

# CH>RITY CH>LLENGE



TRIP NOTES

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# BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE

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CUBAN REVOLUTION CYCLE  
CUBA

Fri 01 Nov - Sun 10 Nov 2024







## In aid of your choice of charity

01 Nov - 10 Nov 2024

### 10 DAYS | CUBA | CHALLENGING

Welcome to the land of cigars, revolution, Che Guevara and vintage Chevrolets. The Cuban cycle travels from the cultural capital Havana to the exotic Caribbean. Our 10 days in the saddle will see us cycling 380 km through beautiful countryside, passing fruit orchards, tree-lined avenues and buildings left untouched for more than half a century. Outside of Havana vehicles are rare and there is a strong biking culture – so expect to fit right in!

- Cover 380 km from one beautiful coastline to the other
- Pass remote villages, fruit orchards and sugar plantations
- Discover hidden treasures in Havana's preserved old quarter
- Visit the city of Cienfuegos, once a hotbed of pirate activity
- Finish in the UNESCO World Heritage site of Trinidad

## YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

### DAY 1 Fri 01 Nov

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#### International departure from London

It's finally time for your long-awaited departure to Cuba. Wave goodbye to friends and family, before you board the flight and embark upon your challenge! (D)

Accommodation: Hotel

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### DAY 2 Sat 02 Nov

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#### Havana to Playa Jibacoa

Today you have the chance to explore beautiful Old Havana before heading into the Cuban countryside. A city tour will give you an opportunity to learn about Havana's varied history from war to revolution, including an introduction to its many beautiful buildings and monuments. You then transfer to Playa Jibacoa, where you are introduced to your bikes ahead of the adventure that awaits you. (B,D,L)

Accommodation: Hotel

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### DAY 3 Sun 03 Nov

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#### Playa Jibacoa to Matanzas (approx. 60 km)

It's an early start for your long-awaited cycle ride towards Trinidad. Today's route is hilly with steep climbs up to 200m and poor road conditions, particularly as you head to Arcos de Canasi. As the route meanders through country villages and pretty scenery, the toughest part of the day awaits at the entrance of Matanzas. The reward is a swim and a comfy hotel bed! (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Hotel

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### DAY 4 Mon 04 Nov

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#### Matanzas to Torriente (approx. 95 km with an optional 12 km)

Prepare for a long ride as you bid farewell to Matanzas, home to the infamous Bay of Pigs on the south coast. Overall, today's ride is flat as it passes through villages and orchards. The only steep hill is a 330m climb at Triunvirato, before you stop for lunch. The ride continues through Saca Piedras, La Luisa, Zapote and Torriente, before reaching your hotel in Cienfuegos. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Hotel

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### DAY 5 Tue 05 Nov

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#### Cienfuegos (approx. 60 km)

Cienfuegos was founded on the fortunes of the sugar industry in the 1700s. The roads are generally good and your first climb upwards is just 300m. As you ride the scenic roads that border the city, it's important to stay together as the traffic becomes heavier. Tonight there will be time to explore this picturesque bay city, which has repeatedly been looted by pirates in the past. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Hotel

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#### **DAY 6** *Wed 06 Nov*

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#### **Cienfuegos to Hanabanilla (approx. 65 km)**

Today is the penultimate day of your ride and the route becomes hilly, curvy and visibility is limited. In addition, there's the welcome distraction of the lush botanical gardens on the approach to the Escambray Mountains. Lunch is followed by the toughest part of the day – an 8km hilly ride. Dig deep on this tough terrain, while the glorious views of the Hanabilla Reservoir push you onwards. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Hotel

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#### **DAY 7** *Thu 07 Nov*

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#### **Hanabanilla to Trinidad (approx. 10710 km)**

You will be covering a pedal-pumping 107 km on this grand finale of the ride. You begin with a fun descent before attacking curved roads with potholes, steady hills and limited visibility. After lunch there are tricky hills and a bumpy road. Yet you finish with a thrilling descent down to Trinidad. Spend the evening celebrating at our beach hotel which looks out onto the Caribbean. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Hotel

