

HOW TO PLAN LEGAL TRAVEL TO CUBA

That's sure to Wow!



Absolutely
CUBA

◊ IMMERSE YOURSELF. ◊

Hola, I'm Danielle!



At Absolutely Cuba®, when it comes to this captivating island, our passion knows no bounds. Cuba is a hidden gem waiting to be discovered, and we're thrilled to share its wonders with you and your clients.

With extensive experience and a deep understanding of Cuban culture, we're dedicated to creating truly remarkable moments. From the intriguing history and the warm-hearted locals to the tantalizing cuisine and the vibrant arts scene, we've got it all covered.

As the CEO of Absolutely Cuba®, I've made it my mission to turn dreams into reality. Having transitioned from a fulfilling career, I now have the privilege of curating unforgettable travel experiences for travel professionals like you full-time.

Absolutely Cuba® takes pride in crafting unique and personalized itineraries that cater to your clients' individual preferences and interests. We take the time to truly understand their desires, ensuring that each experience reflects their vision. No two trips are ever the same—we're here to surpass expectations and deliver tailored moments that leave a lasting impression.

Whether you opt for a private client experience or join one of our exceptional Done-for-you FAMs, we promise warm welcomes, personalized service, and moments that will create lasting memories. Get ready for an extraordinary experience that will leave your clients in awe of the magic of Cuba. We look forward to showing your clients the Cuba You Can't Google.

A COMPLETE 13-STEP GUIDE

for anyone looking to plan travel to Cuba that is legal and immersive, compliant and authentic and completely custom.

Want to plan a trip that is intentional, culturally authentic and leaves your clients wildly satisfied?

You're in the right place.

Cuba changes lives. It changed mine.

What fuels my passion is the desire to inspire people to explore and expand their horizons through gorgeous travel experiences, like I had the first time I visited the island.

That is why I created this free guide. Cuba, with its rich culture and boundless opportunities, is an experience waiting to happen. Just one trip, and your clients will be captivated by its charm and forever changed by the encounter.

From one cultural explorer to another...

*With love,
Danielle*



13 STEPS TO *help* YOU PLAN A LEGAL TRIP TO CUBA THAT *Wows*.



01: GET CLEAR ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE YOUR CLIENT WANTS



02: GET FAMILIAR WITH THE DESTINATION



03: IDENTIFY YOUR CLIENT'S PRIORITIES



04: UNDERSTAND YOUR CLIENT'S BUDGET



05: SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS



06: CHOOSE THEIR ACCOMMODATIONS



07: PLAN AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES



08: RESEARCH BARS, RESTAURANTS & NIGHTLIFE



09: PREPARE ART & SHOPPING RECOMMENDATIONS



10: WORK OUT THE LOGISTICS



11: FINALIZE THE ITINERARY & LAST MINUTE LOOSE ENDS



12: ENGAGING WITH THE LOCALS IS KEY TO A GREAT TRIP



13: SKIP STRAIGHT FROM STEP 1 TO STEP 13 AND LET ABSOLUTELY CUBA DO THE PLANNING FOR YOU

I'll be giving you lots of #PROTIPS throughout, linking to resources and ending with more information on my own FAMs in case you want to learn how to plan a legal trip to Cuba that WOWs firsthand.

Let's get started!



LEGAL TRAVEL TO CUBA *means*

traveling to Cuba in a meaningful way. Legal travel means exploring the island while engaging with locals. It means eating in local paladars, buying art from independent galleries and seeing the sights with a local guide. Legal travel means embracing the culture of Cuba through salsa classes and perfectly poured mojitos, horseback rides through the valleys of Viñales and learning the art of a handmade cigar. Legal travel to Cuba means treating the island like the cultural, historic, vibrantly rich destination that it is. Absolutely Cuba has mastered the art of authentic, legal travel to the island. A visa and a passport is all you need. No special licenses required.



