



## **38th Southern Cross Brigade to Cuba**

29 December 2022 — 17 January 2023

### **Information Booklet**

#### ***Contents***

Introduction	1
Program	1
Costs	7
Flights, travel insurance and visas	7
Flights	7
Travel insurance	8
Visas	8
Money	9
Cash	9
Credit cards	9
Debit and cash cards	10
Brigade staff and volunteers	10
Arrival in Havana	10
Accommodation (Julio Antonio Mella International Camp)	11
Dorms	11
Food and water	11

Bathrooms and washing	11
Camp shop	12
Valuables	12
Electricity	12
Australia/New Zealand night	12
Computer, phone and internet access	12
Contacting Brigadistas in Cuba	13
COVID-19 and the Brigade	13
Vaccinations	13
What if I contract the disease while on the Brigade?	13
Packing list	13
Personal items	13
Gift ideas for your new Cuban friends	14
Donations	15
FAQs	15
Contacts	17
Registration	19

## Introduction

The Southern Cross Brigade is organised by friendship societies in Australia and New Zealand, in collaboration with the Cuban Institute of Friendship Amongst the Peoples (ICAP), to strengthen international friendship and solidarity.

Participants in the Southern Cross Brigade are known as *brigadistas*. Brigadistas are more than tourists, they are people who wish to extend solidarity with the Cuban people and their Revolution, wishing to learn more about the Cuban socialist experiment and its unique medical, educational, economic, democratic and other programs. Brigadistas learn about and participate in many aspects of Cuban life, following a schedule of activities that has been thoughtfully put together by staff at ICAP to give them a comprehensive understanding of what the Cuban Revolution stands for and how it works.

The 2022-23 Southern Cross Brigade will be the 38th iteration and the first since COVID-19 led to the postponement of the 2020 and 2021 Brigades.

The first brigade from Australia to Cuba was named the Eureka Brigade and left Australia in December 1983, returning in January of 1984. After this, New Zealanders were also invited and the Brigade became known as the Southern Cross Brigade, or Brigada Cruz del Sur in Spanish.

In this document you will find information and tips about your upcoming Brigade to Cuba.

Feel free to contact us by phone (0481355330) or email ([southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com](mailto:southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com)) with any questions.

Please note that this is not a Cuba travel guide – as well as reading this document thoroughly, we recommend that you also read up on Cuban culture, economy and travel tips so that you are fully prepared for your trip.

## Program

<i>Day 1: Thursday, 29 December, 2022</i>	
17:00	Members arrive at ICAP in Havana
17:30	Departure to the Julio Antonio Mella International Camp (CIJAM) Transport provided by Amistur
18:30	Arrival at CIJAM
19:30	Dinner
<i>Day 2: Friday, 30 December 2022</i>	
07:00	Breakfast
09:00	Inauguration
12:30	Lunch
14:30	Presentation on Cuba's history and current affairs Guests: Ernesto Teuma, Iramis Rosique and Gladys Hernández  Presentation on the work of ICAP
16:00	Music and exchange with local artists
20:00	Dinner

<i>Day 3: Saturday, 31 December 2022</i>	
08:00	Breakfast
09:00	Friendship Run
13:00	Lunch
15:00	Solidarity exchange with other Brigades at CIJAM (e.g., the Nordic Brigade)
20:00	Dinner and recreational activity to celebrate the 64th anniversary of the Triumph of the Revolution and the arrival of the New Year
<i>Day 4: Sunday, 1 January 2023</i>	
08:00	Breakfast
Free morning followed by travel to Havana	
13:30	Lunch at Casa de la Amistad
16:30	Arrival at the Gran Teatro Nacional Alicia Alonso (National Theatre)
17:00	Gala of the National Ballet of Cuba dedicated to the anniversary of the Triumph of the Revolution
19:00	Departure to Bodeguita del Medio restaurant
20:00	Visit to San Carlos de la Cabaña Fortress
21:30	Return to CIJAM
<i>Day 5: Monday, 2 January 2023</i>	
06:30	Breakfast
07:45	Departure to Ciénaga de Zapata, Matanzas Visit to Consejo Popular Australia and then Jagüey Grande
12:30	Lunch in transit at Pio Cua restaurant
14:30	Arrival at the Korimakao socio-cultural project
20:00	Dinner and cultural activity
<i>Day 6: Tuesday, 3 January 2023</i>	
07:00	Breakfast
08:30	Departure to Girón (Bay of Pigs) Museum
09:00	Visit the Girón Museum
10:00	Departure to Guasasa Community
Community work work in coordination with Korimakao in the Guasasa community with members of Korimakao	
12:00	Lunch
17:00	Return to Korimakao

