



CSC, c/o Unite Woodberry
218 Green Lanes
London N4 2HB
Tel. 0208 800 0155
www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk
finance@cuba-solidarity.org.uk

CSC WINTER SOLIDARITY BRIGADE 2010: 15TH DECEMBER 2010 – 5TH JANUARY 2011

THE BRIGADE

Solidarity Brigades are holidays with a difference, as well as volunteering you get to mix with people of different ages and backgrounds from all over the world, and learn about a fascinating country.

The Brigade is arranged in conjunction with the Cuban friendship organisation ICAP (Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos) and consists of groups from several European countries. Members of the Brigade (Brigadistas) stay on the Julio Antonio Mella camp in the countryside, about 25 miles south west of Havana.

Part of the Brigade involves undertaking voluntary work. Past Brigadistas have taken part in a range of agricultural and construction projects. Previous skills and experience are not required for the work and each person is expected to do only what they feel capable of.

As well as your voluntary work your time in Cuba will contain various cultural visits, educational visits to hospitals, schools, political institutions and community projects, trips to the delightful Cuban beaches and lush Cuban countryside and a number of optional excursions. Plus enough free time to sample some famous Cuban hospitality, with salsa, rum and cigars or stroll around Havana's old town which is a UNESCO World heritage site.



Going on the Brigade is a practical way of showing solidarity with the Cuban people as well as building meaningful exchanges. It gives you an excellent opportunity to learn first hand about the achievements of the Cuban Revolution as well as allowing an insight into the difficulties caused by the illegal US trade blockade.

"There is so much I have found out about myself, my nationality, and those of others, about Cuba, its people, about life and aspiration, whilst at the same time truly having the time of my life." – Previous Brigadista



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WHAT TO DO NEXT

If you wish to apply for a place on the Brigade, please complete an application form, making clear any special requests. Then return it to CSC, enclosing two passport size photographs and £100 deposit. The deposit is used to secure airline seats, once booked we are unable to return your deposit. Cheques should be made payable to 'CSC'. Brigadistas must also be members of CSC, please therefore also send a completed membership form to the CSC office.

Before leaving for Cuba, you must attend a Preparation Day at the CSC office in London. This is an important part of the application process. The day consists of background on Cuban history and contemporary Cuba, day to day life on the Brigade, individual and group responsibilities and tips on fundraising. You will also get to meet new and past Brigadistas. An invitation will be sent to applicants to confirm the date which is normally on a Saturday, 4-6 weeks before departure.

The cost of the Brigade is £1,149 (to be confirmed) (subject to no unexpected surcharges). This price includes return flights with Cubana Airlines from London Gatwick, UK departure tax, Cuban visa, transfer from Havana International Airport, accommodation, food, and most visits whilst at the camp. You will need spending money to cover any extra travel, drinks and snacks. Full payment for the Brigade must be made by the Preparation Day.

You are probably aware that there have been increases in UK airport, departure and security taxes and fuel surcharges. These costs are passed onto CSC by the airlines. We always attempt to keep our prices as low as possible and would be unable to absorb further tax increases in our quoted tour costs. Unfortunately, we would need to pass any additional increases onto the client. We will, of course, keep you informed at all times if there are any subsequent increases that may affect your booking



> Please note: In order to keep flight costs as low as possible we usually book group flights with Cubana Airlines. This means that flight dates are fixed and cannot be altered. However, if anyone would like to extend their stay in Cuba after the Brigade then please contact us to enquire about the cost of booking a flight with an extended return date. Extended return dates would be subject to availability and cost at the time of booking. If you stay longer than 30 days you will have to renew your visa at a cost of CUC25.00 (Cuban Convertible Peso).

> **Travel insurance is not included**, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have adequate insurance cover. Please note that new regulations from the Cuban Ministry of Tourism require all visitors to Cuba to have a valid travel insurance policy, including comprehensive medical cover. You must check with the insurance provider that the policy is recognised and valid in Cuba. An insurance cover note must be carried to Cuba and presented to immigration authorities if requested. There is also a Cuban departure tax of CUC25.00 (Cuban Convertible Peso) which you will need to pay in cash when leaving Cuba.

Brigadistas must be over 18 years of age unless accompanied by a guardian

Please contact CSC at finance@cuba-solidarity.org.uk if you have any questions and visit the Brigade section of the website

<http://www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk/brigades.asp> for more information