



Cuba Solidarity Campaign
C/o Unite, 33-37 Moreland Street, London EC1V 8BB
Tel 020 7490 5715 E: office@cuba-solidarity.org.uk
W: www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk

24 January 2018

Dear Challenger

CUBA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN
Cycle Cuba Challenge
Revolutionary Rebel Route
8-20 November 2018



Thank you for your recent enquiry about the Cuba Solidarity Campaign unique and exciting Cycle Cuba Challenge 2018. Monies raised will go towards purchasing essential educational equipment for young Cuban school children with physical disabilities and supporting the vital campaign work of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign. The cycle group will deliver aid directly to Solidarity with Panama School for physically disabled children in Havana, where many essential items are in critical short supply. We will be guaranteed a rousing reception and gifted musical performance from the school band, so do expect to get to your feet and join in with the celebrations!

We have run an annual sponsored cycle challenge in Cuba since 1999. Many intrepid challengers have taken part in these events and successfully raised funds for vital educational and medical aid projects in Cuba, including over 20,000 asthma inhalers, 50,000 contact lenses to a children's hospital, specialist Braille printers, musical and recording equipment and speaking watches to a school for visually impaired children and the complete repair and renovation of the Miramar Community Theatre in Havana.

Cycle Cuba Challenge is run by Cuba Solidarity Campaign in association with Havanatour (ATOL 4636).

The **Revolutionary Rebel Route** runs 355 exhilarating kilometres through western Cuba. From Soroa to Cayo Jutiás and back to San Diego de los Baños climbing to the remote and rugged La Güira National Park to visit Che Guevara's secret underground HQ during the 1962 October Missile Crisis. The route passes through the lush forests of Sierra del Rosario, the tobacco fields of Pinar del Río following the Viñales Valley, with its soaring limestone *mogotes*, onto the Gulf of Mexico with its pristine white sandy beaches. We cycle to the salsa beat through dramatic scenery and along quiet rural roads away from the usual tourist trails, with opportunities to experience vibrant Cuban culture at first hand. From the finishing line we return to Havana, the salsa capital of the world, for further exploration of this fascinating capital city and to celebrate a wonderful group achievement with our famous celebratory meal at an authentic Cuban restaurant.

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To be part of the Challenge simply complete and return the enclosed registration forms with your registration fee of £250. You will then need to raise the minimum sponsorship entry level of £2,699. We will give you plenty of fundraising tips and we're only a phone call away if you need any help.

Past participants or 2 people booking together register for only £150 each

Go on, grab the experience of a lifetime and register today. When you are cycling through a beautiful rural Cuban landscape by day and dancing to an intoxicating salsa rhythm by night you won't regret it. Cycle Cuba Challenge is a great way to break the decade's long illegal US economic blockade of Cuba and be involved in delivering essential educational equipment direct to young Cuban school children.

The tour costs include return flights with Virgin Atlantic from London Gatwick direct to Havana, UK Departure Tax, Cuban Tourist Card (visa), 11-night's accommodation based on two people sharing twin rooms with en suite facilities, entrance to all visits and excursions (other than those marked as optional) and all meals listed in the itinerary. There are comprehensive back up and support services throughout the Challenge.

- Dedicated support team including a cycle tour manager, a fully qualified mechanic, who works with the Cuban national cycle team, and an English speaking local guide.
- 100% vehicle support. Transfers in air-conditioned coach.
- Luggage and spare parts carried on support vehicle.
- 4L of bottled water per cyclist per cycling day.
- Detailed route descriptions and daily briefing sessions.
- Hotel accommodation equivalent to 2/3/4 star standards ranging from colonial splendour and charming rural hotels.
- Full board (except 3 lunches and 2 evening meals). Pack lunch on cycle days.
- Special invitation to participate in a Trade Union event in Pinar del Río, a provincial capital.
- Specialist visits to Solidarity with Panama School for children with physical disabilities, a local health care centre and a Committee for the Defence of the Revolution neighbourhood community project.
- Guided cultural and historical visits, including Che Guevara's secret underground HQ during the October Missile Crisis and Comandancia del Che Museum, thrilling Casa de la Música, a traditional live Cuban music venue, walking tours of Pinar and Old Havana, a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- Optional visit (cycle time permitting) to Casa Garay Guayabita factory, a famous Pinar guava brandy.
- Guided hike into Santo Tomás caves, Cuba's largest cave system.
- Celebratory evening meal at a top Havana restaurant.