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#### **DAY 8** *Fri 08 Nov*

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#### **Relaxation and transfer back to Havana**

Chill out at the beach or in the hotel pool. Alternatively, you can explore the charming town of Trinidad. With its cobbled streets and colonial housing, this UNESCO World Heritage Site has hardly changed in more than 150 years. In the early afternoon you transfer back to Havana for a celebratory dinner and the chance to sample some of Cuba's finest exports – rum and cigars! Overnight in centrally located hotel. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Hotel

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#### **DAY 9** *Sat 09 Nov*

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#### **Free day in Havana**

Spend more time sight-seeing or perhaps take part in a salsa or rumba lesson. And if you're feeling hungry you could grab a bite at one of Havana's many paladares (local Cuban houses that cater for paying guests). Supper is provided in a restaurant close to the airport, before your evening flight back to the UK via Madrid. (Please note

lunch is not included today). (B,D)

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**DAY 10** *Sun 10 Nov*

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**International departure to London Heathrow**

Arrive back in the UK in a whirlwind of emotions as you return to your nearest and dearest, but part ways with new-found friends and trekking partners.

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**NB**

The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather patterns, wildlife movements, the strength of the group, and so on. We will do our very best to keep to the set itinerary; however we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that may occur. In all such circumstances, your expedition leader will have the final say.

**HOW TO FUND YOUR CHALLENGE**

This page provides you details of the costs of your challenge.  
The costs below are per person.

**SELF FUNDER**

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Pay a registration fee of £425.00 when you book  
Then a balance of £1972.00 (10 weeks before your challenge)  
Raise as much as you can for your charity.

**MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP**

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Registration fee of £425.00 when you book  
Raise a minimum of £4025.00 for your charity.

**FLEXI**

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Registration fee of £425.00 when you book  
Then £425.00 towards challenge costs (10 weeks before your challenge)  
Raise a minimum of £3160.00 for your charity.

You will be invoiced for the air tax and fuel element contribution for your international flights, capped at £250.00, which is due 10 weeks before departure.

**WHAT'S INCLUDED**

**Before you go**

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- Sponsorship forms
- Support materials (itinerary, kit list, visa information, travel tips, responsible travel policy and guidance)
- 12.5% off Cotswold Outdoor, Snow + Rock, and Runners Need
- Access to your own password protected account including support materials and training schedules
- Risk assessment and emergency management planning
- Public liability insurance
- Access to training weekends (optional and at additional expense)
- Warm up exercise routines
- Fundraising advice
- Fitness training notes
- 16 and 20 week trek/bike training schedule

**On your challenge**

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- UK-based 24-hour emergency support line
- Internal transfers (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- Equipment as per the challenge activity
- An English speaking first aid trained challenge leader and full local support team
- A contribution towards funding the reduction of carbon emissions through Climate Care’s portfolio of award winning projects
- A donation to a community project in one of the countries in which we operate
- Drinking water on challenge days
- Accommodation during the challenge (usually in twin share)
- Three meals a day (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- Entrance fees to national parks or other places of interest visited on the itinerary
- Full back-up support including first-aid qualified staff and first-aid supplies
- A Charity Challenge T-Shirt

**WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED**

**Before you go**

**On your challenge**

- - Any covid tests required for entry to any countries or places of interest on your challenge itinerary
  - Visa (if required)
  - Travel to and from the UK airport of departure
  - Vaccinations (please check Trip Notes for requirements)
- - Tips
  - Departure Tax (if applicable)

## THE DETAILS

### Fundraising deadlines

You will need to send your sponsorship money to the charity as you raise it. At least 80% of the minimum sponsorship required must be sent to the charity 12 weeks before departure (by 09/08/2024), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 08/12/2024). If you have raised the necessary funds, the charity will then pay the balance of your challenge costs. The charity benefits by keeping the remaining sponsorship money and every pound over and above that you raise.