20:00	Dinner and cultural activity with Korimakao
<i>Day 7: Wednesday, 4 January 2023</i>	
07:30	Breakfast
08:30	Departure
Cultural exchange and community work in Gayo Ramona community with members of Korimakao	
12:00	Lunch
15:00	Return with transit visit to Cueva de los Peces (Fish Cave)
20:00	Dinner and cultural activity with Korimakao
<i>Day 8: Thursday, 5 January 2023</i>	
07:30	Breakfast
08:30	Departure
Community work at Korimakao	
12:00	Lunch
20:00	Farewell dinner at Korimakao
<i>Day 9: Friday, 6 January 2023</i>	
08:30	Breakfast
10:00	Departure to Villa Clara
13:00	Lunch at the Casa de la Amistad in Las Villas (our accommodation)
18:00	Return to the Casa de la Amistad
<i>Day 10: Saturday, 7 January 2023</i>	
07:30	Breakfast
08:30	Departure
09:30	Meeting with Combatants of the Cuban Revolution in the conference room of the Che Memorial  Visit to the Che Guevara Memorial and historical centre of the city
12:00	Return to the Casa de la Amistad
12:30	Lunch at the Casa de la Amistad
16:30	Departure to the Sociocultural Project "El Mejunje"
17:00	Exchange with the project  Presentation on rights of the LGBTIQ+ community and an update of the Cuban social model through the Cultural Policy and Family Code
20:00	Dinner at Santa Rosalia restaurant
22:30	Return to Casa de la Amistad

<i>Day 11: Sunday, 8 January 2023</i>	
07:30	Breakfast
08:00	Departure
08:30	Volunteer work with youth organisations around Villa Clara
11:00	Departure
12:00	Lunch at the Casa de la Amistad
14:00	Cultural activity and free time in the city with young artists and members of the UJC and student organisations
18:30	Return to Casa de la Amistad
19:00	Dinner
<i>Day 12: Monday, 9 January 2023</i>	
07:30	Breakfast
08:00	Departure
08:30	Volunteer work with the government and youth organisations of the province in an education centre
11:00	Meeting with education directors and teachers to learn about the educational system in Cuba and current challenges
12:30	Departure
13:00	Lunch at the Casa de la Amistad
14:00	Meeting at the ICAP Delegation to learn about the province of Villa Clara, information on challenges of the Cuban economy, update of the Cuban economic and social model, local development with ICAP officials and the government in Villa Clara
17:30	Return to Casa de la Amistad
19:00	Dinner
<i>Day 13: Tuesday, 10 January 2023</i>	
07:30	Breakfast
08:00	Departure
08:30	Volunteer work with the government and youth organisations of the province in a health centre
11:00	Meeting with public health managers and professionals to learn about the health system in Cuba and the current challenges. Observe Cuba's success in confronting the pandemic and issues associated with the process of creating Cuban vaccines, their distribution and immunisation of the Cuban population.
12:30	Lunch at the Casa de la Amistad
14:30	Departure

15:00	<p>Visit to Marta Abreu University in Las Villas</p> <p>Receive information on the role of universities and the contribution of science to the economic and social development of the country</p> <p>Meeting with international and Cuban students, among them activists of the FEU, the UJC and the Movimiento Juvenil Martiano, at the place where Che Guevara installed his first command for the Battle of Santa Clara</p>
17:30	Return to Casa de la Amistad
19:00	Dinner
<i>Day 14: Wednesday, 11 January 2023</i>	
07:30	Breakfast
08:00	Departure
08:30	Volunteer work with government and youth organisations in the province at INPUD 1 de Mayo, the only factory of its kind in Cuba, founded by Che in 1964
11:00	Meeting with managers, factory workers and trade union leaders of the province to learn about the current challenges of the Cuban economy and the measures that are being adopted to dynamise it in order to face the blockade to which we are subjected
12:30	Lunch at the Casa de la Amistad
15:00	Meeting with leaders and activists of the Federation of Cuban Women at the House of Orientation for Women and the Family and cultural activity in honor of Celia Sanchez Manduley
17:30	Return to Casa de la Amistad
19:00	Dinner
<i>Day 15: Thursday, 12 January 2023</i>	
07:30	Breakfast
08:00	Breakfast
12:30	Lunch at the Casa de la Amistad
14:30	Visit to the Fidel Castro Centre
19:00	Return to CIJAM
20:00	Dinner
<i>Day 16: Friday, 13 January 2023</i>	
07:30	Breakfast
09:30	Exchange on Cuba-US relations
12:30	Lunch
14:00	Departure to visit cooperatives or MYPIMES in Caimito
20:00	Dinner
<i>Day 17: Saturday, 14 January 2023</i>	

07:30	Breakfast
08:00	Volunteer work
12:00	Lunch
14:30	Cultural activity and dance classes
20:00	Dinner at CIJAM
<i>Day 18: Sunday, 15 January 2023</i>	
07:30	Breakfast
08:00	Visit to environmental conservation project
12:00	Lunch
14:00	Visit to an industrial cooperative
20:00	Dinner at CIJAM
<i>Day 19: Monday, 16 January 2023</i>	
08:00	PCR tests (if required for return travel)
09:30	Visit to the Finlay Institute or CIGB to learn about the process of developing Cuban vaccines
12:30	Lunch at the ALJIBE restaurant
14:30	Visit to local development projects and to learn about the work of MSMEs and socialist state enterprises for the benefit of society
19:30	Dinner at Tocaroro restaurant
20:00	Cederista evening at the La Corbata community project
22:00	Return to CIJAM
<i>Day 20: Tuesday, 17 January 2023</i>	
07:00	Breakfast
09:00	Lecture on the media war against Cuba
12:30	Lunch
14:30	Closing ceremony and evaluation
18:30	Visit and exchange with CDR in Caimito as a farewell to the brigade
22:30	Return to CIJAM
<i>Day 21: Wednesday, 18 January 2023</i>	
08:00	Breakfast
10:00	Transfer to ICAP in Havana and then to the airport (as required).