TRAVEL THAT *wows*

is an immersive experience in vibrant culture. It's about feeling the pulsating rhythm of salsa in a Havana club, tasting the rich flavors of traditional Ropa Vieja, and marveling at the timeless beauty of colonial architecture. It's the excitement of navigating through bustling street markets, the tranquility of lush tobacco fields, and the heartwarming connections with locals. It's the lushness of a custom experience with no detail left to chance. This is travel that goes beyond sightseeing, it's a deep dive into the soul of Cuba.

So, HOW DO YOU PLAN LEGAL TRAVEL TO CUBA THAT WILL *WOW* YOUR CLIENTS & MAKE **YOU** LOOK LIKE A *travel planning* ROCKSTAR?

Travel is a most transformative thing. Travel is illuminating, honest and perspective-shifting. Every travel experience I've had in my life has contributed to the woman that I am today. For more than 17 years, I have crafted authentic, visually stunning travel experiences to destinations around the world. This is why planning travel to Cuba came so naturally. Few places in the world are so misunderstood. Few places in the world are so open to reinterpretation. Travel to Cuba is truly life-changing. The more people I can encourage to visit this beautiful island, the better.

Over the last decade, I have hosted and facilitated travel to Cuba for hundreds of clients. I have built a community of thousands. I speak and teach and moderate forums on travel to Cuba. After nearly two decades in the travel industry, to be considered an expert in the Cuba travel space feels amazing.

This free guide brings together all of my best advice and inside information I've learned over more than a decade of long- and short-term visits to the island. I love that I get to support you as you plan travel to Cuba for your clients. I want you to look like the knowledgeable rockstar travel agent that you are! These 13 steps are a great start. They take the confusion out of planning travel to Cuba, lay out a clear plan for engaging with your clients and help you to craft an unforgettable travel experience. Your clients are going to have an amazing trip to Cuba!

13 STEPS TO *help* YOU PLAN A LEGAL TRIP TO CUBA THAT IS SURE TO *WOW* YOUR CLIENTS AND TURN THEIR *travel wishlist* INTO A REALITY.



STEP 1: GET CLEAR ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE YOUR CLIENT WANTS TO HAVE

What does your client's perfect trip look like? How do they want to feel during their stay? What memories are they trying to come home with? How do they talk about this unique and special destination?

Many first-time travelers to Cuba have a very clear idea of what they want from a first visit. This is where you come in. Having a clear picture of the experience that your client has always envisioned will help you create a trip your client will LOVE. Don't have a wishlist to work from? Don't sweat it. This is where getting to know your client comes in. Is your client a foodie? Are they an amateur photographer? Do they enjoy bird-watching on the weekends? Is your client a cigar aficionado? Whatever their interests, Cuba can deliver. The more the you are able to customize a trip to the client's interests, the more WOWed the client will be. And, YOU, dear agent, will look like a SUPERSTAR!

#PROTIP



One of the questions I always ask my clients is "How do you want your clients to feel when they return from Cuba?" "What do you want them to say about their trip?" Start there. Work backwards from this feeling, keeping it front of mind throughout the planning process. You'll be sure to plan a trip that your client will LOVE.



STEP 2:

FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE DESTINATION

Travel, especially to Cuba, requires a bit of know-how. The more you grasp the ins and outs of this unique island, the better equipped you'll be to serve your clients like a boss. And guess what? Absolutely Cuba has been rocking the travel to Cuba game for over a decade. We've seen it all!

Now, here's the deal: There's a whole lot of misinformation floating around about travel to Cuba. But when you can confidently brief your clients on the must-knows like passport and visa requirements, money matters, delectable local eats, unique customs, language tips, and the legal nitty-gritty, you'll level up your expertise and then some.

Smooth and compliant travel to Cuba is all about proper preparation and expert-level planning. Once your clients feel the confidence of having a top-notch travel professional like you by their side, they can kick back, relax, and soak up every moment of their well-deserved and likely long-awaited trip to Cuba.