After receipt of your registration fee we will send you:

- Sponsorship forms and a detailed fundraising pack including ideas and suggestions to help you reach your sponsorship goal.

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- A suggested training schedule.
- Cycle Cuba Challenge T-shirt.
- A detailed Information Dossier including recommended kit list.

You will need to bring your own bike and cycle helmet. The cycling is all on road. Mountain, tourer and hybrid bikes are ideal for this challenge. We recommend a wide range of gears, with a good low ratio. Full details will be included in the Information Dossier. You should have experience of cycling on roads and be fit and healthy. It is recommended that you follow the suggested training schedule before departure.

What is not included: travel insurance, single room supplement if required (£250 per person), 3 lunches and 2 evening meals and any visits listed as optional.

Early booking is strongly recommended to ensure flight availability and no increase in flight costs; Virgin may levy an additional supplement as the flight becomes full. If a supplement is payable at the time of receipt of Booking Forms then we will inform you. If you choose not to continue at this point then we will arrange a full refund of your Registration Fee. We would anticipate that flight prices will start to increase closer to the departure date and availability will become restricted. **We would recommend that you submit your completed Booking Form as early as possible to avoid disappointment.**

CYCLE CUBA CHALLENGE 2018 ITINERARY

TRIP PROFILE



A fully supported point-to-point road tour in the central provinces of the island. The total cycling distance is approximately 355kms over 5 cycling days. The average distance per cycling day is 62kms and the longest day is 80kms. The route is classified as moderate to challenging. The terrain ranges from undulating to hilly with several steep and demanding climbs and downhill descents. Though many roads are in fair to good condition you should expect numerous potholes and poor surface conditions on some sections. The roads are tarmac and generally free of heavy traffic. It is suitable for recreational riders and above, or fit and confident novices

who are comfortable on a bike. There is a steep hike to the dramatic Santo Tomás Caves in Valle de Quemado. Mid-level fitness is required, for example running, cycling or swimming 2-3 times a week. Average national temperatures are 29/30°C in November.

There is vehicle support at all times, enabling you to take a lift at any point if you get tired.

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You cycle at your own pace and together with the programmed cultural visits you will gain a unique insight into present day Cuban society not available to many tourists. Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean. It has a diverse and fascinating culture. There is an irresistible blend of dramatic scenery, vibrant colours of a lush tropical landscape and stunning colonial architecture. The images and symbols of the Cuban Revolution mix with left over icons of American 50's culture. Buicks and Chevrolets, with gleaming chrome and extravagant fins, cruise the streets redolent of an earlier era. An impressive health care system, posters of revolutionary figures and a wealth of rural schools with happy children in their bright red and white uniforms illustrate more recent events. Imagine fading pastel coloured colonial facades, the infectious laughter of school children and an unstoppable salsa beat playing on the warm breeze and you have the sights, sounds and rhythms of Cuba.

FLIGHT TIMES

Outbound: 08 November. Virgin VS063 departs London Gatwick North Terminal 10:15. Check in at 07:15. Arrives Havana 14:55 local time.

Inbound: 19 November. Virgin VS064 departs Havana 19:30. Arrives London Gatwick North Terminal 09:30 on 20 November.

All flight times are subject to final confirmation by the airline.

ITINERARY

Day 1. Havana. Transfer to Hotel Plaza in Old Havana.