## Costs

To register, complete the form at the end of this publication and return by October 2022, together with the 250AUD deposit. Potential brigadistas are encouraged to express interest by emailing [southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com](mailto:southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com) so that further information can be provided as it is finalised.

The Southern Cross Brigade costs approximately 1,750AUD in total, per person. This cost is paid in two parts.

1. There is a non-refundable registration fee of 250AUD to be paid by 31 October to secure your place on the Brigade.

This fee can be paid by electronic fund transfer to:

- BSB: 062-900
- Account number: 00800897
- Account name: ACFS ACT

Please include your name in the reference, e.g. "Tony Smith — SCB Registration"

2. Upon arrival at the Camp, you will need to pay a further approximate 1,100USD (in Cuban Pesos — approximately 26,000CUP) in cash. *You must bring this cash in either Euros, Canadian Dollars or Mexican Pesos.*

This cost covers all accommodation at the camp, food at the camp, travel and activities for the duration of the Brigade.

*International flights, visas and health insurance are not included and must be arranged separately by each brigadista.*

The cost of the Brigade covers all basic necessities, however we recommend that each brigadista bring a minimum of 600AUD spending money in a suitable currency for snacks, drinks, toiletries, souvenirs, personal outings and optional activities. Please bring enough extra cash to suit your travel style – for many, 600AUD will not be enough. We have found that most brigadistas spend approximately 1,000AUD on extras.

## Flights, travel insurance and visas

*It is the responsibility of each brigadista to organise their own flights, visas and travel insurance.*

Here is a little info to get you started:

### **Flights**

We advise booking your flights as early as possible, as flights to Cuba around the Christmas period can be expensive and fill fast.

We recommend that you do not travel to Cuba via the United States, due to the ongoing blockade on Cuba. It's possible that you could be delayed at immigration in the United States due to unwanted attention from officials. The Cuban government has no issue with your travel to the United States, but the United States government continues to harass Cubans and travellers to Cuba.

Some flight options you may want to investigate include:

*Most direct from Australia or New Zealand*

- Qantas conduct nonstop flights to Santiago de Chile. You can fly to Cuba (with one stop) from there;
- Air Canada fly direct to Vancouver from Sydney and direct to Cuba from Toronto.

*Most affordable options from Australia or New Zealand*

**Americas**

- If you can make your way to Central American hubs such as Mexico, Venezuela or Panama, you can get direct flights (e.g. Cancún or Panama City) or simple connecting flights (e.g. Mexico City to Havana via Panama City).

**Europe**

- If you can make your way to Europe, there are a number of cities that conduct direct flights to Havana, including Madrid, Istanbul, Rome, Milan, Zurich, Frankfurt, Brussels and Paris. Cities such as London provide connecting options, e.g. via Madrid.

**Travel insurance**

It is a requirement of entry into Cuba that all travellers, both foreigners and Cubans living abroad, have medical insurance. To ensure that you comply with this requirement, you will need to have a travel insurance policy with a non-US company that covers medical expenses in Cuba.

Please have a hard copy of your policy ready to show the officials at Cuban immigration.

**Visas**

Australians and New Zealanders who wish to travel to Cuba must obtain a visa from the Cuban Embassy in their respective country. As a brigadista, you are being invited to Cuba by ICAP, a Cuban government body, however you will still have to apply for a Tourist Card. Minors must have their own Tourist Card.

The Tourist Card can be used within one year of issue. However, once you enter Cuba, the visa is valid for a stay of 30 days. If you intend to stay in Cuba after the Brigade finishes, you can organise to extend your Tourist Visa with ICAP while in Cuba. You must organise this extension while the Brigade is in session, as ICAP will not be able to assist you after the Brigade has finished.

REPRESENTACIONES DIPLOMÁTICAS DE CUBA EN EL EXTERIOR

Home English

## Cuba in Australia

Search terms Category - Any - BUSCAR

**MAR 21 2022** Cuban Ambassador participates in the reopening of the Ibero-American Plaza in Sydney

Sydney, March 21, 2021- The Cuban Ambassador to Australia, Ariel Lorenzo Rodríguez, participated in the reopening ceremony of the Ibero-American Plaza in the city of Sydney, which was originally inaugurated in 1989.

**JAN 11 2022** 63rd anniversary of the Revolution is celebrated in Canberra

Canberra, 10 January 2022. - The Embassy of Cuba in Australia together with the branch in the capital of the Australia-Cuba Friendship Association celebrated the 63rd Anniversary of the triumph of the Revolution in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, located on the fringe of Namadgi National Park.