#PROTIP



Trying to sort through fact and fiction when it comes to travel to Cuba can be HARD! It's essential that you find reliable and comprehensive sources to follow as you plan. Or, if untying the knots of planning becomes too much, reach out to us at hola@absolutelycuba.com and we'll do the heavy lifting for you.



STEP 3:

IDENTIFY YOUR CLIENT'S PRIORITIES

How does your client want you to prioritize their time and budget? What experiences matter most? How do they want to manage their time? Communicating these questions to your client can make the difference between presenting a cookie-cutter travel experience and presenting an experience that WOWs.

Yes, they want to spend time in all of Havana (and Trinidad and Viñales) , but they will only be in Cuba for 5 days. How does your client want to organize their itinerary? The only way to answer this question and create a truly special experience is to know your client's priorities prior to beginning the planning process.

Knowing what matters most to your client can make the difference between a "just okay" proposal and a WOW proposal...making YOU look like a SUPERSTAR.

#PROTIP

Asking your client what is MOST IMPORTANT to them as you plan their dream trip to Cuba is essential to creating a WOW-worthy experience. Aligning the itinerary you create with your client's desires becomes easier when the lines of communication are open. Clients who feel seen become return clients and are more likely to refer friends to your business.





STEP 4:

UNDERSTAND YOUR CLIENT'S BUDGET

To plan an exceptional trip to Cuba, it's essential to have a clear understanding of your client's budget.

To be clear, travel to Cuba is not cheap, but it can be done "on the cheap". Will sacrifices have to be made? Definitely. This is why having a clear budget is so important. The kind of trip you create for your client is entirely dependent on how much they have to spend.

Cuba offers a range of experiences and accommodations, from budget-friendly to more luxurious stays. By discussing the budget with your client, you can manage their expectations effectively and curate the best experience within their means. Being transparent about the financial aspects of the trip will allow you to recommend accommodations, activities, and dining options that align with their budgetary constraints. With a well-planned budget, your client can enjoy their Cuban adventure without financial stress, enhancing their overall experience.

#PROTIP

Here are some things to consider when mapping out a budget for your client: flights, accommodations, transportation (to the airport and in-destination), excursions, eating out, shopping, nightlife and miscellaneous expenses. Planning a comprehensive budget leaves nothing to chance. Detail-oriented agents ROCK!



STEP 5:

SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

For Americans, traveling to Cuba means complying with specific rules and regulations. It's crucial to set clear expectations for your clients to ensure a smooth and enjoyable trip. Explain to them that their American credit and debit cards do not work in Cuba. There are no ATMs available to them. They cannot withdraw money. All of the money they have is all of the money they are going to have so it's essential that you advise your clients on currency exchange options, bringing a good of money and managing their finances while in Cuba.

Additionally, inform your clients about the legal requirements for Americans traveling to Cuba. Cuba is a cultural destination. Laying on the beach for 7 days is not a legal option. Emphasize the importance of complying with the itinerary you've created, which should include immersive activities that engage the locals. Provide guidance on the necessary paperwork, such as the process of obtaining a visa, and inform them about any recent updates in travel regulations.

Making sure your clients understand terms of the trip they are about to embark on is one of the most essential ways to create a trip that WOWs.

#PROTIP



Create a checklist for your clients prior to departure. If you map out all of the pre-departure tasks that your client will need to complete in order to have a smooth and successful trip, they will feel at ease and confident in your services. Remember: Expert agents stay booked and busy and a prepared client is your best ambassador.



STEP 6:

CHOOSE THEIR ACCOMMODATIONS

Your next step is to find accommodations that fit your client's budget for each city they are planning to visit and stay overnight.

Like airfare, accommodations is one of the largest items in the budget, so it is smart to plan this expense before booking anything else. If your client loves the kinds of premium boutique properties that we secure for our clients, se

Depending on the type of trip your client is trying to have, there are obvious benefits to staying in certain neighborhoods over others, especially in Havana. Booking most hotels is a no-no, so the first thing you'll want to do is create a list of casa accommodations that fit your client's needs and budget.