### Air tax and fuel element contribution

The air taxes, and fuel element, that make up part of the flight costs can fluctuate significantly before a challenge takes place. As such, we exclude part of these taxes from the initial cost of the challenge and we will invoice you for it 10 weeks before departure. This applies to all participants on all payment options. For the challenge you are booked on this payment will be capped at £250 and we will absorb any amount above that. Please be sure to factor this cost into your budgeting for the challenge.

### Typical group size

The typical group size is 9 - 30 participants

### Small group supplement

The costs and sponsorship levels on our website are based on a minimum of 9 participants. We can run this trip with 6-8 people, but there will be a small group supplement of £95. This is payable by your charity if you book under the Minimum Sponsorship or Flexi options, and by yourself if you choose the Self Funder option. We will notify you 12 weeks before departure if this is necessary.

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**Optional extras**

Business class upgrades\*  
Single room supplements\*  
Extensions at end of trip\*  
Travel insurance  
(\*subject to availability)

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**Travel insurance**

Your safety when travelling with Charity Challenge is our main concern, which is why it is a booking condition that you have a suitable travel insurance policy, which covers you for the adventurous nature of your challenge, the activities you are undertaking, and the altitudes. We have chosen to partner with specialist travel insurance providers Campbell Irvine, who offer cover for an extensive number of adventurous activities. Cover is available directly from Campbell Irvine for most European residents and includes cover for emergency medical and repatriation and for your cancellation or curtailment of the challenge. Full details including costs may be found at <https://www.campbellirvine.com/charitychallenge>.

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**HAVANA – £460.0**

This extension tour will stay in the heart of Old Havana and will include a visit to Revolution Square, the venue for most of Cuba's political rallies. In addition, take a 1 hour classic car tour of Havana, stroll along the Paseo del Prado and a visit to the Capitolio Nacional. You can learn to salsa, before showing off your dancing skills in a buzzing club.

- Registration fee £50.0
- Balance £410.0
  
- Single Room £195.0

**VARADERO BEACH – £375.0**

After the hard work, relaxation is the order of the day. Simply lie on the beach or take the opportunity to explore the island or visit the nearby town of Varadero. And for the more adventurous there's the chance to take a catamaran trip to a deserted island. Snorkelling, scuba diving or deep sea fishing can be arranged through the hotel.

- Registration fee £50.0
- Balance £325.0
  
- Single Room £135.0

### Level of Difficulty

The Cuban Revolution cycle is graded as Challenging. This is the perfect challenge for participants who are of an adventurous spirit and an open mind, but perhaps haven't taken on a strenuous challenge event before and are hoping to push themselves out of their comfort zone. You can tell your supporters that on your Cuban Revolution Cycle, you will be:

- Cycling under very hot and humid conditions with temperatures of up to 30 degrees
- Covering distances of up to 100 km per day
- Cycling for over 8 hours on the longest days
- Taking on some steep climbs on a mixture of rocky and main roads

### Typical Day

You will rise early each day and pack your bags after breakfast, loading the support vehicle each day. You will ride each day for approximately 6-8 hours, with water stops and a long lunch stop to avoid the heat of the midday. On arrival in the afternoon into your accommodation, you will have time to relax and enjoy the (hopefully) sunny evening. Dinner and the day's debriefing are generally after sundown. Specific hours of activity for each day are given in the itinerary.

### Safety

Charity Challenge considers the safety of all of our participants and staff to be a top priority, and as such we have set up Challenge Safe, one of the most advanced and thorough safety management systems in the industry. Challenge Safe formalises our ethos when it comes to safety, and brings together the procedures and risk management strategies that we use to audit all aspects of our challenges, from vehicles to accommodation to the challenge activity itself. Your welfare is absolutely paramount!