Tutorial solicitud de... CUBA

D'VIAJEROS

Proceso que facilita y mejora la experiencia de los viajeros en su tránsito por la República de Cuba

Social networks

Consular Services

CUBA VISA | TOURIST CARD APPLICATION

Visa application form (for non-tourist purposes)

### Pricing

	Australia	New Zealand
<b>Posted</b>	99AUD + 7AUD shipping (via Cuba Visa)	80NZD
<b>Collected in-person</b>	-	30NZD

The following information will be useful when filling out the visa form:

- The purpose of your visit to Cuba is to participate as a brigadista in the Southern Cross Brigade.
- Your initial address in Cuba is CIJAM (Julio Antonio Mella International Camp), which is located at Caimito Guayabal.

For Australians: Visa applications are organised via [Cuba Visa](#). For more information, please phone the Cuban Embassy on (02) 6290 2151 or visit their website at <http://misiones.minrex.gob.cu/en/australia> and find the application links for the Tourist Card on the right hand side of your screen.

For New Zealanders: For more information, please phone the Cuban Embassy on (04) 464 2210 or visit their website at <http://misiones.minrex.gob.cu/en/new-zealand> and find the application links for the Tourist Card on the right hand side of your screen.

## Money

Cuba no longer has a dual currency system. There is one single official exchange rate of 24 CUP/USD applying to state companies and private individuals alike.

### Cash

We strongly recommend that you arrive in Cuba with enough cash for your entire time in the country. *This includes the 1,250AUD Brigade payment and a minimum 600AUD spending money.*

Please ensure you arrive in Cuba with Euros, Canadian Dollars or Mexican Pesos.

Neither Australian nor New Zealand Dollars can be exchanged in Cuba.

The Southern Cross Brigade recommends that you avoid bringing US dollars, as these incur an extra surcharge to exchange in Cuba.

There is a money exchange service at CIJAM (the camp), where you will be able to change Euros, Canadian Dollars and Mexican Pesos to Cuban Pesos.

CIJAM also has a Security Room where cash and other valuables can be stored if you so desire. Money exchanges can also be found at the airport, in banks and some big hotels.

There is a money exchange in the departures lounge at the airport if you wish to change money back at the end of the trip, although it is best to change the majority of your money in the city, as the money exchange in the airport has been known to run out of foreign currencies.

### Credit cards

A credit card is a good back up option to cash. ATMs can be found throughout Havana and other cities where both Visa and Mastercard credit cards can often be used successfully for a cash

advance. When withdrawing cash in Cuba, remember that not all ATMs in Havana dispense large denominations of money. Always check this before inserting your card.

It is very difficult for us to provide accurate information on what kinds of credit cards will or won't work in Cuba, as the situation changes year to year and is largely dependent on the state of the US blockade against Cuba. This is why we strongly recommend that you bring cash. Credit cards issued by American financial institutions, such as American Express, are never accepted in Cuba.

Credit cards are only sometimes accepted at large establishments. Many smaller businesses, including private restaurants (paladares) and private guest houses (casa particulares), do not accept credit cards of any kind. It is best to always carry some cash to ensure you can pay for goods and services.

The Southern Cross Brigade recommends that, as well as bringing ample cash, brigadistas also bring a credit card and one other card to Cuba. Please leave copies of your card numbers with a family member, in case of emergencies.

### **Debit and cash cards**

Due to the US blockade of Cuba, cash cards and travel cards do not work in Cuba, while debit cards are often similarly useless. You cannot rely on these cards as a backup.

## **Brigade staff and volunteers**

The Brigade is supported by two or three ICAP staff. These Cuban staff all speak English and have been working hard to coordinate and plan the Brigade all year. There are many other Cubans who staff the camp where you will stay, including people working in the kitchen, the shop, the money exchange, the security room and the bar.

Each year, one brigadista is asked to be the Brigade Leader. This person should be fluent in English (a working knowledge of Spanish is also useful) and should be knowledgeable about the political, economic and social situation in Cuba. The job of the Brigade Leader is to liaise between brigadistas and locals to ensure that all brigadistas know what is happening and when. They will also be the 'go-to' person for sorting out admin issues, coordinating the Australia/New Zealand night and acting as an impromptu speech giver for the Brigade. Adam Mayers, National Coordinator, will be the Brigade Leader in 2022-23.

There is also a team of volunteer local coordinators living in Australia and New Zealand who are responsible for Brigade promotion and brigadista recruitment. It's possible you've already met some of these people! Any and all questions you have prior to leaving for the Brigade can be directed towards the National Coordinator or your local coordinator.

## **Arrival in Havana**

On arrival, Cuban immigration is thorough, and you may be asked several questions.

For your information:

- You are travelling to Cuba as a member of La Brigada Cruz del Sur (Southern Cross Brigade) organised by the Australia and New Zealand Cuba Friendship Societies in association with ICAP;
- You are not in Cuba for a holiday, but as part of a solidarity brigade;
- If your flight arrives on the day the brigade begins (Thursday, 29 Dec 2022), you will be met by the Cuban ICAP staff at the arrivals gate at José Martí International Airport, Havana, and be taken to the Julio Antonio Mella International Camp (CIJAM);
- If your flight arrives prior to the first day of the Brigade, you will be asked to meet at the ICAP building in Havana, Number 301, Calle 17 (between H & I), Vedado on Thursday, 29 Dec 2022 at a time to be confirmed.

The Christmas/New Year period is incredibly busy in Cuba, so you must organise your accommodation prior to arriving in Cuba. Please notify the National Coordinator of your accommodation details in case of a change in arrangements.