Day 2. Havana /Soroa. Introductions to the Challenge Support Team and initial Briefing Meeting. Morning transfer to Soroa, the Rainbow of Cuba and world famous orchid garden. On arrival, our expert mechanic assembles the bikes before a short test ride to ensure everything is working properly.

Day 3. Soroa to San Diego de los Baños. 59km. The first day's cycling over undulating terrain. The landscape is dotted with tall majestic royal palms and *Tiñosas*, turkey vultures, soaring overhead on the thermal currents. At the end of today's cycle, we have the optional opportunity to revitalise tired muscles with an invigorating immersion in hot sulphurous waters from natural mineral springs at the local spa complex.

Day 4. San Diego de los Baños to Pinar del Río. 53km. Revitalised and ready to go, today's route is undulating and continues along the old Carretera Central passing through several busy, bustling market towns of this rich agricultural region. There is ample opportunity to sample local homemade Cuban foods and drinks at roadside stalls including *guarapo* (sugar cane juice), a natural energy booster. You will not be able to get enough into your bike bottle; so drink up before moving on. We may share the road with tractors, oxen and shy, smiling cowboys on a cattle drive. In the evening, there is the option to visit Casa de la Música to groove to those intoxicating salsa rhythms.

Day 5. Pinar del Río. The group has a special invitation to join Cuban workers taking part in a local Trade Union event. In the afternoon, there will be time for independent exploration of this beguiling provincial capital.

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Day 6. Pinar del Río to Puerto Esperanza. 55km. A series of demanding climbs takes us up to Parque Nacional Viñales, with breathtaking views over the awesome series of *mogotes*, haystack hills, rising from the rich red earth of the tobacco fields. Today's route passes through a quintessential Cuban landscape with small *bohíos* (farmhouses) and *guajiros* (farmers) tending their fields with ox drawn plough. At today's destination, we follow the giant mango trees lining the road to the ocean. In the evening we take a thrilling visit to the local Casa de la Cultura, traditional live Cuban music venue, and venture on to the dance floor to add some new salsa steps to our rapidly expanding repertoire.

Day 7. Viñales to Cayo Jutías. 63km. The terrain is hilly as we climb through the Viñales Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, punctuated by soaring limestone *mogotes* rising up from the valley floor like massive haystacks. We pass distinctive tobacco fields with characteristic deep red earth and drying barns full of tobacco leaves. Crossing the causeway over turquoise blue waters, with views of the mountains to our right, we are rewarded with a dip in the crystal clear waters of the Gulf of Mexico and sandy white beach to relax on with a well deserved Cuba Libre. We transfer back to the hotel by coach.

Day 8. Gran Caverna de Santo Tomás. Out of the saddles today, we hike to Santo Tomás Caves, Cuba's largest cave system. We will explore the accessible cave galleries 42m above the valley floor with headlamps. After lunch we visit a rural Policlínico, a local health care centre, and see first hand some of Cuba's many impressive achievements in health care.

Day 9. Viñales to San Diego de los Baños. 80km. The last day's cycling follows a hilly terrain with sections of broken road surfaces and demanding climbs. Cycling along the single main streets of small villages, we pass Cuban grandparents sitting on the verandas of their wooden houses exchanging memories. Maize and coffee beans dry on the roads in the hot sun. Passing through an area of sweet smelling coffee plantations we stop for lunch at Los Portales, the secret HQ of the legendary Che Guevara during the 1962 October missile crisis. Keep a look out for the shy Toco-ro-ro, the national bird whose feathers reflect the colours of the Cuban flag, as we continue through thickly forested La Güira National Park. After an exhilarating 355kms in the saddle we reach the finishing line back at San Diego de los Baños, a laid-back, tranquil old spa town. In the evening we have an invitation to attend a welcome party with the Committee for the Defence of the Revolution (CDR). A wonderful opportunity to chat with local families, from grandparents to grandchildren, and gain a valuable insight into present day Cuban society.

