

Addie/Anna,

Cuba certainly has been in the news over the last week as the result of a diplomatic spat between our two countries. We have been in close touch with the State Department, The U.S. Embassy in Havana and Cuban authorities in Cuba and Washington over the last several months regarding the health incidents affecting U.S. diplomats and the political fall out. Here are some thoughts on the issue.

- Cuba Educational Travel has done its due diligence in examining the facts and talking to authorities in both countries. We have determined there is no risk to U.S. travelers and similar to major U.S. airlines, cruise ships, Airbnb, study abroad associations and others, we are continuing to do business as usual. We believe these are isolated incidents that have not affected private citizens and Cuba continues to be one of the safest countries in the World.
- The State Department Travel Warning for Cuba is political and the result of sparring between the U.S. and Cuban government. You will notice that it states no private U.S. citizens have been affected, while at the same time using language even stronger than advisories for Europe, under threat for terrorism, and Mexico, under threat for murder, kidnapping and other violent crime.
- Reduced embassy staffs will not affect the way we operate or our clients' safety on the ground. We have been running trips to Cuba for over 10 years. The embassies are just over 2 years old and essential staff will remain at the U.S. Embassy in Havana and the Cuban Embassy in Washington, DC.
- There has been no change in the legality of travel to Cuba. It's still legal for U.S. citizens to travel to Cuba under one of the 12 categories of purposeful travel, which we arrange through our license from the U.S. Treasury Department.
- There has been no change in the issuing of visas to enter Cuba. We have a contract with the Cuban consulate and we have purchased thousands of visas, which we are authorized to provide our travelers with.

We believe strongly in connecting the people of the United States and Cuba. We feel that now more than ever it's important for our two countries to be talking, visiting and working together. We will continue to communicate regularly with all relevant parties and keep you up to date about any revelations. Here are a few good resources about the situation:

- <https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2017/10/02/study-abroad-cuba-continues-despite-warning>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lohDIXVumDw>
- <http://www.seatrade-cruise.com/news/news-headlines/barring-evidence-of-threat-to-travelers-lines-continue-cruises-despite-us-warning.html>

We are confident that we should move forward as planned. One thing that is possible here would be to add in the comfort of a Global Search and Rescue insurance plan. Cost varies based on the group, however we have added this in certain groups, and can build it in to the offering for WKU.

Thanks, Adam

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Sincerely,

Adam Linderman

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