In terms of your Cuban Revolution Cycle, there are some important things you should be aware of:

- Smoke alarms are not compulsory in Cuba, and as such very few accommodation will include them. Your tour leader will explain the emergency procedures.
- You will be riding on the right-hand side of the road, through occasionally busy areas. Make sure that you are paying attention at all times.
- The brakes on the bikes may be on the opposite side to what you are used to in the UK. Take the first morning slow and steady until you get used to this.

### Responsible Tourism

At Charity Challenge we are committed to sustainable and responsible tourism, and work closely with bodies such as the International Porter Protection Group and Climate Care to ensure that our challenges benefit the local environments and communities in which they take place. We ensure that all rubbish is disposed of responsibly, and following local guidelines on cultural and environmental protection and respect, we aim to limit our impact on the natural environment. In addition to taking these practical steps to ensure that our challenges are sustainable, we also make a contribution each year to a number of local community projects, so as to give something back directly to the communities that we visit. Since 2000 we have donated almost £200,000 to such projects, supporting a range of initiatives, including schooling for children in Africa, shelter for street children in Brazil, and Orang-utan

conservation in Indonesia. We recommend that any gifts brought over for children are given to the UK challenge leader and distributed where needed by them and our local Ground Agent. If you wish to do more, you should consider buying drinks, postcards and souvenirs from the local vendors. For many, it is their sole source of income. For more information, please visit our [Responsible Tourism](#) section.

### Flights

You will be flying from London to Havana (possibly via Madrid) and returning via the same route. You will either fly from Gatwick or Heathrow, and this will be confirmed in your members' area as soon as the flight details are confirmed. The flight will take approx. 10hrs without any connection times. Your flight tickets will be e-mailed to you before departure. If you choose to book your own flights you must confirm this via email with the Charity Challenge office at the time of your initial challenge booking, otherwise you may be liable for your included group flights (please contact [flights@charitychallenge.com](mailto:flights@charitychallenge.com) for further assistance). Please be aware if your flight is routed via Madrid you will not be able to bring back any duty free alcohol or liquids from Cuba, due to restrictions in place in Madrid. For more general flights questions, please refer to our main [FAQs page](#).

Unfortunately, the flight options from London to Havana are severely limited at present and so please set your expectations on this with what we are able to offer. Any specific dietary requirements such as Vegetarian, Vegan, Gluten free please anticipate you will need to bring additional snacks for the flight.

Please note: Timings of the group flights are subject to change so please take this into consideration when booking domestic travel arrangements to reach your departure airport i.e. book flexible tickets where possible. We are unable to take responsibility for the consequences of missed international flights due to delayed travel arrangements to the airport. We therefore advise you, when booking transport and making any arrangements, to plan to get to the airport in plenty of time allowing for any possible delays which may occur on the day (bad weather, break down, cancellations etc). If you book a domestic flight, in order to get to your international departure airport, please do consider that this flight ticket cannot be linked to the ticket we are organising for you; you will need to collect your luggage, possibly change terminal and check-in again as normal

### Visa (Cuban Tourist Card)

A full passport valid for a further 6 months is required and also a tourist card. This allows a stay of up to 30 days and one entry only. Charity Challenge will supply your tourist card. Please ensure your name is as per passport and your passport details are valid and correct no later than 2 months prior to departure.

Please also ensure your address is up to date as this will be mailed to your home address. We will notify you once the Tourist Cards have been mailed to you. Please double check all details upon receiving them.

It is important that you keep this card safe during your challenge as it may need to be presented on entry and on exit.

### Insurance

Your safety when travelling with Charity Challenges is our main concern which is why it is a booking condition that you have a suitable travel insurance policy that will cover you for the adventurous nature of your challenge. We

have chosen to partner with specialist travel insurance providers Campbell Irvine, who offer cover for an extensive number of adventurous activities. Cover is available directly from Campbell Irvine for most European residents and includes cover for emergency medical and repatriation and for your cancellation or curtailment of the challenge. Full details including costs may be found by clicking [here](#).

For more general travel insurance questions, please refer to our main [FAQs page](#).