Day 10. Havana. After boxing the bikes, we transfer back to Havana and visit the Teatro Miramar project, a community theatre restoration project being undertaken by Music Fund for Cuba.

Day 11. Havana. We take a fascinating walking tour of Old Havana, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with a wealth of impressively restored colonial buildings and intriguing historic sites and visit Commandancia del Che Museum in the San Carlos de la Cabaña Fortress where Che set up his HQ immediately after the Revolution. In the evening, we celebrate a tremendous group achievement at an iconic Cuban restaurant enjoying authentic Cuban cuisine with an optional opportunity to visit a glitzy nightclub to relax and enjoy the salsa magic of Havana.

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Day 12. Havana. After breakfast, we attend a donation presentation at Solidarity with Panama School, for children with physical disabilities, where we have the opportunity to meet staff and students and see first hand how the educational equipment will be used.

We are guaranteed a rousing reception and gifted musical performance from the school salsa band.

Thanks again for your interest in **Cycle Cuba Challenge 2018** and we hope that you will be able to join us cycling to the salsa beat and raising funds for essential educational equipment for physically disabled Cuban school children. Full details are available on Cuba Solidarity Campaign's website www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk/tours.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call on 020 7490 5715 or email tours@cuba-solidarity.org.uk

With very best regards

Simon Bull
Cycle Cuba Challenge Tour Manager

CYCLE CUBA CHALLENGE 2018 CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

Please read in conjunction with the Havanatour Booking Conditions

1. You must be at least 16 years old before date of departure.
2. You are required to pay a registration fee of £250 (or £150 each if a previous participant or 2 people registering together). The registration fee is used to reserve your flight seat and once this is held it becomes non-refundable.
3. You agree to raise a minimum sponsorship of £2,699. This includes the costs of the challenge. All sponsorship monies must be paid by 27 September 2018.
4. Virgin may levy an additional supplement when the flight starts to get full. If a supplement is payable at the time of receipt of Booking Forms then we will inform you. If you choose not to continue at this point then we will arrange a full refund of your Registration Fee. We would anticipate that flight prices will start to increase closer to the departure date and availability will become restricted. We would recommend that you submit your completed Booking Form as early as possible to avoid disappointment.
5. You must be fit enough to undertake the Cuba Cycle Challenge and be prepared to complete a questionnaire regarding your medical history. If you are over 65 years of age or have any medical condition that could be adversely affected by this event you will be required to provide a doctor's certificate stating that you have a suitable level of health and fitness to participate. A copy must be forwarded to Cuba Solidarity Campaign before departure.

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6. You are responsible for ensuring that you have sufficient supplies of any medication that you are taking and all the necessary vaccinations for travel to Cuba. It is your responsibility to take the requisite medical advice.
7. The Cuba Solidarity Campaign and Havanatour reserves the right to refuse entry to any individual who is deemed medically unfit to take part.
8. Participation in the event is at your own risk and you agree to indemnify Cuba Solidarity Campaign and Havanatour against claim for loss of or damage to personal property, accidents, personal injury or death howsoever arising and any claim arising from your own actions.
9. You must provide your own bicycle and cycle helmet. Cycle helmets must be worn at all times whilst cycling.
10. If we are unable to allocate a twin room due to odd numbers of participants, then a single room supplement will be payable by any participant placed in a single room.
11. To ensure that we are able to keep our prices as low as possible, we would like to inform you that if there are any further increases in UK airport departure taxes we would have to pass this additional cost on to our clients.
12. The Cuban Ministry of Tourism require all visitors to Cuba to have a valid comprehensive travel insurance policy, including full medical cover. You must check with the insurance provider that your policy is recognised and valid in Cuba. An insurance cover note must be carried to Cuba and presented to immigration authorities if requested. The policy must provide adequate cover for the payment of the costs and expenses relating to medical treatment, repatriation costs, loss of or damage to personal items and claims made by third parties and cover cycle touring.
13. You must hold a current 10-year passport valid for the proposed duration of your stay in Cuba. A Cuban Tourist Card (visa) will be provided to participants.
14. If you cancel, all sponsorship forms must be returned to Cuba Solidarity Campaign and donations already received to the relevant donors. Monies can still be donated to Cuba Solidarity Campaign if the sponsors agree.