Please send your flight details to our National Coordinator, Adam Mayers, by the end of October by emailing him at [southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com](mailto:southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com)

## **Accommodation (Julio Antonio Mella International Camp)**

Brigadistas will spend the majority of the program staying at the Julio Antonio Mella International Camp (CIJAM), which is located 50 km out of Havana. The nearest town to the camp is called Guayabal and is a 8km walk away.

*It is important to emphasise that the camp is not a five-star, or even one-star, hotel!*

Don't let this put you off, but remember that this is not a packaged tour, but a solidarity brigade. You will be experiencing life similar to that of the average Cuban.

### **Dorms**

The dorms are basic concrete brick constructions and the rooms are shared and single sex, with each dorm room holding up to 8 people (most dorms sleep 4 people). Blankets, sheets and pillows and pillow cases are provided. You will need to bring a towel.

People of the same family are normally put in the same room. If there is space in the camp, couples usually will be able to have a room to themselves but this is not guaranteed, as other brigades may be staying there at the same time as ours.

### **Food and water**

The food at the camp is served in a canteen style, with three meals provided each day. Food is basic but will meet all your daily nutrition needs. *There is no choice of menu.* Breakfast is a light meal of fruit juice, bread, eggs on occasion, coffee and hot milk or yoghurt. For lunch and dinner there is fresh fruit and salad and an emphasis on rice, beans, yucca and malanga. They also serve beef, pork, chicken and some fish. It is safe to eat all the food at the camp, including the fresh fruit and vegetables.

It is not recommended to drink the tap water in the camp. However, there is a treated drinking water dispenser in the canteen and also one near the bar.

The camp has a bar which sells food and drinks. This is where brigadistas can buy Cubita coffee, alcohol, soft drinks and bottled water at very reasonable prices. The camp bar will also supply you with hot water.

### **Bathrooms and washing**

The bathroom facilities at the camp are very basic. The showers are sometimes cold. Recent improvements to CIJAM have seen the introduction of solar hot water in some shower blocks, however it is best to be prepared for cold showers. You can buy a bucket at the camp shop, fill it with hot water from the troughs outside and take it in with you to shower, if you wish. If you shower in the hottest part of the day, cold showers should not be a problem.

There are troughs outside the showers for washing clothes. We recommend bringing a universal rubber sink plug or small collapsible bucket for clothes washing, both of which can be donated to the camp if you do not want to take them home. You can of course also use your shower bucket for clothes washing.

## ***Camp shop***

There is a small shop at the camp where you can buy personal items, such as soap, shampoo, detergent and toilet paper, as well as gifts for friends and family, such as slogan tees, Havana Club rum and Cubita coffee. They also sell biscuits, chocolates, towels, postcards, cigarettes and a small selection of books.

## ***Valuables***

The camp has a secure place to keep valuables. Money, important documents and other valuables are recorded and signed in by both the brigadista and the security officer on a receipt before the valuables are secured. You should be aware that once in the safe, valuables can only be accessed at certain times of the day, so you will need to ensure that you keep enough money on your person for a few days at a time.

Theft in the camp is rare and there are security guards on duty at all times. However, do not leave items on the bus at night or leave valuables lying exposed in your room.

## ***Electricity***

Cuba's power output is 110 volts (Australia and New Zealand use 220V). Because Cuba uses a lower voltage, it is safe to put our appliances in Cuban power sockets. Remember that this means that appliances like hairdryers and electric shavers may not work in Cuba. There are some 220V power points around the camp, which can be found if necessary.

You will need an adaptor. Cuban sockets generally use the North American style double flat prong, but some also use the European style with round prongs. For this reason, we recommend bringing a universal adaptor.

## ***Australia/New Zealand night***

As a gesture of solidarity, the Australian and New Zealander brigadistas will hold an Australia/New Zealand night for the Cuban staff at the camp. The brief for this evening is quite open, but usually involves a performance of some kind and a dinner cooked by brigadistas. Be prepared to offer your skills (singing, dancing, public speaking, cooking) and if you know of any poems, songs, speeches, flags or recipes that you would like to include in this night, please bring a copy of them along with you! Remember that the availability of ingredients and kitchen utensils may be limited in Cuba.

## ***Computer, phone and internet access***

WiFi is not widely available in Cuba and can often be expensive. This is because Cuba is unable to use the submarine cable to the USA that connects to the global network, and so they use satellite and a cable to Venezuela for international phone and internet. Coverage has recently been improved via new technology from China.

It is best to tell family and friends to expect limited contact from you during your time in Cuba.

- While staying at CIJAM, you will be able to access WiFi on your personal devices. Internet access while you are away from the camp cannot be guaranteed.
- There is internet access in Havana.
- Bigger hotels offer WiFi for a set price per hour. You will usually need a NAUTA card from the hotel in order to access their WiFi.
- An increasing number of locations throughout Cuba now have WiFi. To access public WiFi, buy a NAUTA scratch card from an ETECSA shop. The locations are easy to spot with people sitting about with their laptops and cell phones.