## Vaccinations & Medication

### Vaccinations

For up to date vaccination information please check the Travel Health Pro website:

<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>

Charity Challenge team are not medical experts and we would encourage you to visit your GP or travel nurse to discuss vaccination requirements. Your GP may ask questions about the specific locations that you are visiting so it may be useful to take a copy of your itinerary with you.

### Medication

- Carry medicines (including those bought over the counter) in their correctly labelled container, as issued by the pharmacist, in hand luggage
- Consider packing a spare supply of medication in the hold luggage in case of loss of hand luggage
- A letter from the prescriber detailing the medicines with the generic names for the medications can be helpful for border control checks, and in case medicines have to be replaced or medical help is required
- Carry a note from the prescribing physician on letterhead stationery for controlled substances and injection medications
- Take out an appropriate level of travel health insurance including repatriation and specific cover for any pre-existing illnesses

N.B. Some medications are banned abroad so please check you can find further information at

<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/43/medicines-abroad>

## Extension - Havana City

### Havana City Extension

This extension tour will stay in the heart of Old Havana and will include a visit to Revolution Square, the venue for most of Cuba's political rallies. In addition, take a 1 hour classic car tour of Havana, stroll along the Paseo del Prado and a visit to the Capitolio Nacional. You can learn to salsa, before showing off your dancing skills in a buzzing club.

### Day 1: Havana

Bid farewell to the rest of the group this evening, though you can transfer to your centrally located hotel at any point this afternoon. You will be staying in the heart of Old Havana, close to museums, plazas, art galleries and prominent 18th Century buildings. Tonight enjoy typical Cuban music, where you can learn to salsa and dinner at the Asian- Creole food Restuarant (B/D)

## Day 2: Havana

Enjoy a tour of Havana, the many marvelous monuments, cathedrals and palaces of the city's historical centre are brought to life by a constant hustle and bustle. Enjoy a 1 hour classic car tour and a delicious lunch before continuing to explore the post - revolution restoration work of this UNESCO world heritage site. Old Havana has been well- preserved and is offered referred to as a 'living museum'. (B/L)

## Day 3 & 4: Departure and arrive UK

Depending on the flight schedule most of the day is free to stroll around some of Havana's many hidden cultural, historical and political treasures. Transfer to the airport to check in for your return flight to London via Madrid. (B) [Please note that where possible we will book the overnight flight, however it might be necessary to take an earlier flight if there is no availability].

## Inclusions and Exclusions

### Included:

- All accommodation on a 3 star basis on a bed & breakfast basis
- Salsa Class
- Classic Car Tour - 1 hour
- Guided for sightseeing and transport
- Meals as stated in the program
- Transfer to the airport

### Excluded:

- Personal expenses (eg: gifts, extra soft drinks or alcohol, laundry, etc)
- Tips
- Meals that are not included in the program

Please note that this extension is subject to minimum numbers of 4 people, flight and ground availability and **should be booked as soon as possible**. Occasionally, a surcharge may need to be applied in which case we will inform you prior to confirming your booking. Full payment must be received no later than 10 weeks prior to departure or your place on the extension may be cancelled. Extensions are not part of the main challenge. If we cannot offer an extension for any reason and you wish to cancel your challenge due to unavailability, Charity Challenge's full terms and conditions will still apply.

The advertised costs for this extension are per person on twin sharing basis. If you are a solo passenger we will accommodate you in a room with someone of the same sex. Single supplements are available.

The cost of the extension (registration fee and balance) are subject to Charity Challenge's standard terms and conditions.

## Extension - Varadero Beach

### Varadero Beach Extension



After the hard work, relaxation is the order of the day. Simply lie on the beach or take the opportunity to explore the island or visit the nearby town of Varadero. And for the more adventurous there's the chance to take a catamaran trip to a deserted island. Snorkelling, scuba diving or deep sea fishing can be arranged through the hotel.

