

DETAILS

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About Your
“Bandwidth”
How Business
Jargon Jumped
the *Shark Tank*

—
INTRODUCING
THE MOST
SHAMELESS
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TREATMENT YET

OSCAR ISAAC

AN OVERNIGHT SUCCESS
A DECADE IN THE MAKING



IN LIVING COLOR 25 YEARS LATER:
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BY JASON TESAURO • PHOTOGRAPH BY ADAM VOORHES

SHOULD YOU Go to Cuba?



• Why You're Hearing About It

After President Obama reestablished diplomatic ties with Cuba in December, many were eager to cruise south immediately for an island adventure. Yet even as travel sites like Kayak are adding the destination to their search engines, heading to Havana isn't hassle-free yet.

• The Big Promise

Cuba has remained virtually unchanged since 1960 (Netflix just arrived in February). The crumbling Art Deco architecture, pristine beaches, and vintage American cars entice travelers to get there before it's overrun by tourists.

• The Travel Guru

"Someone who's a foodie, into staying in luxurious places, needs push-button comforts—that person isn't ready for Cuba, and Cuba isn't ready for them. It's going to be two to five years before Cuba can accommodate those travelers." —Joe Diaz, cofounder of travel publisher AFAR Media

• The Red Tape

Before you pack your guayaberas, know that there are only a dozen official Treasury Department-approved reasons to go, and tourism's not one of them (many visitors cite "people-to-people" exchanges). Direct flights from JFK begin mid-March; otherwise, you can hop on a charter or detour through Miami, Canada, Cancún, or the Bahamas.

• Converting Money Is a Pain

For the best rates, change your dollars into euros—and then when you land, convert those into Cuban convertible pesos, or CUCs (which are useless outside Cuba, so budget smartly). Yes, the new law says you can use credit cards, but most U.S. banks still aren't set up there (Bank of America, sí; USAA, no), thus no plastic or ATMs.

• The Opposition

The country's history of human-rights abuses is prompting groups like Human Rights Watch to remind travelers that Cuba isn't your average beach destination. And, with minimal infrastructure, it's not the luxury vacation some travelers are hoping for.

• Let's Run the Numbers

1,580%: Increase in traffic to GoToCuba.org after rules were relaxed
\$150: Approximate price of Havana Club 15 Años Gran Reserva Rum
\$100: Maximum value of alcohol and/or tobacco products that may be returned to U.S. for personal use

• Not Your Typical Day at the Beach

"Without Internet or TV, you'll see kids in the National Ballet outdoors practicing and kids playing ball—life is lived outside. The people don't have the freedoms we do, so I wouldn't go to hang out on a beach and drink frozen drinks, but the culture is amazing." —Alejandro Ingelmo, Cuban-American shoe designer

A CHEF'S GUIDE TO CUBA

David Guas, the son of a Cuban immigrant and host of Travel Channel's *American Grilled*, shares his secrets for how to do the island right.

— Eat & Drink

"Real Cuban food is the home cooking at tiny *palodores* with plastic tablecloths, like La Mulata, where I know to order the chicken—I don't even need a menu. And go to La Bodeguita del Medio, where the mojito was born. Get there early and stake out your bar stool."

— Stay

"Hotel Nacional de Cuba has so much history, and it's well kept up. It's got beautiful grounds where you can walk out toward the Malecón," a sea-side esplanade.

— Do

"Visit the Partagás cigar factory, where they still roll the originals—Partagás No. 5 is my favorite cigar. Make sure to call ahead and get a table at Tropicana. Trust me, you want to sit close to the stage."

The Bottom Line

Cuba is utterly analog and spectacularly Instagrammable, and if you're willing to rough it for a once-in-a-lifetime experience, get packing. If you want a luxury holiday and Wi-Fi at the ready, though, Diaz is right—wait a while. Fodor's vice president Arabella Bowen agrees: "There will still be plenty of 'time capsule' moments to experience in the months and even years ahead. I would wait to go."

PROP STYLING BY ROBIN FINLAY