## **Contacting Brigadistas in Cuba**

Our contact in Cuba is ICAP. This organisation acts as host to brigadistas during the time of the Brigade. Leima is the ICAP Director Asia and Oceania. Her email is [director.dao@icap.cu](mailto:director.dao@icap.cu).

Please note there is no Australian or New Zealand Embassy in Cuba (the nearest Embassy for Australians is in Mexico City), however, the Canadian Embassy in Havana deals with Australian matters in Cuba.

You can call the Brigade Directors office on 047 319 343 to talk to an English speaker who will pass a message on to a brigadista. You can also call the camp gatehouse on 047 319 121. Please only use these numbers in case of emergencies.

## **COVID-19 and the Brigade**

More up-to-date COVID-19 information will be provided closer to the departure date.

### **Vaccinations**

All brigadistas should be up-to-date with their COVID-19 vaccinations. The Cuban Government recognises all TGA-approved vaccinations available in Australia. Other WHO vaccines are also recognised if you received your vaccination overseas. The Cuban Government also recognises a number of other vaccines and remedies not yet approved by the WHO, however these are primarily those being used in the Global South and not alternative medicines or similar that may be found in Australia.

### **What if I contract the disease while on the Brigade?**

Double-check that your travel insurance will cover you for any COVID-related healthcare requirements.

If you contract COVID-19 while on the Brigade, you will be isolated in one of Cuba's world class medical centres, such as IPK in Havana. You will be provided with everything you need to safely isolate and recover from the disease. If you require hospitalisation or other primary care, this will be provided.

PCR tests will be made available to brigadistas if they require a negative test to return to their home country.

We recommend that all brigadistas bring a supply of RAT testing kits with them.

## **Packing list**

### **Personal items**

- Casual clothes
- A warm outfit for cooler weather
- One smart casual outfit for special events (casual clothing will not be allowed when entering the National Ballet [expected to be part of the 2022-23 program])
- One work outfit for volunteer agricultural activities, including long sleeved shirt and sturdy shoes that can get dirty
- Gardening gloves
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Raincoat/umbrella
- Wind proof jacket
- Swimmers and a towel

- Hat
- Sunglasses
- A water bottle
- Universal power adaptor
- Torch
- Toiletries – e.g. soap, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, razor blades, sunscreen
- Sanitary products (these items may be difficult to find in shops)
- COVID-19 RAT kits
- A roll of toilet paper (for use in public bathrooms)
- Hand sanitiser
- Sufficient prescription medications for the duration of your journey overseas
- Anti-diarrheal medication (e.g., Gastrostop or Loperamide)
- Antibiotics for both bladder/urinary tract infections and bowel infections
- Motion sickness tablets
- Insect repellent
- Earplugs (if you are a light sleeper, you might be bothered by late night music in the camp)
- A portable solar camp shower (if you want to ensure hot showers)
- Towel (pillowcase, sheets, pillows and blankets are provided)
- Clothes washing powder or soap, clothes pegs, elastic or nylon washing line
- Any extra snacks or treats you might want, including tea bags, Vegemite, peanut butter, jam, dry biscuits, dried fruits, nuts
- Small gifts for Cuban staff and new friends (optional, see next subsection)
- Guide book and maps
- A copy of your travel insurance policy
- Pens and paper, address book and diary
- A good sense of humour and desire to learn about Cuba

Anything you bring that you do not want to carry home can be donated to the camp, where it will be very much appreciated.

### ***Gift ideas for your new Cuban friends***

You will be overwhelmed with the kindness and generosity of the Cubans you meet, so you might find yourself wanting to show your appreciation with a small gift. The items on this list would be greatly appreciated.

- Money is an acceptable and welcome gift
- USBs – 4GB or more
- Bicycle spares and parts
- Pocket knives
- English/Spanish dictionaries, English (travel) phrase book
- Big box of paracetamol
- Tweezers, nail clippers, soaps, shampoos and other beauty products
- Blu-tac, pens and other office supplies
- Solar-powered calculators
- Guitar strings
- Aus/NZ souvenirs; t-shirts, hats, tablecloths, tea-towels, coasters, calendars, etc.
- Union paraphernalia, such as t-shirts and caps
- Key-rings and other trinkets
- Sets of coloured biro/pencils for kids - gold and silver bios are especially appreciated!
- Quality dolls and toys, especially koalas, emus, kiwis, etc (no battery-operated toys)

- Photo of yourself and your family in Aus/NZ, your house, street, work place, local shop, school, etc - helps with the conversation if your Spanish isn't too hot!

## **Donations**

It is not compulsory to donate, however some brigadistas choose to make donations to the camp. Cash donations are an acceptable and welcome form of donation and go a long way to improving the standards of living at the camp. If you would like to make a donation but feel uncomfortable donating cash, other items that are good as new and high quality are also very welcome. Feel free to talk to your National or Local Coordinator about your ideas.

## **FAQs**

*For COVID-related FAQs, see the COVID-19 section of this document.*

**Q:** Do I need other injections to go to Cuba?

**A:** Cuba is a healthy nation and it is unlikely that brigadistas will encounter any major health problems. Yellow fever, polio, malaria and diphtheria have been eradicated, while infectious diseases, including meningitis and tuberculosis, are rare.

