiki/Earl_of_Albemarle), entered the city as a conquering new governor and took control of the whole western part of the island. The British immediately opened up trade with their North American and Caribbean colonies, causing a rapid transformation of Cuban society. They imported food, horses and other goods into the city, as well as thousands of slaves from West Africa to work on the under developed sugar plantations.[[26]](#cite_note-26)[thumb|The](/wiki/File:LindsayCambridge.jpg) [British invasion and occupation of Havana](/wiki/British_expedition_against_Cuba) in 1762

Though Havana, which had become the third-largest city in the Americas, was to enter an era of sustained development and increasing ties with North America during this period, the British occupation of the city proved short-lived. Pressure from London sugar merchants, fearing a decline in sugar prices, forced negotiations with the Spanish over colonial territories. Less than a year after Britain seized Havana, it signed the [Peace of Paris](/wiki/Treaty_of_Paris_(1763)) together with France and Spain, ending the Seven Years' War. The treaty gave Britain [Florida](/wiki/Florida) in exchange for Cuba. The French had recommended this to Spain, advising that declining to give up Florida could result in Spain instead losing Mexico and much of the South American mainland to the British.[[26]](#cite_note-26) Many in Britain were disappointed, believing that Florida was a poor return for Cuba and [Britain's other gains in the war](/wiki/Great_Britain_in_the_Seven_Years'_War).

The real engine for the growth of Cuba's commerce in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was the [Haitian Revolution](/wiki/Haitian_Revolution). When the enslaved peoples of what had been the Caribbean's richest colony freed themselves through violent revolt, Cuban planters perceived the region's changing circumstances with both a sense of fear and opportunity. They were afraid because of the prospect that slaves might revolt in Cuba, too, and numerous prohibitions during the 1790s on the sale of slaves in Cuba that had previously been slaves in French colonies underscored this anxiety. The planters saw opportunity, however, because they thought that they could exploit the situation by transforming Cuba into the slave society and sugar-producing "pearl of the Antilles" that Haiti had been before the revolution.[[27]](#cite_note-27) As the historian Ada Ferrer has written, "At a basic level, liberation in Saint-Domingue helped entrench its denial in Cuba. As slavery and colonialism collapsed in the French colony, the Spanish island underwent transformations that were almost the mirror image of Haiti's."[[28]](#cite_note-28) Estimates suggest that between 1790 and 1820 some 325,000 Africans were imported to Cuba as slaves, which was four times the amount that had arrived between 1760 and 1790.[[29]](#cite_note-29) [thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Slaves_Unloading_Ice_in_Cuba_1832.jpg)[Slaves](/wiki/Slavery) in Cuba unloading ice from Maine, [Template:Circa](/wiki/Template:Circa) Although a smaller proportion of the population of Cuba was enslaved, at times slaves arose in revolt. In 1812 the Aponte Slave Rebellion took place but it was suppressed.[[30]](#cite_note-30) The population of Cuba in 1817 was 630,980, of which 291,021 were white, 115,691 [free people of color](/wiki/Free_people_of_color) (mixed-race), and 224,268 black slaves.[[31]](#cite_note-31) This was a much higher proportion of free blacks to slaves than in [Virginia](/wiki/Virginia), for instance, or the other Caribbean islands. Historians such as Swedish Magnus Mõrner, who studied slavery in Latin America, found that manumissions increased when slave economies were in decline, as in 18th-century Cuba and early 19th-century Maryland of the United States.[[25]](#cite_note-25)[[32]](#cite_note-32) In part due to Cuban slaves working primarily in urbanized settings, by the 19th century, there had developed the practice of *coartacion,* or "buying oneself out of slavery," a "uniquely Cuban development," according to historian Herbert S. Klein.[[33]](#cite_note-33) Due to a shortage of white labor, blacks dominated urban industries "to such an extent that when whites in large numbers came to Cuba in the middle of the nineteenth century, they were unable to displace Negro workers."[[25]](#cite_note-25) A system of diversified agriculture, with small farms and fewer slaves, served to supply the cities with produce and other goods.[[25]](#cite_note-25) In the 1820s, when the rest of Spain's empire in [Latin America](/wiki/Latin_America) rebelled and formed independent states, Cuba remained loyal. Its economy was based on serving the empire. By 1860, Cuba had 213,167 free people of color, 39% of its non-White population of 550,000.[[25]](#cite_note-25) By contrast, Virginia with about the same number of blacks, had only 58,042 or 11% who were free; the rest were enslaved.[[25]](#cite_note-25) In the antebellum years, Virginia discouraged manumissions after the [Nat Turner's Slave Rebellion](/wiki/Nat_Turner's_Slave_Rebellion) of 1831 and strengthened restrictions against free blacks, as did other southern states. In addition, there was a high demand for slaves, and Virginia planters sold many in the internal domestic slave trade, to be shipped or taken overland to the Deep South, which had greatly expanded its cotton production.

### Independence movements[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Carlos_Manuel_de_Cespedes.jpg)[Carlos Manuel de Céspedes](/wiki/Carlos_Manuel_de_Céspedes) is known as *Father of the Homeland* in Cuba, having declared the nation's independence from Spain in 1868. Full independence from Spain was the goal of a rebellion in 1868 led by planter [Carlos Manuel de Céspedes](/wiki/Carlos_Manuel_de_Céspedes). De Céspedes, a sugar planter, freed his slaves to fight with him for an independent Cuba. On December 27, 1868, he issued a decree condemning slavery in theory but accepting it in practice and declaring free any slaves whose masters present them for military service.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The 1868 rebellion resulted in a prolonged conflict known as the [Ten Years' War](/wiki/Ten_Years'_War). Two thousand Cuban Chinese joined the rebels. Chinese had been imported as indentured laborers. A monument in Havana honours the Cuban Chinese who fell in the war.[[34]](#cite_note-34) The United States declined to recognize the new Cuban government, although many European and Latin American nations did so.[[35]](#cite_note-35) In 1878, the [Pact of Zanjón](/wiki/Pact_of_Zanjón) ended the conflict, with Spain promising greater autonomy to Cuba. In 1879–1880, Cuban patriot [Calixto García](/wiki/Calixto_García) attempted to start another war known as the [Little War](/wiki/Little_War_(Cuba)) but did not receive enough support.[[36]](#cite_note-36) [Slavery in Cuba](/wiki/Slavery_in_Cuba) was abolished in 1875 and was completed in 1886.[[37]](#cite_note-37)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

An exiled dissident named [José Martí](/wiki/José_Martí) founded the Cuban Revolutionary Party in [New York](/wiki/New_York) in 1892. The aim of the party was to achieve Cuban independence from Spain.<ref name=sandler>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> In January 1895 Martí traveled to [Montecristi](/wiki/San_Fernando_de_Monte_Cristi) and [Santo Domingo](/wiki/Santo_Domingo) to join the efforts of [Máximo Gómez](/wiki/Máximo_Gómez).[[38]](#cite_note-38) Martí recorded his political views in the [*Manifesto of Montecristi*](/wiki/Manifesto_of_Montecristi).<ref name=arias>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> Fighting against the Spanish army began in Cuba on February 24, 1895, but Martí was unable to reach Cuba until April 11, 1895.[[38]](#cite_note-38) Martí was killed in the battle of Dos Rios on May 19, 1895.[[38]](#cite_note-38) His death immortalized him as Cuba's national hero.[[39]](#cite_note-39) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Calixto_García_and_William_Ludlow_in_Cuba,_1898.jpg)[Calixto García](/wiki/Calixto_García), a general of Cuban separatist rebels, (right) with U.S. Brigadier General [William Ludlow](/wiki/William_Ludlow) (Cuba, 1898) Around 200,000 Spanish troops outnumbered the much smaller rebel army, which relied mostly on [guerrilla](/wiki/Guerrilla) and [sabotage](/wiki/Sabotage) tactics. The Spaniards began a campaign of suppression. General [Valeriano Weyler](/wiki/Valeriano_Weyler), military governor of Cuba, herded the rural population into what he called *reconcentrados*, described by international observers as "fortified towns". These are often considered the prototype for 20th-century [concentration camps](/wiki/Concentration_camp).[[40]](#cite_note-40) Between 200,000 and 400,000 Cuban civilians died from starvation and disease in the camps, numbers verified by the [Red Cross](/wiki/Red_Cross) and United States Senator [Redfield Proctor](/wiki/Redfield_Proctor), a former [Secretary of War](/wiki/United_States_Secretary_of_War). American and European protests against Spanish conduct on the island followed.[[41]](#cite_note-41) The U.S. battleship [*Maine*](/wiki/USS_Maine_(ACR-1)) was sent to protect U.S. interests, but soon after arrival, she exploded in Havana harbor and sank quickly, killing nearly three quarters of her crew. The cause and responsibility for her sinking remained unclear after a board of inquiry. Popular opinion in the U.S., fueled by an active press, concluded that the Spanish were to blame and demanded action.<ref name=morison>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> Spain and the United States declared war on each other in late April 1898.

