

CUBA: YOU ASK; WE ANSWER

Q: Is the American embargo against Cuba still in effect?

A: Yes, the embargo is in effect and is being enforced more under the Trump Administration than it was under President Obama.

Q: Why is Cuba so expensive?

A: Cuba charges American visitors at least twice as much as visitors from other countries. Also, demand exceeds capacity.

Q: How does Ya'lla Tours deal with increasing demand?

A: With private representation in Cuba, we are uniquely positioned to clear space, while maintaining our signature high quality.

Q: Can Americans book accommodations directly and go on their own?

A: Yes BUT, in order to comply with U.S. embargo regulations, American visitors to Cuba must spend at least 8 hours per day engaged in “meaningful interaction” with Cuban people in such a way that benefits them (the Cubans). Without a program designed by a knowledgeable tour company and a local guide to implement that program, it's very difficult to meet this requirement of U.S. law.

Q: Can Americans use Airbnb in Cuba?

A: Yes, Americans can book Airbnb on their own, but they still must comply with the 8 hours of “meaningful interaction” explained above. There are a handful of Airbnb properties, or casas particulares, that meet Ya'lla standards, but they do not work with tour operators. The majority of casas particulares do not meet the standards of most American travelers.

Q: How does Ya'lla service to Cuba compare with that of the cruise lines operating there now?

A: Cruise tours to Cuba, with generalized, mass-market excursions, can only scratch the surface of the Cuban experience. Cruise lines are new to Cuba and lack experience operating in the unique and complex market. Ya'lla Tours has 15 years of experience operating in Cuba. All Ya'lla Tours staff has toured the island, some multiple times, and Ya'lla owner Ronen Paldi has been to Cuba 39 times to date. Through our first-hand experience in Cuba and long-term relationships on the island, we have acquired the knowledge and facility to provide our travelers with deeply meaningful programs, frequently described by those travelers as “life-changing.” If your client is looking for that kind of impactful experience in Cuba, a carefully crafted, coherent program will more likely provide it than a few disjointed shore excursions. (Due to Cuban regulations, we are not able to offer shore excursions there.)

Q: How does Ya'lla Tours stand out from competitors in general?

A: We guarantee answers within 24 hours. We have access to hotel availability at our finger tips, allowing last minute bookings. We offer the only 5-star hotel in Trinidad, Iberostar Grand. We offer private FIT and group travel, as well as scheduled, small-group departures, guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 2 passengers.

Q: What are the benefits of scheduled flights over charters to Cuba?

A: Benefits of scheduled flights include: lower prices, through boarding passes and checked bags, no need to overnight in Miami and airlines take responsibility for delays.

Q: What are the challenges of scheduled flights?

A: The ease of booking flights leaves agents and travelers with the false impression that travel to Cuba is unrestricted.

Q: How does Ya'lla respond to these challenges?

A: We ensure travelers comply with regulations and maintain records to that effect for the required five years.

Q: What's the impact on Cuba from all the scheduled flights?

A: The addition of scheduled air increases pressure on an already overwhelmed market.

