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Moon Cuba



Synopsis

In 2014, the United States began re-establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba. For the first time in decades, every U.S. citizen can now travel to this eccentric, enigmatic island. In this book, renowned Cuba expert Christopher P. Baker tells you everything you need to know to make this trip possible. Choose the best guides, tours, and means of transportation. Join in the cultural feast in Havana, a city like no other. Experience the best beaches, natural wonders, and scenic drives. Appreciate the island's history, from its indigenous origins through the revolution. Find the ultimate mementos; authentic Cuban cigars and rum.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Christopher P. Baker was born and raised in Yorkshire, England. He received a BA in geography from University College, London, and masters degrees in Latin American studies from Liverpool University and in education from the Institute of Education, London University. He began his writing career in 1978 as a contributing editor on Latin America for *Land & Liberty*, a London-based political journal. In 1980, he received a Scripps-Howard Foundation Scholarship in Journalism to attend the University of California, Berkeley. Since 1983, Christopher, the 2008 Lowell Thomas Travel Journalist of the Year, has made his living as a professional travel writer, photographer, lecturer, and tour guide. He specializes in Cuba, about which he has written six books. He has contributed to more than 150 publications worldwide, including *CNN Travel*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Robb Report*, and *The Los Angeles Times*. Christopher has been profiled in *USA Today*, appears

frequently on radio and television talk shows and as a guest-lecturer aboard cruise ships, and has spoken at the National Press Club, World Affairs Council, and on National Geographic Live. He is a National Geographic Resident Expert and conducts tours of Cuba, Colombia, and Costa Rica and Panama for National Geographic Expeditions. In 2013, he led the first-ever motorcycle tours of Cuba for U.S. citizens on behalf of MotoDiscovery. His many books include *Moon Costa Rica*, *Mi Moto Fidel: Motorcycling Through Castro's Cuba*, and *Cuba Classics: A Celebration of Vintage American Automobiles*. Christopher's website can be found at christopherpbaker.com.

Discover Cuba The time to visit Cuba is now! President Barack Obama's announcement in 2014 that he was reestablishing diplomatic relations with Cuba was exhilarating. For the first time in decades every U.S. citizen can now travel to this Caribbean island of eccentricity and enigma. Any U.S. citizen can qualify for group educational travel with licensed tour companies and academic institutions. Even more exciting is the possibility that new regulations may permit individuals to travel solo for educational activity—defined not as academic study but as people-to-people interaction. Plus, U.S. citizens will be able to use their credit cards in Cuba and bring home cigars and rum—the ultimate mementos of a unique and long overdue travel experience. With all the media attention on politics, it's easy to overlook the sheer beauty of this place: diamond-dust beaches and bathtub-warm seas the color of peacock feathers; bottle-green mountains and jade valleys full of dramatic formations; colonial cities with cathedrals and cobbled plazas; and above all, the sultriness and spontaneity of the people in a place called the most emotionally involving in the Western hemisphere. Divers are delirious over Cuba's deep-sea treasures. Birding is the best in the Caribbean. There are crocodiles, too, lurking leery-eyed in well-preserved everglades. Horseback-riding options abound. Cuba is a prime destination for fishing and bicycle touring. In the Sierra Maestra, hikers can follow revolutionary trails trod by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. There are salsa, mojitos, and cuba libres to enjoy and the world's finest cigars, fresh from the factory. Cuba's most enigmatic appeal, however, is the sense that you are living inside a romantic thriller. Cuba is intoxicating, laced with the sharp edges and sinister shadows that made Ernest Hemingway wish that he could stay forever and inspired Spanish poet Federico García Lorca to write to his parents, "If I get lost, look for me in Cuba." No other Western nation offers such sensual and surreal sensations, made more romantic by Cuba's caught-in-a-time-warp setting. Finally, after six decades, U.S. citizens can now legally taste this forbidden fruit.