Over the decades, five U.S. presidents—[Polk](/wiki/James_K._Polk), [Pierce](/wiki/Franklin_Pierce), [Buchanan](/wiki/James_Buchanan), [Grant](/wiki/Ulysses_S._Grant), and [McKinley](/wiki/William_McKinley)—had tried to buy the island of Cuba from Spain.[[42]](#cite_note-42)[[43]](#cite_note-43)[[58]](#cite_note-58) His government carried out major social reforms. Several members of the Communist Party held office under his administration.[[59]](#cite_note-59) Cuban armed forces were not greatly involved in combat during World War II, although president Batista suggested a joint U.S.-Latin American assault on [Francoist Spain](/wiki/Spanish_State) in order to overthrow its [authoritarian](/wiki/Authoritarian) regime.[[60]](#cite_note-60) Batista adhered to the 1940 constitution's strictures preventing his re-election.[[61]](#cite_note-61) Ramon Grau San Martin was the winner of the next election, in 1944.[[56]](#cite_note-56) Grau further corroded the base of the already teetering legitimacy of the Cuban political system, in particular by undermining the deeply flawed, though not entirely ineffectual, Congress and Supreme Court.[[62]](#cite_note-62) [Carlos Prío Socarrás](/wiki/Carlos_Prío_Socarrás), a protégé of Grau, became president in 1948.[[56]](#cite_note-56) The two terms of the Auténtico Party saw an influx of investment which fueled a boom and raised living standards for all segments of society and created a prosperous middle class in most urban areas.[[63]](#cite_note-63) [thumb|right|210px|](/wiki/File:HavanaSlums1954.jpg)[Slum](/wiki/Slum) (*bohio*) dwellings in Havana, Cuba in 1954, just outside [Havana baseball stadium](/wiki/Estadio_Latinoamericano). In the background is advertising for a nearby [casino](/wiki/Casino). After running unsuccessfully for the presidency in 1952, Batista staged a coup.[[64]](#cite_note-64) He outlawed the Cuban Communist Party in 1952.[[65]](#cite_note-65) Cuba had Latin America's highest per capita consumption rates of meat, vegetables, cereals, automobiles, telephones and radios, though about one third of the population was considered poor and enjoyed relatively little of this consumption.<ref name=lewis>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

In 1958, Cuba was a relatively well-advanced country by Latin American standards, and in some cases by world standards.<ref name=asce>[Template:Harvnb](/wiki/Template:Harvnb).</ref> On the other hand, Cuba was affected by perhaps the largest labor union privileges in Latin America, including bans on dismissals and mechanization. They were obtained in large measure "at the cost of the unemployed and the peasants", leading to disparities.[[66]](#cite_note-66) Between 1933 and 1958, Cuba extended economic regulations enormously, causing economic problems.[[57]](#cite_note-57)[[67]](#cite_note-67) Unemployment became a problem as graduates entering the workforce could not find jobs.[[57]](#cite_note-57) The middle class, which was comparable to that of the United States, became increasingly dissatisfied with unemployment and political persecution. The labor unions supported Batista until the very end.[[57]](#cite_note-57)[[68]](#cite_note-68) Batista stayed in power until he was forced into exile in December 1958.[[64]](#cite_note-64)

### Revolution and Communist party rule (1959–present)[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|170px|left|](/wiki/File:CheyFidel.jpg)[Che Guevara](/wiki/Che_Guevara) and [Fidel Castro](/wiki/Fidel_Castro), photographed by [Alberto Korda](/wiki/Alberto_Korda) in 1961 In the 1950s, various organizations, including some advocating armed uprising, competed for public support in bringing about political change.[[69]](#cite_note-69) In 1956, [Fidel Castro](/wiki/Fidel_Castro) and about 80 supporters landed from the yacht [*Granma*](/wiki/Granma_(yacht)) in an attempt to start a rebellion against the Batista government.[[69]](#cite_note-69) It was not until 1958 that Castro's [July 26th Movement](/wiki/July_26th_Movement) emerged as the leading revolutionary group.[[69]](#cite_note-69) By late 1958 the rebels had broken out of the Sierra Maestra and launched a general popular insurrection. After Castro's fighters captured [Santa Clara](/wiki/Santa_Clara,_Cuba), Batista fled with his family to the Dominican Republic on January 1, 1959. Later he went into exile on the Portuguese island of Madeira and finally settled in Estoril, near Lisbon. Fidel Castro's forces entered the capital on January 8, 1959. The liberal [Manuel Urrutia Lleó](/wiki/Manuel_Urrutia_Lleó) became the provisional president.[[70]](#cite_note-70) From 1959 to 1966 Cuban insurgents fought a [six-year rebellion](/wiki/War_against_the_Bandits) in the [Escambray Mountains](/wiki/Escambray_Mountains) against the Castro government. The government's vastly superior numbers eventually crushed the insurgency. The rebellion lasted longer and involved more soldiers than the Cuban Revolution.[[71]](#cite_note-71)[[72]](#cite_note-72) The U.S. State Department has estimated that 3,200 people were executed from 1959 to 1962.[[73]](#cite_note-73) According to [Amnesty International](/wiki/Amnesty_International), death sentences from 1959–87 numbered 237 of which all but 21 were actually carried out.[[74]](#cite_note-74) Other estimates for the total number of political executions range from 4,000 to 33,000.[[75]](#cite_note-75)[[76]](#cite_note-76)[[77]](#cite_note-77) The vast majority of those executed following the 1959 revolution were policemen, politicians, and informers of the Batista regime accused of crimes such as torture and murder, and their public trials and executions had widespread popular support among the Cuban population.[[78]](#cite_note-78) The United States government initially reacted favorably to the Cuban revolution, seeing it as part of a movement to bring democracy to Latin America.[[79]](#cite_note-79) Castro's legalization of the Communist party and the hundreds of executions that followed caused a deterioration in the relationship between the two countries.[[79]](#cite_note-79) The promulgation of the [Agrarian Reform Law](/wiki/Agrarian_Reform_Laws_of_Cuba), expropriating thousands of acres of farmland, further worsened relations.[[79]](#cite_note-79) In February 1960, Castro signed a commercial agreement with Soviet Vice-Premier [Anastas Mikoyan](/wiki/Anastas_Mikoyan).[[79]](#cite_note-79) In March 1960, Eisenhower gave his approval to a CIA plan to arm and train a group of Cuban refugees to overthrow the Castro regime.[[80]](#cite_note-80) The invasion (known as the [Bay of Pigs Invasion](/wiki/Bay_of_Pigs_Invasion)) took place on April 14, 1961.[[81]](#cite_note-81) About 1,400 Cuban exiles disembarked at the [Bay of Pigs](/wiki/Bay_of_Pigs), but failed in their attempt to overthrow Castro.[[81]](#cite_note-81) In January 1962, Cuba was suspended from the [Organization of American States](/wiki/Organization_of_American_States) (OAS), and later the same year the OAS started to impose sanctions against Cuba of similar nature to the US sanctions.[[82]](#cite_note-82) The [Cuban Missile Crisis](/wiki/Cuban_Missile_Crisis) occurred in October 1962. By 1963, Cuba was moving towards a full-fledged Communist system modeled on the USSR.[[83]](#cite_note-83) [thumb|Fidel Castro and members of the](/wiki/File:Bundesarchiv_Bild_183-L0614-040,_Berlin,_Fidel_Castro_an_der_Grenze.jpg) [East German](/wiki/East_Germany) [Politburo](/wiki/Politburo) in 1972 During the 1970s, Fidel Castro dispatched tens of thousands of troops in support of Soviet-supported wars in Africa. He supported the [MPLA](/wiki/Popular_Movement_for_the_Liberation_of_Angola) in [Angola](/wiki/Angola) and [Mengistu Haile Mariam](/wiki/Mengistu_Haile_Mariam) in [Ethiopia](/wiki/Ethiopia).[[84]](#cite_note-84) The standard of living in the 1970s was "extremely spartan" and discontent was rife.<ref name=cambridge>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)[Template:Page needed](/wiki/Template:Page_needed)</ref> Fidel Castro admitted the failures of economic policies in a 1970 speech.<ref name=cambridge/> In 1975 the OAS lifted its sanctions against Cuba, with the approval of 16 member states, including the U.S. The U.S., however, maintained its own sanctions.[[82]](#cite_note-82) Castro's rule was severely tested in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse in 1991 (known in Cuba as the [Special Period](/wiki/Special_Period)). The country faced a severe economic downturn following the withdrawal of Soviet subsidies worth [Template:Nowrap](/wiki/Template:Nowrap) to [Template:Nowrap](/wiki/Template:Nowrap) annually, resulting in effects such as food and fuel shortages.<ref name=cmaj>[Template:Cite journal](/wiki/Template:Cite_journal)</ref>[[85]](#cite_note-85) The government did not accept American donations of food, medicines, and cash until 1993.<ref name=cmaj/> On August 5, 1994, state security dispersed protesters in a [spontaneous protest](/wiki/Maleconazo_uprising) in Havana.[[86]](#cite_note-86) [thumb|left|Fidel Castro with South African president](/wiki/File:FidelCastro645.jpg) [Thabo Mbeki](/wiki/Thabo_Mbeki) and the Swedish prime minister [Göran Persson](/wiki/Göran_Persson), 2005 Cuba has found a new source of aid and support in the People's Republic of China. [Hugo Chávez](/wiki/Hugo_Chávez), former [President of Venezuela](/wiki/President_of_Venezuela), and [Evo Morales](/wiki/Evo_Morales), [President of Bolivia](/wiki/President_of_Bolivia), have become allies and both countries are major oil and gas exporters. In 2003, the government arrested and imprisoned a large number of civil activists, a period known as the ["Black Spring"](/wiki/Black_Spring_(Cuba)).[[87]](#cite_note-87)[[88]](#cite_note-88) In February 2008, Fidel Castro announced his resignation as President of Cuba.[[89]](#cite_note-89) On February 24 his brother, [Raúl Castro](/wiki/Raúl_Castro), was declared the new President.[[90]](#cite_note-90) In his inauguration speech, Raúl promised that some of the restrictions on freedom in Cuba would be removed.[[91]](#cite_note-91) In March 2009, Raúl Castro removed some of [his brother's appointees](/wiki/2009_Cuban_government_dismissals).[[92]](#cite_note-92) On June 3, 2009, the [Organization of American States](/wiki/Organization_of_American_States) adopted a resolution to end the 47-year ban on Cuban membership of the group.[[93]](#cite_note-93) The resolution stated, however, that full membership would be delayed until Cuba was "in conformity with the practices, purposes, and principles of the OAS."[[82]](#cite_note-82) Fidel Castro restated his position that he was not interested in joining after the OAS resolution had been announced.[[94]](#cite_note-94)[thumb|right|Raúl Castro meets with U.S. President](/wiki/File:President_Obama_Meets_with_President_Castro.png) [Barack Obama](/wiki/Barack_Obama) in Panama, April 11, 2015