### Day 1: Varadero Beach

Transfer 160km east of Havana to Veradero, the largest and most well known beach resort in Cuba. With 20km of white sandy beaches and crystal blue waters, enjoy a couple of days of this ideal Caribbean getaway. Accommodation: 4\* Hotel - All Inclusive

### Day 2: Varadero Beach

2 full days of relaxation during which you can simply lie on the beach or by the pool and rest your weary limbs. Alternatively catamaran trips to deserted islands, snorkelling, scuba diving and deep-sea fishing can be arranged through the hotel. Accommodation: 4\* Hotel - All Inclusive

### Day 3 & 4: Departure and arrive UK

After lunch you will transfer to Havana Airport for your return flight to London via Madrid to arrive the following day. (B)

### Inclusions and Exclusions

Included:

- All accommodation on a twin share basis at a 4\* hotel, Varadero on an all-inclusive basis
- Private transfers from Havana to Varadero and back to Havana airport (2 hours each way)

Excluded:

- Personal expenses (ie: gifts, extra soft drinks or alcohol, laundry etc)
- Tips

Please note that this extension is subject to minimum numbers of 4 people, flight and ground availability and **should be booked as soon as possible**. Occasionally, a surcharge may need to be applied in which case we will inform you prior to confirming your booking. Full payment must be received no later than 10 weeks prior to departure or your place on the extension may be cancelled. Extensions are not part of the main challenge. If we cannot offer an extension for any reason and you wish to cancel your challenge due to unavailability, Charity Challenge's full terms and conditions will still apply.

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The cost of the extension (registration fee and balance) are subject to Charity Challenge's standard terms and conditions.

### Climate & Terrain

### Climate

Cuba is generally hot and sunny. But it is a tropical climate and you may therefore experience tropical rain and very occasionally storms. During the wet season it may be very humid. The hurricane season generally runs from May through to October.

Obviously, like the UK, the weather is changeable, and these are rough guidelines.

### Terrain

The terrain is undulating, with some short uphill sections. Some roads are in poor conditions with potholes and gravel. On some days you will be cycling on main roads.

### Training

Training and fitness are definitely required. Anyone who leads a fairly active and moderately healthy lifestyle should be OK 'as long as they train regularly over a period of at least three months' leading up to the expedition. Don't forget that the temperature and the altitudes are different from the UK. While strength is important, endurance training should be your primary focus. Cycling up hills is a good way to condition your lower body. Begin slowly, without the weight of a pack, eventually adding weight as you increase your training pace. Take a long cycle (6-8 hours) several times with a weighted pack, up and down hills or on small mountains (weigh your pack with water containers and pour out the water before your descent to minimise knee stress).

### Challenge Training

If you would like to get a feel for our challenges ahead of your departure, why not consider booking on a 1 or 2 day UK Challenge?

We have a variety of challenges, covering all levels of difficulty, taking place in stunning National Parks across the UK that are led by highly qualified and experienced expedition and mountain leaders. These challenges will give you the perfect opportunity to monitor fitness levels, test out your kit, meet people in the great outdoors, share fundraising stories and gain valuable advice and support for the challenge ahead. We encourage participants to make use of our highly knowledgeable leaders and ask them any questions you may have about clothing and equipment, expedition health and wellbeing, trekking skills, walking techniques and teamwork!

We are offering all participants **50% off** the registration fee when you book on one of the UK challenges listed via the link below. Just use the code **TRAINING** when booking. T&C's – you must have an active booking on a challenge to avail of this offer. Discount cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Find out more [here](#)

### Luggage Allowance & Valuables

The luggage allowance will depend on the airline we are using for your challenge, but in general it will be one piece of checked baggage at around 23kg. However, we suggest that for our Cuban Trek you should only need around 15kg-17kg. If you don't need it, don't bring it, is a good rule. Carry any valuable with you at all times. There is a safe deposit box at the hotel in Trinidad, where you can place your valuables. Carry your passport with you and make sure you have a photocopy of your documents (travel insurance etc.) in case they get lost or damaged.