We recommend that you organise vaccinations for Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Tetanus and Typhoid. We also recommend that you are vaccinated against yellow fever if you are travelling through countries where yellow fever still exists. Neither Australia nor Cuba will allow you past border control without a vaccination certificate if you have been in a country with yellow fever.

**Q:** Will I have access to health care while on the Brigade?

**A:** Healthcare in Cuba is of high quality. There is a doctor and nurse at the camp and you are encouraged to visit the medical centre over any concern and not to self-diagnose or self-medicate. This service is free to brigadistas.

**Q:** Do I need to speak Spanish to go on this trip?

**A:** No, you do not need to speak any Spanish to be able to participate in the Brigade. There will be a Cuban translator with the group for the entire duration of the trip. Like any trip overseas, it's always useful to learn a little bit of the local language to help you get about when you're not in the group.

**Q:** Do I need to be a member of my local Cuba friendship society to register as a brigadista?

**A:** No, it's not necessary. However, brigadistas are encouraged to make contact with their local Australia-Cuba Friendship Society branch and attend a couple of meetings prior to leaving for Cuba to give them a better understanding of what to expect in Cuba and why the friendship societies exist.

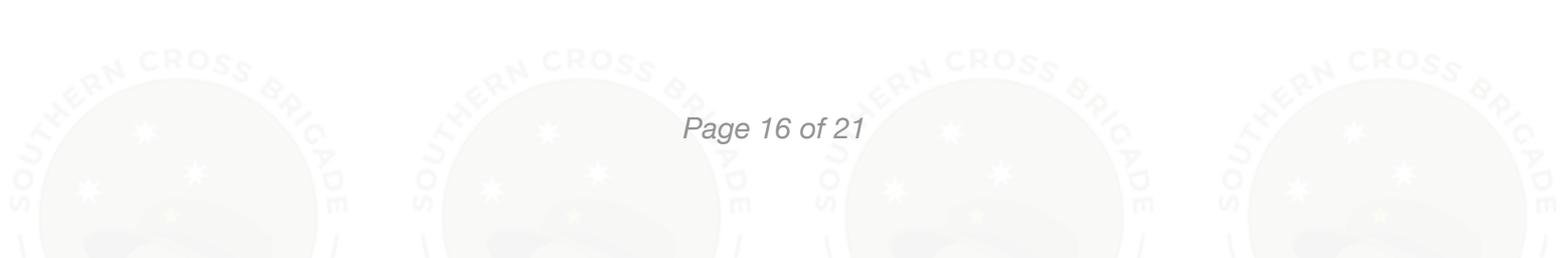
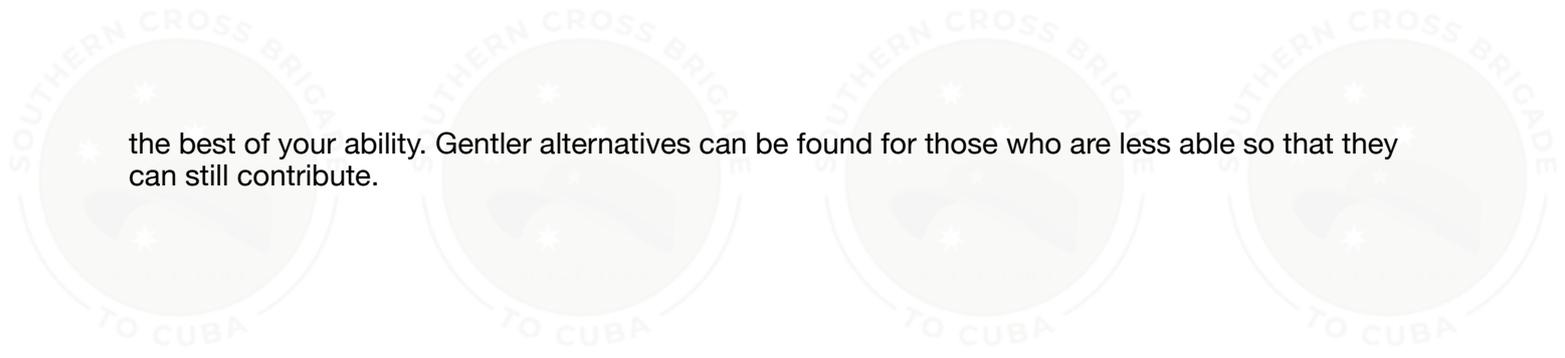
**Q:** What will the weather be like in Cuba in January?

**A:** Although it is technically winter in January, you can expect most days to be pleasantly warm. However, there are occasional cold fronts and nights and early mornings can also be cool. In January in Havana, the temperature range on an average day has a minimum of 18°C and a maximum of 27°C and there is an average total monthly rainfall of 64mm.

**Q:** What's involved in the voluntary agricultural work?

**A:** This work is a token contribution completed by those who are able as a gesture of solidarity with Cuban workers. Past work activities have included picking oranges; pruning orange trees, papaya and banana palms; picking beans; planting guavas; harvesting yucca; picking tomatoes; harvesting sweet potatoes and cutting weeds with machetes. We encourage you to participate to

the best of your ability. Gentler alternatives can be found for those who are less able so that they can still contribute.