Effective January 14, 2013, Cuba ended the requirement established in 1961, that any citizens who wish to travel abroad were required to obtain an expensive government permit and a letter of invitation.[[95]](#cite_note-95)[[96]](#cite_note-96)[[97]](#cite_note-97) In 1961 the Cuban government had imposed broad restrictions on travel to prevent the mass emigration of people after the 1959 revolution;[[98]](#cite_note-98) it approved exit visas only on rare occasions.[[99]](#cite_note-99) Requirements were simplified: Cubans need only a passport and a national ID card to leave; and they are allowed to take their young children with them for the first time.[[100]](#cite_note-100) However, a passport costs on average five months' salary. Observers expect that Cubans with paying relatives abroad are most likely to be able to take advantage of the new policy.[[101]](#cite_note-101) In the first year of the program, over 180,000 left Cuba and returned.[[102]](#cite_note-102) As of December 2014, talks with Cuban officials and American officials including President Barack Obama have resulted in the exchange of releasing Alan Gross, fifty-two political prisoners, and an unnamed non-citizen agent of the United States in return for the release of three Cuban agents currently imprisoned in the United States. Additionally, while the embargo between the United States and Cuba will not be immediately lifted, it will be relaxed to allow import, export, and certain commerce within a limit between the two.[[103]](#cite_note-103)

## Government and politics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|Sign promoting the](/wiki/File:CubaElectio.JPG) [2008 parliamentary election](/wiki/Cuban_parliamentary_election,_2008)

The Republic of Cuba is one of the world's last remaining [socialist](/wiki/Socialism) countries following the [Marxist-Leninist](/wiki/Marxism-Leninism) ideology. The Constitution of 1976, which defined Cuba as a [socialist republic](/wiki/Socialist_republic), was replaced by the Constitution of 1992, which is "guided by the ideas of [José Martí](/wiki/José_Martí) and the political and social ideas of [Marx](/wiki/Marx), [Engels](/wiki/Friedrich_Engels) and [Lenin](/wiki/Lenin)."<ref name=constitution>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)  
For discussion of the 1992 amendments, see [Template:Harvnb](/wiki/Template:Harvnb).</ref> The constitution describes the [Communist Party of Cuba](/wiki/Communist_Party_of_Cuba) as the "leading force of society and of the state".<ref name=constitution/>

The [First Secretary of the Communist Party](/wiki/First_Secretary_of_the_Communist_Party_of_Cuba) is concurrently President of the [Council of State](/wiki/Council_of_State_of_Cuba) ([President of Cuba](/wiki/President_of_Cuba)) and President of the [Council of Ministers](/wiki/Council_of_Ministers_of_Cuba) (sometimes referred to as [Premier of Cuba](/wiki/Premier_of_Cuba)).[[104]](#cite_note-104) Members of both councils are elected by the [National Assembly of People's Power](/wiki/National_Assembly_of_People's_Power).<ref name=constitution/> The President of Cuba, who is also elected by the Assembly, serves for five years and there is no limit to the number of terms of office.<ref name=constitution/>

[thumb|The headquarters of the](/wiki/File:Comité_Central_PCC.jpg) [Communist Party](/wiki/Communist_Party_of_Cuba) The [People's Supreme Court](/wiki/People's_Supreme_Court_of_Cuba) serves as Cuba's highest judicial branch of government. It is also the court of last resort for all appeals against the decisions of provincial courts.

Cuba's national legislature, the National Assembly of People's Power (*Asamblea Nacional de Poder Popular*), is the supreme organ of power; 609 members serve five-year terms.<ref name=constitution/> The assembly meets twice a year; between sessions legislative power is held by the 31 member Council of Ministers. Candidates for the Assembly are approved by public referendum. All Cuban citizens over 16 who have not been convicted of a criminal offense can vote.[[105]](#cite_note-105) Article 131 of the Constitution states that voting shall be "through free, equal and secret vote".<ref name=constitution/> Article 136 states: "In order for deputies or delegates to be considered elected they must get more than half the number of valid votes cast in the electoral districts".<ref name=constitution/>

No [political party](/wiki/List_of_political_parties_in_Cuba) is permitted to nominate candidates or campaign on the island, including the Communist Party.[[106]](#cite_note-106) The Communist Party of Cuba has held six party congress meetings since 1975. In 2011, the party stated that there were 800,000 members, and representatives generally constitute at least half of the Councils of state and the National Assembly. The remaining positions are filled by candidates nominally without party affiliation. Other political parties campaign and raise finances internationally, while activity within Cuba by [opposition groups](/wiki/Opposition_to_Fidel_Castro) is minimal.

In February 2013, Raúl Castro, current Cuban President, announced his resignation for 2018, that will end his current 5-year term, and hope to implement permanent term limits for future Cuban Presidents, including age limits.[[107]](#cite_note-107)

### Administrative divisions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) The country is subdivided into 15 provinces and one special municipality (Isla de la Juventud). These were formerly part of six larger historical provinces: Pinar del Río, Habana, Matanzas, Las Villas, Camagüey and Oriente. The present subdivisions closely resemble those of the Spanish military provinces during the Cuban Wars of Independence, when the most troublesome areas were subdivided. The provinces are divided into municipalities.

[thumb|450px|Provinces of Cuba](/wiki/File:CubaSubdivisions.png)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. [Pinar del Río](/wiki/Pinar_del_Río_Province) 2. [Artemisa](/wiki/Artemisa_Province) 3. [Havana](/wiki/Havana) 4. [Mayabeque](/wiki/Mayabeque_Province) 5. [Matanzas](/wiki/Matanzas_Province) 6. [Cienfuegos](/wiki/Cienfuegos_Province) 7. [Villa Clara](/wiki/Villa_Clara_Province) 8. [Sancti Spíritus](/wiki/Sancti_Spíritus_Province) | </ol>   1. [Ciego de Ávila](/wiki/Ciego_de_Ávila_Province) 2. [Camagüey](/wiki/Camagüey_Province) 3. [Las Tunas](/wiki/Las_Tunas_Province) 4. [Granma](/wiki/Granma_Province) 5. [Holguín](/wiki/Holguín_Province) 6. [Santiago de Cuba](/wiki/Santiago_de_Cuba_Province) 7. [Guantánamo](/wiki/Guantánamo_Province) 8. [Isla de la Juventud](/wiki/Isla_de_la_Juventud) |  |

