



The decades-old animosity between the US and Cuba is still not completely over. Just the other day, there were accusations that Cuban government guys drugged some American diplomats.

However, more and more U.S. senior tourists are taking the short flight to the feisty island. Just because it's still Castro Commie shouldn't stop you. After all, so are China and Russia still pinko, and millions of US tourists flock there annually with no restrictions.

So, if you're brave enough to plan a Havana holiday, and your ID and other paperwork is up-to-date, consider some tips for making it more pleasant, and just maybe, more economical.

1. Don't be an ugly American: Forget the politics and treat all Cubans you encounter with courtesy and respect. Not only will you have a more pleasant visit, but it could help in bargaining for everything including hotel rooms, booze, taxis and store-bought items.
2. Aprender el idioma. Learn some basic Spanish or practice up on your high school language lessons. Speaking and bargaining become more effective when you can converse in the local language. If it's all Greek to you now, check for quickie on-line Spanish language expressions you can use.
3. Before you book your trip, be sure to be up-to-date on current money practices in Cuba. Cash dollars or euros may be more valuable than credit cards in bargaining for better prices in retail stores, taxi rides and other transactions.
4. Airbnb is hitting Cuba: The bargain private home stay is getting popular there. As you make your plans, compare hotel prices with Airbnb quotes. Staying in a private home could be a bargain if you're looking to bunk at one of the many attractive beachfront locations in Havana

and elsewhere on the island. The best prices will be if you're traveling with a half-dozen family members or group of pals.

5. Cuba still isn't Miami or Las Vegas. Senior travelers may run into shortages in prescription and over-the-counter medicine, or even such necessary items as toilet paper. When making your plans, be sure to inquire about what health and sanitation items you should take with you.