I owned the last edition by the same author. My Cuban guide saw my book and exclaimed, "That's the best guide book for Cuba. He really knows Cuba!" Good recommendation coming from a Cuban tour guide. I don't know how this compares to LP and others because I haven't used them, but this previous edition worked great for me. I'll know more about this edition in a couple weeks. Just to set the record straight from other reviewers, one complained of "tissue-thin pages" and another of "left out sections". Well, this book has 650 something pages, about the same as the previous "more complete" edition, so I'm not sure yet what was left out. As to the paper, it is thin, but seems sturdy enough. It makes the book much, much easier to carry and that maybe why some think the book is edited down. It certainly LOOKS much thinner, but it is the same number of pages, just a lot thinner due only to paper thickness. I think it's an improvement because the other book was just too bulky to carry in a pocket or anywhere. This one's easily stuck in a back pocket!

I bought the hard copy instead of the Kindle version for the simple reason that I obviously want to take it with me to Cuba and be able to flip around the book easily. Unfortunately, it is printed on the equivalent of tissue paper. Sure, that saves weight, but the negatives severely outweigh that single positive. It's hard to turn the pages - at least two usually turn at the same time because the paper is so thin and then you have to stop and carefully separate them. It will not stand up to any travel at all - even before putting it in my carry-on luggage, the pages have been bent and torn. And at this point I've only read it at home! It's so hard to read comfortably that I give it that second star only because the content is good - but just try to thumb through and read that content.

I never give five star reviews but this book truly merits one. I was in Havana the last week in March and relied heavily on this book to prepare myself for the trip, for guidance as to where to stay (I prefer Vedado), where to eat, and what to see. Baker lived in Cuba as a correspondent for the Guardian and the book covers all of Cuba in depth. While I only went to Havana this time I intend to go back soon and will consult his book for information on other locales. The chapter on Essentials, all you need to know before you go, is worth the cost of the book alone. I have a few quibbles about the book but no criticisms of note. I would only add that the private sector in Havana, *casas particulares*, *paladars*, etc rapidly so while this is the most recent source of printed information you can find also check out what is available on the internet.

I'd give this book a higher rating, if I had the paperback. I discovered in Cuba that travel books don't work as well on Kindle as their paper cousins. You tend to flip back and forth with travel books, and

Kindle's lack of 'flip-ability' meant everything too far longer than usual. I kept having to search based on a keyword, and then discovered dozens of choices. If I chose the wrong page, I had to go back, try the next one, on and on. Maps, pictures, etc all proved very difficult to access. Also since Cuba has extremely limited wireless connection, the usual benefits of Kindle - its access to the Wikipedia and such - proved useless. I still consulted the book quite a lot, but once a paperback guide became available to me (Lonely Planet - not as good) I used it instead just to get answers quicker. An interesting discovery. Love my Kindle for novels, but not so much for reference type books. That said, Baker's guide has almost all the info you'd find in the LP, Rough Guides, type books - but with loads of personality and opinion. It contains very useful insights and historical information, a much better overview than I expected from such a guide book.

This is a good book to use while in Cuba. I will be going there in a few months, and will consult this book as I go to different places. It has a great wealth of information.

The 2000 Edition was more complete and informative. The 2015 Edition has many sections removed.

I like this Cuba travel guide book.

Lots of great information but somewhat overly cautious about dangers. My son and his wife were there for weeks on their own, rented a car and had no trouble with anything except flat tires!. Also, I am very interested in information about scuba diving and that information was limited, especially for the areas the author said were the best. For example Cabeza Sambo ""one of the best sites...70 km west of Cayo Largo. Over 800 species of fish...exquisite coral." Cabeza Sambo is not on the map, nor is there any indication of how one might go there. Other places, such as La Costa de los Piratas (Isla de la Juventud) are very hard to find on the map, although it is said to "offer spectacular diving...56 dive sites." It might help to coordinate the text with the pages of the maps. The situation about visiting is very fluid now, so I am hoping that the updates on the moon.com website will keep up. For example, I would very much like to know what kinds of gifts for Cubans will be most appreciated (clothes? electronics? art supplies?) and what is allowed. Whenever I travel to areas that may lack some items, I like to take as many as I can to leave with the citizens. I forgot to add: caution was recommended about the drinking water, but nothing was said about the ice that one presumably would get in the wonderful cocktails...do restaurants use safe water for ice? How would

one know??

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