

Canadian Embassy in Havana that a visit to Cuba would be desirable, should react promptly to the opportunity. Direct contact with end users and product specifiers usually leads to fast, efficient resolution of any difficulties. It will also provide an opportunity for direct contacts and negotiations with the decision-makers in Cuba. In short, if you are invited to Cuba, go. Whether invited or not, as a matter of sound marketing and export strategy, you should reaffirm with the Cuban Trade Commission and Galax Inc., your company's interest and willingness to visit Cuba.

When to Go

Most business visitors find that the best time to visit Cuba is between September and May. Visits should not be scheduled during the months of July and August as most directors of the various empresas are abroad on buying missions or are on vacation. Also, due to anniversary celebrations, July 14 to 26, hotel reservations are even more difficult to make.

On the other hand, it is always advisable to visit Cuba immediately after you have received your request for quotation (RFQ), for delivery in the following year, in order to personally present your quotation. Companies new to the Cuban market should arrive some months earlier to make sure they will be approved suppliers and hence sent RFQ's when they are issued (normally between July and September). However, Canadian exporters must be aware that a need for specific products may arise at any time.

Clothing

Lightweight tropical suits are worn throughout the year in Cuba's warm climate. Take lots of short-sleeved cotton shirts. While the wash-and-wear shirts of synthetic fibres may ease the problem of slow laundry service in local hotels, they are often uncomfortable and are not recommended. Apart from meetings with senior officials, jackets are not usually worn. For ladies, summer clothes (containing at least 65 per cent cotton), plus a shawl for perhaps a cool evening, are advisable.

Currency

Credit cards: Major western credit cards are accepted in most tourist shops, hotels and tourist restaurants.

Travellers Cheques: These are usually honoured in most hotels and shops for tourists/foreigners. When cashing a cheque (particularly American Express) do not fill in the