

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Cuba

**CAPITAL:** Havana

**SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT:** Unitary Socialist Republic

**AREA:** 114,524 Sq Km (44,218 Sq Mi)

**ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION** 12,735,400

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**LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY:** Cuba is an island located on the northern rim of the Caribbean Sea west of Haiti, south of Florida and north of Jamaica. It consists of the island of Cuba, Isla de la Juventud (Island of Youth) and 1,600 islets and cays. Topographically, 66% of Cuba is flat land of rolling plains, with mountain systems, such as the Central Escambray, the western Sierra de los Organos and the rugged easterly Sierra Maestra, accounting for the remaining 34%. Much of the southern coast is low and marshy while the northern coast is generally steep and rocky with some of the best harbors in the world. The rest of the land is flat or gently rolling with many wide, fertile valleys and plains. Cuba has over 200 rivers as well as small streams or arroyos that are dry in summer. The country's longest river is the Cauto. Major Cities (pop. est.); Havana 2,176,000, Santiago de Cuba 440,100, Camaguey 294,000, Holguin 242,100, Guantanamo 207,800 (1993). Land Use; forested 24%, pastures 27%, agricultural-cultivated 30%, other 19% (1993).

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**CLIMATE:** Cuba has a temperate semitropical climate due to the moderating influence of the trade winds. There are two seasons, the dry season from November to April and the wet season from May to October. Around 75% of the rainfall occurs during the wet season and is well distributed throughout the country. The amount of rainfall varies from year to year and droughts are also common. Cuba is subject to tropical hurricanes with one generally occurring every year. Average temperature ranges in Havana are from 18 to 26 degrees Celsius (64 to 79 degrees Fahrenheit) in January to 24 to 32 degrees Celsius (75 to 95 degrees Fahrenheit) in July.

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**PEOPLE:** The principal ethnic majority are the Whites who account for 66% of the population while Mulattoes who are of mixed Spanish and Black African descent as well as Mestizos who are of mixed Spanish and AmerIndian descent account for 22% of the population. Black Africans account for 12% and Asians for 1%. Other ethnic minorities include East Mediterranean and German Jews.

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**DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS:** Density; 97 persons per sq km (250 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 72.8% urban, 27.2% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 50.4% male, 49.6% female (1990). Life Expectancy at Birth; 72.7 years male, 76.1 years female (1984). Age Breakdown; 23% under 15, 32% 15 to 29, 20% 30 to 44, 13% 45 to 59, 12% 60 and over

(1989). Birth Rate; 17.5 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 6.5 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 11.0 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 11.1 per 1,000 live births (1989).

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**RELIGIONS:** As a socialist state there is no official or state religion. Although 85% of the population are nominally Roman Catholic while other religious minorities include Protestants, Jews and Afro-Cuban cults such as the Santeria (Thing of the Saints).

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**LANGUAGES:** The official language is Spanish which is spoken by virtually all of the population. It is described as a disfigured Castilian with an admixture of AmerIndian, African and English words.

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**EDUCATION:** Aged 25 or over and having attained: no formal schooling or incomplete primary 39.6%, primary 26.6%, secondary 29.6%, higher 4.2% (1981). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 7,200,000 or 96.0% (1985).

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**MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993:** In 1953 Cuba saw the failed Castro revolution resulting in Fidel Castro a young lawyer and many of his followers being jailed. In 1955 Castro was released from prison and began a guerrilla war from the mountains which the government under Fulgencio Batista attempted to crush, however this only increased the peoples' support for the rebels. In 1958 many Cubans lost confidence in Batista's government and in 1959 Castro's forces took control of the government with Castro later becoming Prime Minister of Cuba. The revolutionary leaders abolished the political and military structure of Batista's government and many former political officials as well as army officers were tried and executed. In 1959 the then Pres. Manuel Urrutia was removed and a nationalization program was instituted. The Castro government grew hostile towards the US after West European nations under US pressure refused to sell arms to Cuba. In 1960 Cuba and the USSR signed their first trade agreement while the Castro government took over the American oil refineries in Cuba and eventually took over all remaining US businesses in Cuba. In early 1961 the US ended diplomatic relations with Cuba and restricted travel to Cuba by American citizens. In April 1961 the US sponsored Bay of Pigs, an anti-Castro invasion by Cuban exiles, failed. In Dec. 1961 Castro declared himself as a Marxist-Leninist and Cuba a communist state. In 1962 Cuban leaders convinced the US was planning an attack, urged the USSR to send more military aid. The USSR responded to these requests and the US learned that Cuba had missile bases which could launch nuclear attacks on US cities. The then US Pres. John F. Kennedy (JFK) demanded that the USSR remove the missiles and the missile bases while for several days the world stood still on the brink of its first nuclear war. Finally, the USSR agreed to Kennedy's demands after a pledge not to attack Cuba if the missiles were removed. The USSR withdrew the missiles and became the country's principal trading partner. Today Cuba supports rebel groups in other Latin American countries and aids countries in Africa that support communist policies. Cuban troops fought with