### Human rights[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Damas_de_Blanco_demonstration_in_Havana,_Cuba.jpg)[Ladies in White](/wiki/Ladies_in_White) demonstration in [Havana](/wiki/Havana) (April 2012) The Cuban government has been accused of numerous [human rights abuses](/wiki/Human_rights_abuse) including [torture](/wiki/Torture_in_Cuba), arbitrary imprisonment, unfair trials, and extrajudicial executions (also known as "*El Paredón*").[[4]](#cite_note-4)[[108]](#cite_note-108) [Human Rights Watch](/wiki/Human_Rights_Watch) has stated that the government "represses nearly all forms of political dissent" and that "Cubans are systematically denied basic rights to free expression, association, assembly, privacy, movement, and due process of law".<ref name=hrw2006>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

In 2003, the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union) (EU) accused the Cuban government of "continuing flagrant violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms".[[109]](#cite_note-109) The United States continues an [embargo](/wiki/United_States_embargo_against_Cuba) against Cuba "so long as it continues to refuse to move toward democratization and greater respect for human rights",[[110]](#cite_note-110) though the [UN General Assembly](/wiki/UN_General_Assembly) has, since 1992, passed a resolution every year condemning the ongoing impact of the embargo and claiming it to be in violation of the [Charter of the United Nations](/wiki/Charter_of_the_United_Nations) and international law.[[111]](#cite_note-111) Cuba considers the embargo itself to be in violation of human rights.[[112]](#cite_note-112) On December 17, 2014, United States President [Barack Obama](/wiki/Barack_Obama) announced the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba, pushing for Congress to put an end to the embargo.[[113]](#cite_note-113) Cuba had the second-highest number of imprisoned journalists of any nation in 2008 ([China](/wiki/China) had the highest) according to various sources, including the [Committee to Protect Journalists](/wiki/Committee_to_Protect_Journalists) and Human Rights Watch.[[114]](#cite_note-114)[[115]](#cite_note-115) [Cuban dissidents](/wiki/Cuban_dissidents) face arrest and imprisonment. In the 1990s, Human Rights Watch reported that Cuba's extensive prison system, one of the largest in Latin America, consists of 40 maximum-security prisons, 30 minimum-security prisons, and over 200 work camps.<ref name=hrw1999>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> According to Human Rights Watch, Cuba's prison population is confined in "substandard and unhealthy conditions, where prisoners face physical and sexual abuse."<ref name=hrw1999/>

In 2005, the president of the EU made a declaration on behalf of member states and other regional countries:[[116]](#cite_note-116)[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

In July 2010, the unofficial Cuban Human Rights Commission said there were 167 political prisoners in Cuba, a fall from 201 at the start of the year. The head of the commission stated that long prison sentences were being replaced by harassment and intimidation.[[117]](#cite_note-117)

### Foreign relations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|Propaganda sign in front of the](/wiki/File:Havana11.JPG) [United States Interests Section in Havana](/wiki/United_States_Interests_Section_in_Havana) Cuba under Castro was heavily involved in wars in Africa, Central America and Asia.

Cuba supported [Algeria](/wiki/Algeria) in 1961–5.[[118]](#cite_note-118) Cuba sent tens of thousands of troops to [Angola](/wiki/Cuban_intervention_in_Angola) during the [Angolan Civil War](/wiki/Angolan_Civil_War).[[119]](#cite_note-119) Other countries that featured Cuban involvement include [Ethiopia](/wiki/Ethiopia),[[120]](#cite_note-120)[[121]](#cite_note-121) [Guinea](/wiki/Guinea),[[122]](#cite_note-122) [Guinea-Bissau](/wiki/Guinea-Bissau),[[123]](#cite_note-123) [Mozambique](/wiki/Mozambique),[[124]](#cite_note-124) and [Yemen](/wiki/Yemen).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Cuba has conducted a foreign policy that is uncharacteristic of such a minor, developing country.[[125]](#cite_note-125)[[126]](#cite_note-126) Lesser known actions include the 1959 missions to the [Dominican Republic](/wiki/Dominican_Republic).[[127]](#cite_note-127) The expedition failed, but a prominent monument to its members was erected in their memory in [Santo Domingo](/wiki/Santo_Domingo) by the Dominican government, and they feature prominently at the country's Memorial Museum of the Resistance.[[128]](#cite_note-128) Cuba is a founding member of the [Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas](/wiki/Bolivarian_Alliance_for_the_Americas).[[129]](#cite_note-129) At the end of 2012, tens of thousands of Cuban medical personnel worked abroad,[[130]](#cite_note-130) with as many as 30,000 doctors in Venezuela alone via the two countries' oil-for-doctors programme.[[131]](#cite_note-131) In 1996, the United States, then under President [Bill Clinton](/wiki/Bill_Clinton), brought in the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, better known as the [Helms–Burton Act](/wiki/Helms–Burton_Act).[[132]](#cite_note-132) [thumb|Raúl Castro with Mongolian President](/wiki/File:Парад_в_честь_70-летия_Великой_Победы_-_42.jpg) [Elbegdorj](/wiki/Tsakhiagiin_Elbegdorj) during the [Moscow Victory Day Parade](/wiki/2015_Moscow_Victory_Day_Parade), May 9, 2015 In 2008, the EU and Cuba agreed to resume full relations and cooperation activities.[[133]](#cite_note-133) United States President [Barack Obama](/wiki/Barack_Obama) stated on April 17, 2009, in [Trinidad and Tobago](/wiki/Trinidad_and_Tobago) that "the United States seeks a new beginning with Cuba",[[134]](#cite_note-134) and reversed the [Bush Administration's](/wiki/George_W._Bush) prohibition on travel and remittances by Cuban-Americans from the United States to Cuba.[[135]](#cite_note-135) On December 17, 2014, an agreement between the United States and Cuba, popularly called "The [Cuban Thaw](/wiki/Cuban_Thaw)", brokered in part by [Canada](/wiki/Canada) and [Pope Francis](/wiki/Pope_Francis), began the process of restoring international relations between Cuba and the United States. Cuba and the US agreed to release political prisoners and the United States began the process of creating an embassy in Havana.[[136]](#cite_note-136)[[137]](#cite_note-137)[[138]](#cite_note-138)[[139]](#cite_note-139)[[140]](#cite_note-140) On April 14, 2015, the [White House](/wiki/White_House) announced President Obama will remove Cuba from the American government's list of nations which sponsor terrorism.[[141]](#cite_note-141)[[142]](#cite_note-142) The Cuban government has reportedly welcomed the decision as "fair".[[143]](#cite_note-143) On June 30, 2015, Cuba and the U.S. reached a deal to reopen embassies in their respective capitals on July 20, 2015[[144]](#cite_note-144) and reestablish diplomatic relations.[[145]](#cite_note-145)

### Crime and law enforcement[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|A police car in](/wiki/File:Cuba_police_car_01.JPG) [Holguín](/wiki/Holguín) All law enforcement agencies are maintained under Cuba's Ministry of the Interior which is supervised by the [Revolutionary Armed Forces](/wiki/Cuban_Revolutionary_Armed_Forces). In Cuba, citizens can receive police assistance by dialing "106" on their [telephones](/wiki/Telephone).[[146]](#cite_note-146) The police force, which is referred to as "Policía Nacional Revolucionaria" or PNR is then expected to provide help. The Cuban government also has an agency called the [Intelligence Directorate](/wiki/Intelligence_Directorate) that conducts intelligence operations and maintains close ties with the [Russian Federal Security Service](/wiki/Federal_Security_Service_(Russia)).

### Military[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), Cuba spent about [Template:Nowrap](/wiki/Template:Nowrap) on its armed forces.[[147]](#cite_note-147) In 1985, Cuba devoted more than 10% of its [GDP](/wiki/GDP) to military expenditures.[[148]](#cite_note-148) In response to perceived American aggression, such as the [Bay of Pigs Invasion](/wiki/Bay_of_Pigs_Invasion), Cuba built up one of the largest armed forces in Latin America, second only to that of [Brazil](/wiki/Brazilian_Armed_Forces).<ref name=military>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

From 1975 until the late 1980s, [Soviet military](/wiki/Soviet_Armed_Forces) assistance enabled Cuba to upgrade its military capabilities. After the loss of Soviet subsidies, Cuba scaled down the numbers of military personnel, from 235,000 in 1994 to about 60,000 in 2003.[[149]](#cite_note-149)

## Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|Cuban export composition, 2009](/wiki/File:Tree_map_export_2009_Cuba.jpeg) The Cuban state claims to adhere to [socialist](/wiki/Socialist) principles in organizing its largely state-controlled [planned economy](/wiki/Planned_economy). Most of the means of production are owned and run by the government and most of the labor force is employed by the state. Recent years have seen a trend toward more private sector employment. By 2006, public sector employment was 78% and private sector 22%, compared to 91.8% to 8.2% in 1981.[[150]](#cite_note-150) Any firm wishing to hire a Cuban must pay the Cuban government, which in turn will pay the employee in Cuban pesos.[[151]](#cite_note-151) The average monthly wage as of July 2013 is 466 [Cuban pesos](/wiki/Cuban_pesos), which are worth about US$19.<ref name=moneytalk/>