Recommending casa particulares, privately-owned guesthouses, will provide the most authentic and immersive stay - and the quality that your client is seeking. Casa particulares offer a unique opportunity to connect with local hosts, immerse yourself in the Cuban culture, and gain insights into everyday life on the island. For a more enriching experience , a casa - especially the kinds of premium boutique properties we use for our clients - are the way to go.

#PROTIP



Staying in a casa particular allows your clients to interact with locals, receive personalized recommendations, and experience the warmth and hospitality of the Cuban people. Encourage your clients to embrace this alternative accommodation option for a truly authentic Cuban experience. Few hotels in Cuba compare.





STEP 7:

PLAN AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES

One of the highlights of traveling to Cuba is immersing oneself in authentic experiences that showcase the country's rich culture and heritage. Encourage your clients to venture beyond the typical tourist spots and engage with the local community. Recommend activities such as taking salsa classes to embrace the vibrant Cuban rhythms, visiting tobacco farms to learn about the art of cigar rolling and organic farming, or joining a guided tour to explore historical landmarks like Old Havana, San Isidro or Trinidad.

Promote opportunities for your clients to interact with locals and gain insights into their day-to-day life. Suggest visiting community projects, engaging in cooking classes, or attending cultural events and festivals. These authentic experiences will provide a deeper connection with the Cuban culture and create lasting memories.

Embark on a captivating journey to Viñales, where your clients can connect with skilled organic tobacco farmers and indulge in the finest, legally obtainable cigars, despite the current ban on importing cigars and rum from Cuba. This immersive adventure promises a truly genuine encounter that will leave any traveler with unforgettable memories and a legal taste of Cuba's tobacco heritage.

By curating a range of unique and authentic activities, your clients can fully immerse themselves in the Cuban experience, fostering a genuine appreciation for the island's history, traditions, and people.

#PROTIP

If you're looking for eye-popping backdrops for your client to jazz up their IG, look no further than the entire capital city! Havana is one of the most photogenic places in the world. Here's our Top 5 list of Off-the-Beaten-Path Places in Havana to Do It for the 'Gram: The Gran Teatro. Fusterlandia. Revolution Square. Cajellón de Hamel. The view from the top of the Paseo Del Prado Hotel. Enjoy!



STEP 8: RESEARCH BARS, RESTAURANTS & NIGHTLIFE

Cuba's vibrant nightlife and culinary scene are world-renowned. To ensure your clients have an unforgettable experience, conduct thorough research on bars, restaurants, and nightlife options that cater to their preferences.

Recommend atmospheric bars where your clients can savor classic Cuban cocktails, like the iconic mojito, in lively surroundings. Explore the local cuisine and suggest non-touristy paladars that offer authentic Cuban dishes and innovative takes on local ingredients. Choosing paladars - family-owned restaurants - over state-owned restaurants will add depth to how your clients experience the culinary scene in Cuba and fill their plates with authentic food galore.

Keep your clients in the know about the vibrant music and dance scene in Cuba. Suggest venues where they can enjoy live performances of Afro-Cuban jazz, salsa, or son music. Encourage them to dance the night away and experience the infectious rhythms of Cuban music firsthand.

Providing a well-researched list of bars, restaurants, and nightlife will ensure that your clients experience Cuba's vibrant social scene, creating moments to remember forever.

#PROTIP



Don't forget to consider your clients' dietary preferences and budgets when making recommendations. Pescatarians, vegetarians and vegans need food love, too. When it comes to nightlife, La Fábrica de Arte Cubano is a MUST.



STEP 9:

MAKE A LIST OF WHERE TO SHOP TIL YOUR CLIENT DROPS

Cuba is a country of color and vibrancy. Encourage your clients to explore the lively art scene and unique shopping experiences during their stay. Recommend visiting art galleries in Havana to admire works by talented Cuban artists.