Portable chargers or power banks containing a lithium ion battery must be packed in carry-on bags. Specific

regulations regarding power banks may vary depending on the airline, the country you're traveling to, and the type and capacity of the power bank. It's always a good idea to check with the airline and the destination country's regulations before your flight to ensure that you comply with their specific rules regarding power banks.

### Leadership

There will be an English-speaking challenge leader who will be responsible for the logistics and co-ordination of your challenge, this could be a local leader or a leader from the UK depending on group size. There will also be numerous local support staff to assist them. The challenge leader will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group.

### Group Size

Each group is intended to be a minimum of 9 people in order to run and a maximum of approximately 30 people due to the wilderness environment in which the challenge takes place. We will be able to run this challenge for 6 to 8 people by charging a small group supplement of £95, which will be added to your final balance invoice (self-funders) or charged to your charity (minimum sponsorship or flexi).

### Clothing & Equipment

Good quality, durable kit could mean the difference between a fantastic challenge experience and an uncomfortable one. For your cycle challenge, padded cycling shorts and comfortable footwear are essential, and helmets are compulsory throughout. Training with your cycling shorts is definitely advised! You can bring equipment like clip-in pedals or a gel seat, if desired, in order to adapt your bike in country, and we would also recommend technical/wicking t-shirts rather than cotton shirts. A full kit list for this challenge can be found [here](#), once you book you will have access to kit discounts with our partners The Outdoor Shop, Outdoorhire and Cotswold Outdoor.

**Water Bottles:** You should bring your own water bottle which fits into a standard water bottle cage. Mineral Water in Cuba is proving to be incredibly difficult to source currently. We will be providing water on your challenge of course but we are also recommending that if you can you bring your own filtration system so that you have access to safe drinking water everywhere you go.

We are recommending [water to go bottles](#) :

#### **Water-to-Go**

Water-to-Go is a water filter bottle that eliminates up to 99.9999% of all microbiological contaminants including viruses, bacteria, chemicals, and heavy metals from any non-saltwater source in the world, providing safe drinking water wherever you are. The filters used in the BPA free water bottles are created based on technology originally developed for the NASA space programme. Responsible travel has always underpinned the mission at Charity Challenge, but now we want to go further to reduce our impact on the environment and, among other initiatives, by reducing single-use plastic pollution. Charity Challenge customers can help with this by taking a Water-to-Go filter bottle with them.

### What are the Bikes like?

Our partners in Cuba have a fleet of over 200 bikes in Havana, including all sizes spanning from XS to XXL. All are Trek branded and our most commonly used model is the 8.3 DS.

All bikes come fitted with standard saddles and platform pedals. Feel free to bring your own saddle or padded cover (to fit a universal seat post) and your clip-in pedals should you wish.

Every cycling tour involves a bike fitting and safety briefing before the first ride. Please indicate your height beforehand so we can assign you the correct sized bike. Mechanics will be on hand to help you get comfortable. There is no need to bring any of your own tools – just your helmet and water bottle.

## Accommodation & Toilets

### Accommodation

You will be staying in hotels throughout the challenge. The hotels, apart from in Havana and Trinidad, will be quite basic. You will be sharing in rooms of two with en-suite bathrooms. Please let Charity Challenge know if you are travelling with a friend or relative who you wish to share with. Please let Charity Challenge know if you are travelling with a friend or relative who you wish to share with. If you are travelling with a friend or partner who you wish to share with please ensure that you note this where appropriate when booking or email [challenges@charitychallenge.com](mailto:challenges@charitychallenge.com)

### Toilets

During your Challenge, you will be staying at hotels throughout with private toilet facilities. During the ride days these facilities will be limited to the great outdoors!

## Food & Drink

Cuba has suffered from the American embargo, and there are shortages in most sectors of the economy. Often food is repetitive, with a heavy reliance on eggs and chicken. Rice or beans usually accompany the main meat dish, along with a green salad and fried banana chips. Please let Charity Challenge know if you have any dietary requirements or allergies.