[thumb|People waiting in line at a libreta store in Havana](/wiki/File:Libreta_line_Havana.jpg) Cuba has a dual currency system, whereby most wages and prices are set in Cuban pesos (CUP), while the tourist economy operates with [Convertible pesos](/wiki/Convertible_peso) (CUC), set at par with the [US dollar](/wiki/US_dollar).<ref name=moneytalk>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> Every Cuban household has a ration book (known as [libreta](/wiki/Libreta)) entitling it to a monthly supply of food and other staples, which are provided at nominal cost.<ref name=dealsoff>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref>

Before Fidel Castro's 1959 revolution, Cuba was one of the most advanced and successful countries in Latin America.[[152]](#cite_note-152) Cuba's capital, Havana, was a "glittering and dynamic city".[[152]](#cite_note-152) The country's economy in the early part of the century, fuelled by the sale of sugar to the United States, had grown wealthy. Cuba ranked 5th in the hemisphere in per capita income, 3rd in life expectancy, 2nd in per capita ownership of automobiles and telephones, and 1st in the number of television sets per inhabitant. Cuba's literacy rate, 76%, was the fourth highest in Latin America. Cuba also ranked 11th in the world in the number of doctors per capita. Several private clinics and hospitals provided services for the poor. Cuba's income distribution compared favorably with that of other Latin American societies. However, income inequality was a profound issue between city and countryside, especially between whites and blacks. Cubans lived in abysmal poverty in the countryside. A thriving middle class, according to PBS, held the promise of prosperity and social mobility.[[152]](#cite_note-152) According to Cuba historian Louis Perez of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, "Havana was then what Las Vegas has become."[[153]](#cite_note-153) [thumb|left|Cigar production in](/wiki/File:SantiagoPeople_01.JPG) [Santiago de Cuba](/wiki/Santiago_de_Cuba) After the Cuban revolution and before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba depended on Moscow for substantial aid and sheltered markets for its exports. The removal of these subsidies sent the Cuban economy into a rapid depression known in Cuba as the [Special Period](/wiki/Special_Period). Cuba took limited free market-oriented measures to alleviate severe shortages of food, consumer goods, and services. These steps included allowing some self-employment in certain retail and light manufacturing sectors, the legalization of the use of the [US dollar](/wiki/US_dollar) in business, and the encouragement of [tourism](/wiki/Tourism_in_Cuba). Cuba has developed a unique urban farm system (the [*organopónicos*](/wiki/Organopónicos)) to compensate for the end of food imports from the Soviet Union. It's widely viewed that the [U.S. embargo](/wiki/United_States_embargo_against_Cuba) which initiated as a result of discontent with nationalization of U.S.-citizen-held property and later perceived human rights violations hurts the Cuban economy.

The leadership of Cuba has called for reforms in the country's [agricultural system](/wiki/Agriculture_in_Cuba). In 2008, Raúl Castro began enacting agrarian reforms to boost food production, as at that time 80% of food was imported. The reforms enacted are aimed at expanding land usage and increasing efficiency.<ref name=food>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> Venezuela supplies Cuba with an estimated [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) a day of oil in exchange for money and the services of some 44,000 Cubans, most of them medical personnel, in Venezuela.[[154]](#cite_note-154) Estimates place Venezuelan assistance at over 20% of the Cuban GDP for 2008–2010, similar to the aid flows from the Soviet Union in 1985–1988.[[155]](#cite_note-155) [thumb|Cubans are now permitted to own small businesses in certain sectors.](/wiki/File:Havana_-_Cuba_-_2756.jpg) In 2005, Cuba had exports of [Template:Nowrap](/wiki/Template:Nowrap), ranking 114 of 226 world countries, and imports of [Template:Nowrap](/wiki/Template:Nowrap), ranking 87 of 226 countries.[[156]](#cite_note-156) Its major export partners are Canada 17.7%, China 16.9%, [Venezuela](/wiki/Venezuela) 12.5%, [Netherlands](/wiki/Netherlands) 9%, and Spain 5.9% (2012).<ref name=factbook>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Cuba's major exports are sugar, nickel, tobacco, fish, medical products, citrus fruits, and coffee;<ref name=factbook/> imports include food, fuel, clothing, and machinery. Cuba presently holds debt in an amount estimated to be [Template:Nowrap](/wiki/Template:Nowrap),[[157]](#cite_note-157) approximately 38% of GDP.[[158]](#cite_note-158) According to the [Heritage Foundation](/wiki/Heritage_Foundation), Cuba is dependent on credit accounts that rotate from country to country.<ref name=catholic/> Cuba's prior 35% supply of the world's export market for sugar has declined to 10% due to a variety of factors, including a global sugar commodity price drop that made Cuba less competitive on world markets.[[159]](#cite_note-159) It was announced in 2008 that wage caps would be abandoned to improve the nation's productivity.[[160]](#cite_note-160) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), Cubans were allowed to build their own houses. According to Raúl Castro, they will be able to improve their houses with this new permission, but the government will not endorse these new houses or improvements.[[161]](#cite_note-161) On August 2, 2011, *The New York Times* reported Cuba as reaffirming their intent to legalize "buying and selling" of private property before the year's end. According to experts, the private sale of property could "transform Cuba more than any of the economic reforms announced by President Raúl Castro's government".[[162]](#cite_note-162)It will cut more than one million state jobs, including party bureaucrats who resist the changes.[[163]](#cite_note-163) The new economic reforms effectively created a new economic system, referred by some as the "New Cuban Economy".[[164]](#cite_note-164)[[165]](#cite_note-165) In August 2012, a specialist of the "Cubaenergia Company" announced the opening of Cuba's first Solar Power Plant. As a member of the Cubasolar Group, there was also a mention of 10 additional plants in 2013.[[166]](#cite_note-166) In October 2013, as part of Raúl Castro's latest reforms, Cuba announced an end to the dual currency system.[[167]](#cite_note-167)

### Resources[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

Cuba's natural resources include sugar, tobacco, fish, citrus fruits, [coffee](/wiki/Coffee_production_in_Cuba), beans, rice, potatoes, and livestock.<ref name=factbook/>

Cuba's most important mineral resource is nickel, with 21% of total exports in 2011.<ref name=ITC>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> The output of Cuba's nickel mines that year was 71,000 tons, approaching 4% of world production.<ref name=USGS>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of) its reserves were estimated at 5.5 million tons, over 7% of the world total.<ref name=USGS/> [Sherritt International](/wiki/Sherritt_International) of Canada operates a large nickel mining facility in [Moa](/wiki/Moa,_Cuba). Cuba is also a major producer of refined [cobalt](/wiki/Cobalt), a by-product of nickel mining operations.<ref name=torres>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

Oil exploration in 2005 by the [US Geological Survey](/wiki/United_States_Geological_Survey) revealed that the North Cuba Basin could produce approximately [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) to [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of oil. In 2006, Cuba started to test-drill these locations for possible exploitation.[[168]](#cite_note-168)

### Tourism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Varaderos_beach_(5982433102).jpg)[Varadero](/wiki/Varadero) beach Tourism was initially restricted to enclave resorts where tourists would be segregated from Cuban society, referred to as "enclave tourism" and "tourism apartheid".[[169]](#cite_note-169) Contacts between foreign visitors and ordinary Cubans were *de facto* illegal between 1992 and 1997.[[170]](#cite_note-170) The rapid growth of tourism during the Special Period had widespread social and economic repercussions in Cuba, and led to speculation about the emergence of a two-tier economy.[[171]](#cite_note-171) Cuba has tripled its market share of Caribbean tourism in the last decade;[Template:When](/wiki/Template:When) as a result of significant investment in tourism infrastructure, this growth rate is predicted to continue.[[172]](#cite_note-172) [Template:Nowrap](/wiki/Template:Nowrap) tourists visited Cuba in 2003, predominantly from Canada and the European Union, generating revenue of [Template:Nowrap](/wiki/Template:Nowrap).[[173]](#cite_note-173) Cuba recorded 2,688,000 international tourists in 2011, the third-highest figure in the Caribbean (behind the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico).<ref name=unwto>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

The [medical tourism](/wiki/Medical_tourism) sector caters to thousands of European, Latin American, Canadian, and American consumers every year.