For an even more immersive experience, encourage your clients to discover local markets where they can find handmade crafts, artwork, and souvenirs that showcase Cuba's artistic heritage. Suggest visiting artist studios or participating in workshops where your clients can learn about traditional Cuban art forms like pottery, painting, or wood carving. This allows them to engage with local artists and gain a deeper understanding of the creative process.

When it comes to shopping, guide your clients to explore local boutiques, where they can discover unique clothing, accessories, and jewelry made by local designers. Clothing, art and crafts from local artisans are keepsakes that your clients will keep to remember their trip to Cuba forever. Shopping with independent entrepreneurs is an incredible way to support the Cuban people.

#PROTIP



Make arrangements for your clients to exchange a small amount of USD for local currency upon arrival. Having small amount of CUP on hand makes shopping locally easier and bargaining a breeze.



STEP 10:

WORK OUT THE LOGISTICS

To ensure a smooth travel experience, it's important to work out the logistics of transportation and planning well in advance of your client's arrival in Cuba. Inform your clients about the different transportation options available in Cuba, including taxis, bicitaxis, charter buses and rental cars (not recommended, but available). Discuss the pros and cons of each mode of transportation, considering factors such as cost, convenience, availability and ease of use.

If your clients will be traveling between cities, be sure to pre-arrange their transportation, taking into account the distances and travel times involved. Recommend scenic routes and interesting stops along the way, such as the picturesque Viñales Valley or the colonial town of Trinidad. The Che Memorial in Santa Clara is a great place to pause as your client makes their way to the middle of the country.

When it comes to logistics, the guidance you give to your clients and the arrangements you make before they arrive can make or break the trip. Including seamless transportation options in your client's itinerary is sure to impress.

#PROTIP



Rental cars are readily available on the island, but discouraging this may be more beneficial to your client in the end. Rental cars are not always in the best condition in Cuba and AAA is not a thing. Also, with gas availability at an all-time low, your client may lose a full day of their time on the island trying to refuel. No bueno across the board. Do not recommend.





STEP 11:

FINALIZE THE ITINERARY & TIE ANY LOOSE ENDS

The final stages of planning involve finalizing the itinerary, addressing any last-minute loose ends, and preparing a comprehensive packing list. Review the activities and destinations that align with your clients' interests and prioritize their must-see attractions. Incorporate their desired experiences, such as art visits, culinary adventures, or outdoor excursions, into a well-balanced itinerary.

Double-check all travel arrangements, including flights, accommodations, and transportation, to ensure accuracy and smooth transitions. Provide your clients with essential information about entry requirements, travel insurance, and ask that they provide you with their emergency contacts.

Create a detailed packing list tailored to their specific trip, including essentials like comfortable clothing, sunscreen, insect repellent, every conceivable toiletry and prescription and any special items required for unique activities or destinations. Advise on appropriate attire for cultural sites or events. Clients appreciate when their travel agent pays attention to the smallest details.

#PROTIP



Make sure to remind your clients to bring an appropriate amount of cash. The cash they have on hand is all the cash they will have on hand for the duration of their trip. We recommend that our clients bring \$150-200USD per person per day – this should do it! Remember: It's always better to have too much money than not enough!



STEP 12:

ENGAGING WITH LOCALS IS THE HEARTBEAT OF A GREAT TRIP

Immersing oneself in the vibrant local culture is a must when traveling to Cuba. Encourage your clients to engage with locals to truly experience the warmth and authenticity of the island. Here are some of the ways that I have arranged for my clients to authentically immerse themselves in Cuban culture:

Pair rum with the perfect cigar. Rhumba! Get a santeria reading. Have lunch on the beach. Dance to live music. Eat at every paladar you can. Drink a mojito as you watch the sunset over the Malecón. Visit Viñales. Get your fill of Afro-Cuban culture. Crash a street party. Catch a baseball game. Enjoy dinner prepared by your own private chef. Drink rum with a Cuban. Go to the ballet.

Take a cooking class. Play dominoes.

Share a gorgeous view with a new Cuban friend.