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CYCLE CUBA CHALLENGE 08-20 November 2018 REGISTRATION FORM

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM IN BLOCK CAPITALS.

Personal Details.

Title (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/other) _____
Last Name (as on your passport) _____
Middle Name (as on your passport) _____
First Name (as on your passport) _____
Name you wish to be called by _____
Date of Birth _____
Address _____

Postcode _____
Contact telephone _____
E-mail _____

Passport Details (required for Virgin flight)

Passport Number _____ Nationality _____
Date of Expiry _____

Your passport should be valid for the proposed duration of your stay.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises that no additional period of validity beyond this is required.

Contact Person in Case of Emergencies

Name _____ Relationship _____
Address _____

Postcode _____
Contact telephone _____

Accommodation

Accommodation will be in twin rooms allocated on a same sex basis unless you indicate you require a single room. If you wish to share with someone in particular please write her/his name here _____

Please tick the box if you require a single room £250 supplement payable.

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Dietary Requirements

Do you require vegetarian food? Yes No

Do you have any other dietary requirements? If so please give details _____

Insurance

It is the responsibility of participants to arrange their own appropriate personal travel insurance policy, including cycle touring cover.

Cycle Cuba Challenge T-shirt.

Please indicate size required. Small Medium Large XLarge XXL

Where did you hear about Cycle Cuba Challenge? _____

Declaration

I have read, understood and agree to the Conditions of Entry and Havanatour Booking Conditions. I have enclosed a completed and signed Medical Questionnaire and Havanatour Booking Form and a registration fee of £250/£150 to secure my place. The registration fee is used to reserve your flight seat and once this is held it becomes non-refundable. Cheques should be made payable to Cuba Solidarity Campaign.

Signed _____

Date _____

Please ensure that you have signed and returned the following:

- Registration Form
- Medical Questionnaire
- Havanatour Booking Form
- Registration fee

To: Trish Meehan, Office Manager, Cuba Solidarity Campaign,
c/o UNITE, 33-37 Moreland Street, London, EC1V 8BB.

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CYCLE CUBA CHALLENGE 2018 MEDICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

The event in which you will be participating is designated as challenging and will require a mid- level of fitness. A suggested training programme will be sent to participants after registration.

Personal Details

Full Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Do you have a history of any of the following conditions? If yes, please give details, including frequency, severity and aggravating factors, in the space provided below. Please use a separate sheet of paper if necessary.

Condition	Yes	No
Raised blood pressure		
Heart or circulatory disease		
Respiratory disease		
Asthma/Hayfever		
Epilepsy		
Diabetes		
Allergies		
Joint or back problems		
Hearing loss or problems with balance		
Details		
Please list any medication you are currently taking and ensure that you bring enough supplies for the duration of the trip		

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Any other relevant medical information
Are you registered disabled?
If yes, please provide details

If you are over 65 years of age or have any medical condition that could be adversely affected by this event you will be required to provide a doctor's letter stating that you have a suitable level of health and fitness to participate in Cycle Cuba Challenge 2018. Please inform your doctor that you are intending to complete a 355km cycle ride involving steep uphill cycling over 5 days and a steep 3km hike. Average temperatures will be in the region of 27°C.

I confirm that I have understood the need for fitness and to the best of my knowledge this is a true and accurate description of my medical history and current condition. I agree to Cuba Solidarity Campaign releasing this information to relevant medical personnel. In the event of illness or an accident on the trip, I hereby give permission for medical personnel to initiate medical treatment and CSC to notify my elected contact person in case of hospitalisation. If my medical condition changes before my departure I will inform Cuba Solidarity Campaign in writing.

This form and your information will be treated as confidential.

Signed _____

Date _____

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