procommunist groups in civil wars in Angola in 1976 and Ethiopia in 1977. US-Cuba relations were further strained when a mass exodus of 125,000 Cubans many of which were criminals or mentally ill landed in the US. In 1990 the wave of economic and social reforms that sweep through Eastern Europe did not reach Cuba and Pres. Castro re-affirmed his commitment to the socialist concepts of central economic planning. In March 1990 the US government began trial programs from its TV Marti propaganda station with a channel aimed at Cuban viewers. Cuba responded by jamming the broadcasts and in April, jammed Radio Marti which had been broadcasting since 1985. In 1991 some 11,000 Soviet troops were withdrawn from Cuba with Soviet Pres. Gorbachev stating that relations would be based political and economic links only while Cuban troops in Angola and Congo were also withdrawn in April and May 1991. In Aug. 1991 the US temporarily suspended tourist visa applications due to an influx of Cuban visitors as a result of relaxed travel restriction by Cuban authorities. In July 1991 Pres. Castro attended the first Ibero-American summit in Mexico. In Sept. 1991 eight small dissident groups united to form a single democratic opposition group, although later several dissidents were arrested. Also during 1991 further economic problems also became evident as essential items were rationed for the first time under the "special period in peacetime" while the government continued to support tourism projects as a means of earning much-needed foreign exchange. In 1992 the domestic economy was severely affected by the loss of Soviet trade and economic support with electricity supplies being cut for 3 to 4 hours per day while there were further shortages fuel and basic food items. In Jan. 1992 three exiles were put on trial after being caught with weapons and explosives and sentenced to death, although later two sentences were commuted to 30 years imprisonment while in Feb. 1992 two men were executed for murdering three policemen while attempting to flee the country. In July 1992 Cuba was admitted to the Caribbean Tourism Organization which provided their industry with a boost with receipts up 23%. Also in July 1992 the National Assembly approved constitutional reforms that included secret voting for members and private investment in certain state companies as well as foreign ownership in the form of joint venture operations. In Nov. 1992 the UN General Assembly voted 59-3 with 79 abstentions in favor of a resolution calling for the end to the US trade embargo on Cuba. Also during 1992 US Pres. Bush authorized AT&T to install a new telephone cable to Cuba as a result of claimed benefits in more information following into Cuba, however, the service was severed in Aug. 1992 after Hurricane Andrew damaged equipment while Cuba also sign bilateral trade agreements with several Arab countries, some former Soviet republics and China. In Jan. 1993 severe rains ruined the sugar harvest while a hurricane in March and flooding in June further amplified the economic hardships of the country and its people. In July 1993 the government announced in the face of the worsening economic situation that citizens would be allowed to possess US dollars and other convertible currencies which they could spend in special shops while in Aug. 1993 the reform mood intensified when four key economic ministers were replaced. In Sept. 1993 Pres. Castro signed a decree that authorized limited private enterprise which provided a small step towards a mixed economy. In 1993 there was no relaxation in the US trade and financial embargo, although relations improved with the US informing Cuba of planned naval exercises and cooperating on a joint anti-drug operation in Sept. 1993.

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**CURRENCY:** The official currency is the Peso (CUP) divided into 100 Centavos.

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**ECONOMY:** Gross National Product; USD \$17,000,000,000 (1991). Public Debt; N/A. Imports; USD \$2,032,000,000 (1994). Exports; USD \$1,235,000,000 (1994). Tourism Receipts; USD \$216,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; USD \$ -797,000,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 4,570,236 or 43.7% of total population (1988). Unemployed; 6.0% (1988).

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**MAIN TRADING PARTNERS:** Its main trading partners are the former USSR, former European communist countries, China, Canada, Japan, France, Spain, the UK, the Netherlands and Germany.

**MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS:** Beans, Cassava, Cobalt, Chrome, Coffee, Copper, Iron Ore, Livestock, Maize, Nickel, Oranges, Rice, Sugar Cane, Sweet Potatoes, Tobacco, Tropical Fruits.

**MAJOR INDUSTRIES:** Agriculture, Cement, Chemicals, Fertilizers, Fishing, Food Processing, Light Consumer Production, Metal Refining, Mining, Oil Refining, Textiles, Tobacco Products.

**MAIN EXPORTS:** Chemicals, Coffee, Copper, Fish, Fruit and Vegetables, Nickel, Rum, Sugar, Tobacco.

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**TRANSPORT:** Railroads; route length 4,843 km (3,009 mi) (1989), passenger-km 2,891,000,000 (1,796,000,000 passenger-mi) (1989), cargo ton-km 2,416,200,000 (1,654,855,000 short ton-mi) (1989). Roads; length 34,000 km (21,127 mi) (1985). Vehicles; cars 206,300 (1985), trucks and buses 172,800 (1985). Merchant Marine; vessels 410 (1990), deadweight tonnage 1,115,163 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 3,177,700,000 (1,974,531,000 passenger-mi) (1989), cargo ton-km 36,500,000 (24,999,000 short ton-mi) (1989).

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**COMMUNICATIONS:** Daily Newspapers; total of 17 with a total circulation of 1,315,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 3,608,000 (1994). Television; receivers 2,500,000 (1994). Telephones; units 344,200 (1993).

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**MILITARY:** 105,000 (1995) total active duty personnel with 80.9% army, 4.8% navy and 14.3% air force while military expenditure accounts for 2.7% (1994) of the Gross National Product (GNP).