Allegations of widespread [sex tourism](/wiki/Sex_tourism) are downplayed by the Cuban Justice minister.[[174]](#cite_note-174) According to a Government of Canada travel advice website, "Cuba is actively working to prevent child sex tourism, and a number of tourists, including Canadians, have been convicted of offences related to the corruption of minors aged 16 and under. Prison sentences range from 7 to 25 years."[[175]](#cite_note-175)

## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|A general map of Cuba](/wiki/File:Cuba_rel94.jpg) Cuba is an [archipelago](/wiki/Archipelago) of islands located in the northern [Caribbean Sea](/wiki/Caribbean_Sea) at the confluence with the [Gulf of Mexico](/wiki/Gulf_of_Mexico) and the Atlantic Ocean. It lies between latitudes [19°](/wiki/19th_parallel_north) and [24°N](/wiki/24th_parallel_north), and longitudes [74°](/wiki/74th_meridian_west) and [85°W](/wiki/85th_meridian_west). The United States lies 150 kilometers (93 miles) across the [Straits of Florida](/wiki/Straits_of_Florida) to the north and northwest (to the closest tip of [Key West, Florida](/wiki/Key_West,_Florida)), and [the Bahamas](/wiki/The_Bahamas) 21 km (13 mi) to the north. [Mexico](/wiki/Mexico) lies 210 kilometers (130 miles) across the [Yucatán Channel](/wiki/Yucatán_Channel) to the west (to the closest tip of [Cabo Catoche](/wiki/Cabo_Catoche) in the State of [Quintana Roo](/wiki/Quintana_Roo)).

[Haiti](/wiki/Haiti) is 77 km (48 mi) to the east, [Jamaica](/wiki/Jamaica) (140 km/87 mi) and the [Cayman Islands](/wiki/Cayman_Islands) to the south. Cuba is the principal island, surrounded by four smaller groups of islands: the [Colorados Archipelago](/wiki/Colorados_Archipelago) on the northwestern coast, the [Sabana-Camagüey Archipelago](/wiki/Sabana-Camagüey_Archipelago) on the north-central Atlantic coast, the [Jardines de la Reina](/wiki/Jardines_de_la_Reina) on the south-central coast and the [Canarreos Archipelago](/wiki/Canarreos_Archipelago) on the southwestern coast.

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Sierra_Maestra_panorama1.jpg)[Sierra Maestra](/wiki/Sierra_Maestra) The main island, named Cuba, is [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) long, constituting most of the nation's land area ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)) and is the largest island in the [Caribbean](/wiki/Caribbean) and [17th-largest island](/wiki/List_of_islands_by_area) in the world by land area. The main island consists mostly of flat to rolling plains apart from the [Sierra Maestra](/wiki/Sierra_Maestra) mountains in the southeast, whose highest point is [Pico Turquino](/wiki/Pico_Turquino) ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)).

The second-largest island is [Isla de la Juventud](/wiki/Isla_de_la_Juventud) (Isle of Youth) in the Canarreos archipelago, with an area of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). Cuba has an official area (land area) of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). Its area is [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) including coastal and territorial waters.

### Climate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Valle_vinales_1.jpg)[Viñales Valley](/wiki/Viñales_Valley) With most of the island south of the [Tropic of Cancer](/wiki/Tropic_of_Cancer), the local climate is tropical, moderated by northeasterly trade winds that blow year-round. The temperature is also shaped by the Caribbean current, which brings in warm water from the equator. This makes the climate of Cuba warmer than Hong Kong, which is at around the same latitude as Cuba, but has a subtropical climate instead of a tropical climate. In general (with local variations), there is a drier season from November to April, and a rainier season from May to October. The average temperature is [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in January and [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in July. The warm temperatures of the Caribbean Sea and the fact that Cuba sits across the entrance to the [Gulf of Mexico](/wiki/Gulf_of_Mexico) combine to make the country prone to frequent [hurricanes](/wiki/Tropical_cyclone). These are most common in September and October.

### Biodiversity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

Cuba signed the Rio [Convention on Biological Diversity](/wiki/Convention_on_Biological_Diversity) on June 12, 1992, and became a party to the convention on March 8, 1994.[[176]](#cite_note-176) It has subsequently produced a [National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan](/wiki/Biodiversity_action_plan), with one revision which was received by the convention on January 24, 2008.[[177]](#cite_note-177) The revision comprises an action plan with time limits for each item, and an indication of the governmental body responsible for delivery. There is, however, virtually no information in that document about biodiversity itself. The country's fourth national report to the [CBD](/wiki/Convention_on_Biological_Diversity), however, contains a detailed breakdown of the numbers of species of each kingdom of life recorded from Cuba, the main groups being: [animals](/wiki/Animal) (17,801 species), [bacteria](/wiki/Bacteria) (270 species), [chromista](/wiki/Chromista) (707 species), [fungi](/wiki/Fungi), including [lichen](/wiki/Lichen)-forming species (5844 species), [plants](/wiki/Plant) (9107 species) and [protozoa](/wiki/Protozoa) (1440 species).[[178]](#cite_note-178) As elsewhere in the world, vertebrate animals and flowering plants are well documented. The numbers recorded from Cuba for those groups are therefore likely to be close to the numbers which actually occur in Cuba. For most if not all of the other groups, however, the true numbers of species occurring in Cuba are likely to exceed, often considerably, the numbers of those recorded so far.

## Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:Bar box](/wiki/Template:Bar_box)

[thumb|Students of the Escuela Lenin](/wiki/File:Escuela_Lenin(estudiantes).JPG) According to the official census of 2010, Cuba's population was 11,241,161, comprising 5,628,996 men and 5,612,165 women.[[179]](#cite_note-179) Its [birth rate](/wiki/Birth_rate) (9.88 births per thousand population in 2006)[[180]](#cite_note-180) is one of the lowest in the [Western Hemisphere](/wiki/Western_Hemisphere). Although the country has grown by around 4 million people since 1961, the rate of increase had simultaneously began to fall during that period, and the population began to decline in 2006, with a fertility rate of 1.43 children per woman.[[181]](#cite_note-181) Indeed, this drop in fertility is among the largest in the Western Hemisphere,[[182]](#cite_note-182) and is attributed largely to unrestricted access to legal abortion: Cuba's abortion rate was 58.6 per 1000 pregnancies in 1996, compared to an average of 35 in the Caribbean, 27 in Latin America overall, and 48 in Europe. Similarly, the use of contraceptives is also widespread, estimated at 79% of the female population (in the upper third of countries in the Western Hemisphere).[[183]](#cite_note-183)

### Ethnoracial groups[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

Cuba's population is multiethnic, reflecting its complex colonial origins. Intermarriage between diverse groups is widespread, and subsequently there is a discrepancy regarding the country's racial composition: whereas the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies at the University of Miami determined that 62% of Cubans are black,[[184]](#cite_note-184) the 2002 Cuban census found that a similar proportion of the population, 65.05%, was white.

[thumb|left|Young children in school uniforms](/wiki/File:La_Havane-Ecolières_en_uniforme.jpg)

In fact, the [Minority Rights Group International](/wiki/Minority_Rights_Group_International) determined that "An objective assessment of the situation of Afro-Cubans remains problematic due to scant records and a paucity of systematic studies both pre- and post-revolution. Estimates of the percentage of people of African descent in the Cuban population vary enormously, ranging from 34% to 62%".[[185]](#cite_note-185) An autosomal study from 2014 has found out the genetic ancestry in Cuba to be 72% European, 20% African and 8% Native American.[[186]](#cite_note-186) It was discovered by the National Center for Biotechnology Information through a genetic study that 2 out of 132 male sample belong to East Asian Haplogroup O2 which is found in significant frequencies among Cantonese people is found in 1.5% of the Cuban population. The study does not include any people with known Chinese ancestry. All the samples were white Cubans and black Cubans.[[187]](#cite_note-187) So, the population of Cubans with Chinese ancestry could be higher than the current recorded number of 114,240.[[188]](#cite_note-188) In recent decades Cuba has seen a rapid growth of [Evangelical](/wiki/Evangelical) [Protestants](/wiki/Protestants): "Cuba’s Christians have thrived despite the island’s politics and poverty. Their improbable, decades-long revival is often described as being rivaled only by China’s. “It’s incredible. People just come on their own, looking for God,” says a Western Baptist leader." [[200]](#cite_note-200) Cuba is officially a secular state. Religious freedom increased through the 1980s,[[201]](#cite_note-201) with the government amending the constitution in 1992 to drop the state's characterization as atheistic.[[202]](#cite_note-202) [Roman Catholicism](/wiki/Roman_Catholicism) is the largest religion, with its origins rooted in Spanish colonization. Despite less than half of the population identifying as Catholics in 2006, it nonetheless remains the dominant faith.<ref name=catholic>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI visited Cuba in 1998 and 2011, respectively, and Pope Francis visited Cuba in September 2015.[[203]](#cite_note-203)[[204]](#cite_note-204) Prior to each papal visit, the Cuban government pardoned prisoners as a humanitarian gesture.[[205]](#cite_note-205)[[206]](#cite_note-206) The religious landscape of Cuba is also strongly defined by [syncretisms](/wiki/Syncretisms) of various kinds. Christianity is often practiced in tandem with [Santería](/wiki/Santería), a mixture of Catholicism and mostly African faiths, which include a number of cults. La Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre (the Virgin of *Cobre*) is the Catholic patroness of Cuba, and a symbol of Cuban culture. In Santería, she has been syncretized with the goddess [Oshun](/wiki/Oshun).