Remind your clients to approach interactions with an open mind and respect for cultural differences. Encourage them to embrace the warmth and friendliness of the Cuban people, as it will enhance their overall experience and leave a lasting impression of their amazing travel experience.

#PROTIP



Support for the Cuban People is not just a checkbox on a form. Every trip planned by Absolutely Cuba places this pillar front of mind. By interacting with locals, our clients gain unique insights into Cuban life, create meaningful connections, and contribute positively to the local community. This is why we do what I do.



STEP 13:

JUMP FROM STEP 1 TO EXPERT AND LET ABSOLUTELY CUBA DO THE PLANNING FOR YOU

I'm going to be honest with you. The travel that I plan to Cuba for (the clients of) my agent clients has all of the bells and whistles. I use the expertise, connections and knowledge I've gained from immersing myself in Cuban culture over more than a decade of long- and short-term visits to plan authentic and immersive experiences for each and every client who seeks me out. Our trips are unique because they are planned from a local - not a tourist, perspective. We support the local economy by working directly with independent business owners native to the island. We use travel as a vehicle to cultivate perspective shifts and a true understanding about Cuba and the Cuban people.

...and our gorgeous itineraries are expertly curated with the client in mind. We customize each to fit the interests of the traveler, so that they can experience Cuba exactly how they wish.

And let's be real: Planning travel to Cuba can be tricky. Planning travel to Cuba that blows the client's mind is practically a unicorn.

I am that unicorn. Absolutely Cuba is the elite travel planner's unicorn. Your fellow agents agree. Check out some of their rave reviews [here](#).

I know you're a travel rockstar, juggling client needs and a million other things. That's where I come in. If you ever find yourself in need of professional support or top-tier expertise, our dedicated team is here to assist you. Our expert travel services are designed to handle all the nitty-gritty logistics and planning, allowing you to focus on what you do best—engaging with and creating unforgettable memories for your clients. Just shoot us and email, and we'll take care of the rest like the unicorns we are.

Let's make your clients' dream trip to Cuba a reality. [Schedule your 30-minute consultation](#) today!





Want to chat about creating a custom travel experience for your clients to be able to experience Cuba for themselves?

BOOK A FREE 30 MINUTE DISCOVERY CALL HERE.

What's on the agenda for our chat? Let's dive in:

1. Let's make this the year you turn your clients' long-awaited dream of visiting Cuba into a gorgeous reality. We'll outline clear next steps to make this bucket list trip happen and ensure their adventure to Cuba becomes an unforgettable experience.
2. We'll walk you through the Absolutely Cuba process, sharing how we work our magic. Every supplier has their own approach, but understanding our seamless planning and clear communication is vital to fostering a strong client/supplier relationship. And hey, don't forget to check out the [glowing testimonials from other agents](#) who have raved about our services - they're the icing on the cake!
3. Have any questions or concerns? We're here to address them all so that you can confidently present travel to Cuba to your clients with knowledge and clarity. Selling something you don't understand? No way! We're the experts in our field, and we're thrilled to provide you with guidance and top-tier expertise. Come prepared with all your questions - we love them, and there's no such thing as a silly question here!

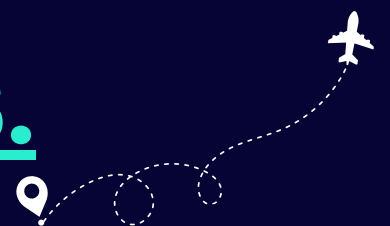
Get ready for a conversation that will equip you with the tools and know-how to expertly serve your clients' Cuba travel desires.

Let's make your client's travel wishes come true!

WANT TO *join* **ONE OF**
OUR COVETED FAMS,
EXPERIENCE CUBA'S
captivating **CULTURE**
FIRSTHAND AND
POSITION YOURSELF AS
AN *expert* **IN TRAVEL TO**
CUBA WHILE
EXPERIENCING A NEW
CULTURE IN AN
immersive and authentic
WAY?


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