

5 Things You Didn't Know About Cuba

Cuba is a fascinating country, and not just because of its revolutionary history. Indeed, there are several interesting tidbits that few people know about – here are my 5 favourite interesting facts about Cuba – I'm confident there will be at least a couple of surprises in here! If you're planning on taking a Cuban holiday, a little research into the country can prove an eye opening experience...

Castro's speeches are longer than most feature-length films

Much has been written and said about Cuba's former president Fidel Castro, but few can argue that he's an incredible man. The 81 year old has lived through an estimated 600+ assassination attempts, the Cold War and 9 US presidents. He also is known for his long speeches – indeed, he holds a place in the Guinness book of records for his 1960 speech to the United Nations which lasted 4 hours and 29 minutes. Amazingly, this pales in comparison to his best within Cuba – a jaw dropping 7 hours and 10 minutes at the 1986 Communist Party Conference in Havana. Now he's retired from the role, there's no risk of being stuck listening to one on a Cuba holiday!

The country has outstanding free healthcare despite its poverty

Despite widespread poverty and being free for all, Cuba's healthcare is amongst the best in the world. An interesting fact about Cuba is that the average life expectancy is around 76 years, and its medical technology is amongst their most successful exports. Indeed, Cuban scientists were behind vaccines for hepatitis B and meningitis B. If you get sick on your luxury Cuba holiday, you are entitled to the same excellent healthcare as the locals.

The locals think Cuba looks like a crocodile...

Cubans often refer to Cuba as El Cocodrilo. The reason for this is simple – viewed from above, the island is said to resemble a crocodile. Despite this bad omen, Cuba's wildlife is actually surprisingly benign – it's one of the few countries to have no animals or plants which are dangerous to humans, so you can feel safe on your holiday in Cuba.

Cuba has a national bird, tree and flower

Here's some interesting information on Cuba: it has a national bird, tree and flower. Each has its own special meanings: The flower is the Butterfly Jasmine, and represents purity, rebelliousness and independence. The national tree is the Royal Palm for its strength – it can survive storm force winds and hurricanes. Finally, the national bird is the Toco-roco, which shares the colours of the Cuban flag – red, white and blue. Nature lovers should be able to find all of these on holiday in Cuba.

Che Guevara Wasn't the First Celebrated Revolutionary

Although you can't get very far in Cuba without seeing the iconic image of Che Guevara, he and Castro weren't the first Cuban revolutionary heroes to be celebrated. Jose Marti was a revolutionary who died in 1895 in battle fighting for independence from Spain – the war ended 3 years later. He spent his time in and out of prison, writing papers and fighting for the cause – it's no wonder he's still revered to this day as a hero.

His legacy is still felt in the island – many streets bear his name and you'd be hard pressed to miss the Jose Marti Memorial in the Plaza de la Revolucion! Indeed, when you take your Cuba holiday, you may well touch down in Jose Marti airport! There's no shortage of stories and information in Cuba about the man.

There are many more interesting facts about Cuba which will surprise and intrigue, just through reading through the island's action packed history. Certainly a little research into its history means that you'll get a lot more from your luxury Cuban holiday.

About the Author

Emma Lelliott is the general manager of Captivating Cuba, an independent Cuba holiday specialist. With offices in Havana and the UK, Captivating Cuba can help you tailor-make the perfect [Cuban holiday](#) experience.

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