## Money

**Currency:** The currency in Cuba is Cuban Convertible Peso (CUC). 1 Cuban Convertible Peso = 100 centavos. For up to date currency exchange, go to [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com). The Convertible Peso is a closed currency, which means it cannot be purchased outside of Cuba. You can change GBP or Euros at the Cadeca (Money Exchange Bureau) at the Airport on landing in Cuba or at your hotel however we are highly recommending that you take US Dollars with you to Cuba. the US Dollar will give you more value and is widely used. any left over dollars at the end of your challenge will easily then be able to be exchanged back. With the local CUP currency fluctuating you will often find prices in Cuba quoted in CUP, USD or EUR. Both Euro and US Dollar are accepted but the dollar will be a more reliable currency for you to use.

**Credit Cards:** MasterCard and Visa Credit Cards are accepted in few places so cash is always the best option. Credit card transactions are subject to local commission charges of between 11% -13%.

**ATMs:** ATMs are not accessible outside of Havana, so ensure that you take enough cash for the challenge and your stay in Trinidad – although the beach hotel in Trinidad is all inclusive, you may choose to go into the city by taxi and spend money there on food etc. There are no ATMs in Trinidad.

**How much to bring:** All accommodation, activities and meals are included in the cost of your challenge. We recommend that you take a sufficient amount of cash (around GBP£250 in USD), and try to request small denominations. This amount should allow enough money to get you by with the purchase of additional soft drinks and snacks, however if you wish to purchase additional items or souvenirs or any additional beverages then we would recommend organising more currency accordingly.

**Tipping:** Tipping is at your sole discretion and all staff is paid a fair wage. However, tourism is a tipping culture, and Cuban guides will generally receive a tip at the end of a job well done. If you choose to tip, we would suggest an amount of USD10-15 per participant per challenge day (Total USD70-80 per person). Your leader will divide this amongst the local staff.

### Phone & WiFi

Throughout the challenge, at the hotels you will be able to find a good telephone and internet reception. WIFI and internet is notoriously slow in Cuba so do not rely on this as a good form of communication.

### Emergencies

The event is not run as a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's walking abilities. This is allowed for. There will be a staff member at the back of the group at all times to ensure that you are not left behind and can take things at your own pace.

### Pre-Existing Medical Conditions

We do not professionally vet your medical details. Please assess for yourself whether you are fit and able to take on the challenge. Please review the detailed Trip Notes and itinerary to get a better idea of what is involved. Please speak to your doctor or specialist if you have any concerns about taking part. If you suffer from a severe allergy, you are required to contact us to discuss any requirements. If you think that there are things we can do to make the challenge more accessible/comfortable for you, it is your responsibility to let us know, and we will then let you know if we can accommodate your request. Whilst we will do our best to put in place appropriate measures we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

### Medical Support

First Aid qualified staff will be provided with the medical details that you give on your booking form but please note that they are on the challenge to support with medical matters related to the challenge environment and terrain itself, i.e. heat/cold, high altitude and so on. They will deal with any incidents and accidents (cuts, sprains, breaks and so on). They are not intended to continue any ongoing specialist medical care that you receive in the UK for pre-existing medical conditions, and should not be assumed to have any professional experience of your specific



medical condition.

If you have any specific needs around pre-existing medical conditions, you should discuss with your family doctor or specialist in advance and can discuss any advice given by them with the challenge leader or doctor.



“

It was the most challenging experience of my life but I wouldn't have missed a minute of it and I don't think I have ever had so much fun!

Philippa Kemp-Welch

“

I had the most amazing experience, challenging myself to do something (cycling) I hadn't done in a long time. Meeting new people and seeing a different side of a country I wouldn't necessarily have seen if I went on a normal trip there. Loved every minute, thank you Charity Challenge.

Jo Greenstreet

“

This challenge really met my expectations. A great challenging ride in a fascinating and beautiful country.

Susan Curran

# CH>RITY CH>LLENGE

## Any more questions?

Contact us:

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