Cuba also hosts small communities of [Jews](/wiki/Jews) (500 in 2012), [Muslims](/wiki/Muslims), and members of the [Bahá'í](/wiki/Bahá'í) Faith.[[207]](#cite_note-207) Several well known Cuban religious figures have operated outside the island such as the charismatic Pentecostal preacher Lazaro Santana[[208]](#cite_note-208) and humanitarian and author [Jorge Armando Pérez](/wiki/Jorge_Armando_Pérez).

### Languages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

The official language of Cuba is [Spanish](/wiki/Spanish_language) and the vast majority of Cubans speak it. Spanish as spoken in Cuba is known as [Cuban Spanish](/wiki/Cuban_Spanish) and is a form of [Caribbean Spanish](/wiki/Caribbean_Spanish). [Lucumí](/wiki/Lucumí_language), a dialect of the West African language [Yoruba](/wiki/Yoruba_language), is also used as a [liturgical language](/wiki/Liturgical_language) by practitioners of [Santería](/wiki/Santería),[[209]](#cite_note-209) and so only as a second language.[[210]](#cite_note-210) [Haitian Creole](/wiki/Haitian_Creole) is the second largest language in Cuba, and is spoken by [Haitian](/wiki/Haitians) immigrants and their descendants.[[211]](#cite_note-211) Other languages spoken by immigrants include [Galician](/wiki/Galician_language) and [Corsican](/wiki/Corsican_language).[[212]](#cite_note-212)

### Largest cities[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

[Template:Largest cities of Cuba](/wiki/Template:Largest_cities_of_Cuba) See Also [List of cities in Cuba](/wiki/List_of_cities_in_Cuba)

Nº City Population Province

* 1 Havana 2,135,498 Havana[3]
* 2 Santiago de Cuba 425,851 Santiago de Cuba
* 3 Camagüey 305,845 Camagüey
* 4 Holguín 277,050 Holguín
* 5 Guantánamo 207 857 Guantánamo
* 6 Santa Clara 205,812 Villa Clara
* 7 Las Tunas 153,982 Las Tunas
* 8 Bayamo 147,563 Granma
* 9 Cienfuegos 144,207 Cienfuegos
* 10 Pinar del Río 137,523 Pinar del Río
* 11 Matanzas 132,664 Matanzas
* 12 Ciego de Ávila, 110,422, Ciego de Ávila

## Media[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) The Cuban government and Communist Party of Cuba control almost all media in Cuba.

### Press[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

* [Granma](/wiki/Granma_(newspaper)) brings:

[Reflections of Fidel](http://www.granma.cu/idiomas/ingles/reflections-i/reflections-i.html) Castro

Speeches of Raul Castro.

### Television[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

Five Communist controlled national channels:

* [Cubavisión](/wiki/Cubavisión)
* [Tele Rebelde](/wiki/Tele_Rebelde)
* [Canal Educativo](/wiki/Canal_Educativo)
* [Canal Educativo 2](/wiki/Canal_Educativo_2)
* [Multivisión](/wiki/Multivisión_(Cuba))

### Internet[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[Internet in Cuba](/wiki/Internet_in_Cuba) has some of the lowest penetration rates in the Western hemisphere, and all content is subject to review by the [Department of Revolutionary Orientation](/wiki/Department_of_Revolutionary_Orientation).[[213]](#cite_note-213) [ETECSA](/wiki/ETECSA) operates 118 cybercafes in the country.[[213]](#cite_note-213) The government of Cuba provides an online encyclopedia website called [EcuRed](/wiki/EcuRed) that operates in a "[wiki](/wiki/Wiki)" format.[[214]](#cite_note-214) Internet access is limited.[[215]](#cite_note-215) The sale of computer equipment is strictly regulated. Internet access is controlled, and e-mail is closely monitored.<ref name=rsf>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)[Template:Dead link](/wiki/Template:Dead_link)[Template:Cbignore](/wiki/Template:Cbignore)</ref>

## Culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|left|A local musical house, Casa de la Trova in Santiago de Cuba](/wiki/File:Casa_de_la_Trova_Santiago_Cuba.jpg) Cuban culture is influenced by its melting pot of cultures, primarily those of Spain and Africa. After the 1959 revolution, the government started a national literacy campaign, offered free education to all and established rigorous sports, ballet and music programs.<ref name=hsas>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref>

### Music[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

[Template:Double image](/wiki/Template:Double_image) [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Cuban music is very rich and is the most commonly known expression of culture. The central form of this music is [Son](/wiki/Son_(music)), which has been the basis of many other musical styles like [salsa](/wiki/Salsa_music), [rumba](/wiki/Cuban_Rumba) and [mambo](/wiki/Mambo_(music)) and an upbeat derivation of the rumba, the [cha-cha-cha](/wiki/Cha-cha-cha_(music)). Rumba music originated in early Afro-Cuban culture.[[216]](#cite_note-216) The [Tres](/wiki/Tres_(musical_instrument)) was also invented in Cuba, but other traditional Cuban instruments are of African origin, [Taíno](/wiki/Neo-Taíno_nations) origin, or both, such as the [maracas](/wiki/Maraca), [güiro](/wiki/Güiro), [marimba](/wiki/Marimba) and various wooden drums including the [mayohuacan](/wiki/Mayohuacan).

Popular Cuban music of all styles has been enjoyed and praised widely across the world. Cuban classical music, which includes music with strong African and European influences, and features symphonic works as well as music for soloists, has received international acclaim thanks to composers like [Ernesto Lecuona](/wiki/Ernesto_Lecuona). Havana was the heart of the [rap](/wiki/Rap) scene in Cuba when it began in the 1990s.

During that time, [reggaetón](/wiki/Reggaetón) was growing in popularity. In 2011, the Cuban state denounced reggaeton as degenerate, directed reduced "low-profile" airplay of the genre (but did not ban it entirely) and banned the megahit *Chupi Chupi* by [Osmani García](/wiki/Osmani_García), characterizing its description of sex as "the sort which a prostitute would carry out".[[217]](#cite_note-217) In December 2012, the Cuban government officially banned sexually explicit reggaeton songs and music videos from radio and television.[[218]](#cite_note-218)[[219]](#cite_note-219)Dance in Cuba has taken a major boost over the 1990s. As well as pop, classical and rock are very popular in Cuba.

### Cuisine[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|A traditional meal of *ropa vieja* (shredded flank steak in a tomato sauce base), black beans, yellow rice, plantains and fried yuca with beer](/wiki/File:Cubanfood.jpg) [thumb|Cuban-style tamales](/wiki/File:La_Havane_(1)_Tamales_pliés.jpg) Cuban cuisine is a fusion of [Spanish](/wiki/Spanish_cuisine) and [Caribbean cuisines](/wiki/Caribbean_cuisine). Cuban recipes share spices and techniques with Spanish cooking, with some Caribbean influence in spice and flavor. Food rationing, which has been the norm in Cuba for the last four decades, restricts the common availability of these dishes.[[220]](#cite_note-220) The traditional Cuban meal is not served in courses; all food items are served at the same time.

The typical meal could consist of plantains, black beans and rice, [*ropa vieja*](/wiki/Ropa_vieja) (shredded beef), [Cuban bread](/wiki/Cuban_bread), pork with onions, and tropical fruits. Black beans and rice, referred to as [*Moros y Cristianos*](/wiki/Moros_y_Cristianos) (or *moros* for short), and plantains are staples of the Cuban diet. Many of the meat dishes are cooked slowly with light sauces. Garlic, cumin, oregano, and bay leaves are the dominant spices.

### Literature[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Cuban literature began to find its voice in the early 19th century. Dominant themes of independence and freedom were exemplified by José Martí, who led the Modernist movement in Cuban literature. Writers such as [Nicolás Guillén](/wiki/Nicolás_Guillén) and [Jose Z. Tallet](/wiki/Jose_Z._Tallet) focused on literature as social protest. The poetry and novels of [Dulce María Loynaz](/wiki/Dulce_María_Loynaz) and [José Lezama Lima](/wiki/José_Lezama_Lima) have been influential. Romanticist [Miguel Barnet](/wiki/Miguel_Barnet), who wrote *Everyone Dreamed of Cuba*, reflects a more melancholy Cuba.[[221]](#cite_note-221) Writers such as [Reinaldo Arenas](/wiki/Reinaldo_Arenas), [Guillermo Cabrera Infante](/wiki/Guillermo_Cabrera_Infante), and more recently [Daína Chaviano](/wiki/Daína_Chaviano), [Pedro Juan Gutiérrez](/wiki/Pedro_Juan_Gutiérrez), [Zoé Valdés](/wiki/Zoé_Valdés), [Guillermo Rosales](/wiki/Guillermo_Rosales) and [Leonardo Padura](/wiki/Leonardo_Padura) have earned international recognition in the post-revolutionary era, though many of these writers have felt compelled to continue their work in exile due to ideological control of media by the Cuban authorities.