## Contacts

### National and Australian Capital Territory Coordinator

Name	Details	Location
Adam Mayers	<a href="mailto:southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com">southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com</a> 0481 355 330	Canberra

### New South Wales

Name	Details	Location
Maria Hilario	<a href="mailto:mariahilario@outlook.com">mariahilario@outlook.com</a> 0431 275 434	Sydney
Hugo Nardini	<a href="mailto:hnardini2@bigpond.com">hnardini2@bigpond.com</a> 02 9822 5891	Western Sydney
Peter Hood	<a href="mailto:phood4@bigpond.com">phood4@bigpond.com</a> 0400 346 585	Albury

### Northern Territory

Name	Details	Location
Miguel Tovar Valencia	<a href="mailto:migueltovarvalencia@gmail.com">migueltovarvalencia@gmail.com</a> 0466 392 512	Darwin

### Queensland

Name	Details	Location
Debra McLoughlin	<a href="mailto:dmclough7@gmail.com">dmclough7@gmail.com</a> 0410 727 094	Brisbane

### South Australia

Name	Details	Location
Tamara Otello	<a href="mailto:tamaraotello@gmail.com">tamaraotello@gmail.com</a> 0418 855 574	Adelaide

### Tasmania

Name	Details	Location
Ro Dallow	<a href="mailto:rdallow@inet.net.au">rdallow@inet.net.au</a> 03 6234 6068	Hobart
Wishes Goodearth	<a href="mailto:w.goodearth@hotmail.com">w.goodearth@hotmail.com</a> 03 6381 5152	Ross

### Victoria

Name	Details	Location
Maree Dellora	<a href="mailto:delloram@hotmail.com">delloram@hotmail.com</a> 0448 121 397	Melbourne
Fred Sergent	<a href="mailto:sargetana@inet.net.au">sargetana@inet.net.au</a> 03 5741 0002	Wodonga

### Western Australia

Name	Details	Location
Rhonda Andrews	<a href="mailto:bowgadabird1@hotmail.com">bowgadabird1@hotmail.com</a> 0428 055 635	Perth

### New Zealand Coordinator

Name	Details	Location
Warren Brewer	<a href="mailto:cubafsnz@gmail.com">cubafsnz@gmail.com</a> 03 328 9580	Auckland

### North Island

Name	Details	Location
Karen Davis	<a href="mailto:karendavis700@gmail.com">karendavis700@gmail.com</a> 021 178 3950	Auckland
Evaristo Navarrete	<a href="mailto:navigas7@gmail.com">navigas7@gmail.com</a> 021 029 36528	Napier
Gael Donald	<a href="mailto:gaeljdonald@gmail.com">gaeljdonald@gmail.com</a>	Napier

### South Island

Name	Details	Location
Paul Maunder	<a href="mailto:wkultur@gmail.com">wkultur@gmail.com</a> 03 732 4010	Blackball

If you would like to find out more about your local Australia-Cuba Friendship Society, please follow these links:

Adelaide ACFS: [acfsadelaide.blogspot.com.au](http://acfsadelaide.blogspot.com.au)

Brisbane ACFS: [www.acfs-brisbane.org.au](http://www.acfs-brisbane.org.au)

Canberra ACFS: [acfscanberra-amigosdecubacanberra.blogspot.com.au](http://acfscanberra-amigosdecubacanberra.blogspot.com.au)

Melbourne ACFS: [www.melbourneacfs.org](http://www.melbourneacfs.org)

Perth ACFS: [acfs-perth.blogspot.com.au](http://acfs-perth.blogspot.com.au)

Sydney ACFS: [www.sydney-acfs.org](http://www.sydney-acfs.org)

New Zealand Friendship Society: [cubasolidarity.blogspot.com.au](http://cubasolidarity.blogspot.com.au)

Most of our societies also have a Facebook page or group. Just search for them on the site!



# 38th Southern Cross Brigade to Cuba

29 December 2022 — 17 January 2023

## Registration

### Brigade participant details (same as passport)

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Given names: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of

birth (dd/mm/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_ Gender (to

assign dorm rooms): \_\_\_\_\_

### Contact details

*Postal address*

Number and Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Landline: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Passport details

Passport number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date (dd/mm/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_

Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_

**Travel details**

Arrival to Jose Marti Airport, Havana

Date (dd/mm/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Flight no: \_\_\_\_\_

Departure from Jose Marti Airport, Havana

Date (dd/mm/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Flight no: \_\_\_\_\_

Travel and health insurance (must be with a non-US owned company)

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy Type/Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional questions**

Do you speak Spanish? Please circle:

None

Basic

Conversational

Fluent

Do you have special dietary requirements? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you consent to allow the Southern Cross Brigade to Cuba to use photographs, audio and video footage of yourself while on the brigade for the purposes of future brigade promotion?

Yes

No

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date (dd/mm/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to Adam Mayers, National Coordinator, at [southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com](mailto:southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com) or PO Box 35, 48 Dickson Place, Dickson, ACT 2602

This registration will be finalised after we receive payment of the 250AUD registration fee sent to:

BSB: 062-900

Account number: 00800897

Account name: ACFS ACT

Please include your name in the reference, e.g. "Tony Smith – SCB Registration"