## Sports[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [left|thumb|Cuban former boxer](/wiki/File:Bundesarchiv_Bild_183-1985-1004-023,_Teofilo_Stevenson_cropped.jpg) [Teófilo Stevenson](/wiki/Teófilo_Stevenson), widely considered to be one of the greatest boxers of all-time Due to historical associations with the United States, many Cubans participate in sports which are popular in North America, rather than sports traditionally promoted in other Latin American nations. [Baseball](/wiki/Baseball_in_Cuba) is by far the most popular; other sports and pastimes include [football](/wiki/Association_football), [basketball](/wiki/Basketball), [volleyball](/wiki/Volleyball), [cricket](/wiki/Cricket), and [athletics](/wiki/Track_and_field_athletics). Cuba is a dominant force in [amateur boxing](/wiki/Amateur_boxing), consistently achieving high medal tallies in major international competitions. Cuba also provides a [national team](/wiki/Cuba_at_the_Olympics) that competes in the [Olympic Games](/wiki/Olympic_Games).[[222]](#cite_note-222)

## Education[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [right|thumb|](/wiki/File:Università_de_La_Habana.jpg)[University of Havana](/wiki/University_of_Havana), founded in 1728 The [University of Havana](/wiki/University_of_Havana) was founded in 1728 and there are a number of other well-established [colleges and universities](/wiki/List_of_universities_in_Cuba). In 1957, just before Castro came to power, the literacy rate was fourth in the region at almost 80% according to the United Nations, higher than in Spain.<ref name=asce/>[[223]](#cite_note-223) Castro created an entirely state-operated system and banned private institutions. School attendance is compulsory from ages six to the end of basic secondary education (normally at age 15), and all students, regardless of age or gender, wear school uniforms with the color denoting grade level. Primary education lasts for six years, secondary education is divided into basic and pre-university education.[[224]](#cite_note-224) Cuba's [literacy rate](/wiki/Literacy_rate) of 99.8 percent[[225]](#cite_note-225) is the [tenth-highest globally](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_literacy_rate), due largely to the provision of free education at every level.[[226]](#cite_note-226) Cuba's high school graduation rate is 94 percent.[[227]](#cite_note-227) Higher education is provided by universities, higher institutes, higher [pedagogical](/wiki/Pedagogical) institutes, and higher [polytechnic](/wiki/List_of_institutions_using_the_term_%22institute_of_technology%22_or_%22polytechnic%22) institutes. The Cuban Ministry of Higher Education operates a scheme of distance education which provides regular afternoon and evening courses in rural areas for agricultural workers. Education has a strong political and ideological emphasis, and students progressing to higher education are expected to have a commitment to the goals of Cuba.[[224]](#cite_note-224) Cuba has provided state subsidized education to a limited number of foreign nationals at the [Latin American School of Medicine](/wiki/Latin_American_School_of_Medicine_(Cuba)).[[228]](#cite_note-228)[[229]](#cite_note-229) According to the [Webometrics Ranking of World Universities](/wiki/Webometrics_Ranking_of_World_Universities), the top-ranking universities in the country are [Universidad de la Habana](/wiki/Universidad_de_la_Habana) (1680th worldwide), [Instituto Superior Politécnico José Antonio Echeverría](/wiki/Instituto_Superior_Politécnico_José_Antonio_Echeverría) (2893rd) and the [University of Santiago de Cuba](/wiki/University_of_Santiago_de_Cuba) (3831st).[[230]](#cite_note-230)

## Health[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Cuba's [life expectancy](/wiki/Life_expectancy) at birth is 78 years.<ref name=factbook/> Historically, Cuba has ranked high in numbers of medical personnel and has made significant contributions to world health since the 19th century.<ref name=asce/> Today, Cuba has [universal health care](/wiki/Universal_health_care) and although shortages of medical supplies persist, there is no shortage of medical personnel.<ref name=whiteford>[Template:Harvnb](/wiki/Template:Harvnb)</ref> Primary care is available throughout the island and infant and maternal mortality rates compare favorably with those in developed nations.<ref name=whiteford/>

Post-Revolution Cuba initially experienced an overall worsening in terms of disease and infant mortality rates in the 1960s when half its 6,000 doctors left the country.[[231]](#cite_note-231) Recovery occurred by the 1980s,<ref name=bethell/> and the country's healthcare has been widely praised.[[232]](#cite_note-232) The Communist government asserted that universal health care was to become a priority of state planning and progress was made in rural areas.[[233]](#cite_note-233) Like the rest of the [Cuban economy](/wiki/Economy_of_Cuba), Cuban medical care suffered from severe material shortages following the end of Soviet subsidies in 1991, followed by a tightening of the U.S. embargo in 1992.[[234]](#cite_note-234) Challenges include low pay of doctors (still only US$60 a month, even after a 150% pay rise[[235]](#cite_note-235)), poor facilities, poor provision of equipment, and frequent absence of essential drugs.[[236]](#cite_note-236) Cuba has the highest doctor-to-population ratio in the world and has sent thousands of doctors to more than 40 countries around the world.[[237]](#cite_note-237) According to the [World Health Organization](/wiki/World_Health_Organization), Cuba is "known the world over for its ability to train excellent doctors and nurses who can then go out to help other countries in need". As of September 2014 there are around 50,000 Cuban-trained health care workers aiding 66 nations.[[238]](#cite_note-238) Cuban physicians have played a leading role in combating the [Ebola virus epidemic in West Africa](/wiki/Ebola_virus_epidemic_in_West_Africa).[[239]](#cite_note-239) According to the UN, the life expectancy in Cuba is 78.3 years (76.2 for males and 80.4 for females). This ranks Cuba 37th in the world and 3rd in the Americas, behind only Canada and Chile, and just ahead of the United States. Infant mortality in Cuba declined from 32 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 1957, to 10 in 1990–95.[[240]](#cite_note-240) Infant mortality in 2000–2005 was 6.1 per 1,000 live births. Its [infant mortality rate](/wiki/Infant_mortality_rate) is 5.13.[[225]](#cite_note-225) In Cuba, there is a need to import certain [pharmaceutical drugs](/wiki/Pharmaceutical_drug). Therefore, the Quimefa Pharmaceutical Business Group (FARMACUBA) was developed under The Ministry of Basic Industry (MINBAS). This group also handles the exporting of pharmaceuticals, and provide technical information for the production of these drugs.[[241]](#cite_note-241) Isolated from the West, Cuba developed the successful lung cancer vaccine, [Cimavax](/wiki/CimaVax-EGF), which now is available to US researchers for the first time, along with other novel Cuban cancer treatments. The vaccine has been available for free to the Cuban population since 2011.[[242]](#cite_note-242) According to [Roswell Park Cancer Institute](/wiki/Roswell_Park_Cancer_Institute) CEO Candace Johnson: "They've had to do more with less, so they've had to be even more innovative with how they approach things. For over 40 years, they have had a preeminent immunology community."[[243]](#cite_note-243) In 2015, Cuba became the first country to eradicate [mother-to-child transmission](/wiki/Mother-to-child_transmission) of HIV and syphilis,[[244]](#cite_note-244) a milestone hailed by the [World Health Organization](/wiki/World_Health_Organization) as "one of the greatest public health achievements possible".[[245]](#cite_note-245)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]

[Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal)

* [Greater Antilles](/wiki/Greater_Antilles)
* [Index of Cuba-related articles](/wiki/Index_of_Cuba-related_articles)
* [International rankings of Cuba](/wiki/International_rankings_of_Cuba)
* [List of Cubans](/wiki/List_of_Cubans)
* [List of island countries](/wiki/List_of_island_countries)
* [List of places in Cuba](/wiki/List_of_places_in_Cuba)
* [Outline of Cuba](/wiki/Outline_of_Cuba)
* [Television Serrana](/wiki/Television_Serrana)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=38)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

## Bibliography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=39)]

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## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=40)]

[Template:Sister project links](/wiki/Template:Sister_project_links)

* [Official site of the Government of Cuba](http://www.cubagob.cu/) [Template:Es icon](/wiki/Template:Es_icon)
* [Cuba](http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/govpubs/for/cuba.htm) from [University of Colorado Boulder](/wiki/University_of_Colorado_Boulder) Libraries
* [Template:CIA World Factbook link](/wiki/Template:CIA_World_Factbook_link)
* [Key Development Forecasts for Cuba](http://www.ifs.du.edu/ifs/frm_CountryProfile.aspx?Country=CU) from [International Futures](/wiki/International_Futures)
* [Template:Dmoz](/wiki/Template:Dmoz)
* [Template:Wikiatlas](/wiki/Template:Wikiatlas)

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