

CUBA



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The first villa Mike and Fraser stayed in used to be the Japanese Embassy but due to their generous nature they gave it to another couple who wanted to be next to their friends. Their second villa was near to Castros villa and equally comfortable. All the necessities were provided with complete kitchen facilities, living room with two terraces on the lower floor and one on the roof.

The first night's dinner was an indication of the good selection of food. At the Hotel Atlantico a full buffet was served outside with tables surrounding the dance floor. There was lobster, crab, sturgeon, tuna, fresh tropical fruit, cake, beer, and coffee. Before dinner they were served Saoco which is a coconut cut open with rum and sugar and coconut milk inside. (Cost about \$1.20) One of the great things about Cuba is that you take Canadian money and change it at your hotel. This is the only place you can change your money. \$1.00 equals approximately 68 centavos and 100 centavos equals one peso. You must remember to carry your money tabulation sheet so that you can make purchases at tourist prices . . . unlike most places . . . tourist prices are cheaper. There are tourist boutiques at each hotel where you can purchase liquor, trinkets, posters, shirts, cigarettes. Due to the high cost of cigarettes it is very advisable to take your own.

There was a movie every night of the week, in an outdoor theatre which somewhat resembled an outdoor amphitheatre. Beer runs from 55 to 65 centavos and you can drink it any where you like as well as at the outdoor theatre.

After three days of beautiful weather soaking up the sun on some of the world's finest beaches and cooling off in the clear waters, Mike and Fraser had made friends with other tourists as well as some of the local Cubans and it would not be surprising to find them playing the very common dice-poker game at the beach bars.

Monday afternoon they rented bicycles (50 centavos/hour) and biked around and picked coconuts off trees along the side of the road. Monday night was CUBAN NIGHT at the Cabaret with free drinks for the first hour. Again a great spread of food with lots of pork, manioc root, (something like a potato), rice, pineapple, papaya and java (fruit something like an apple). Three different bands provided entertainment and there was plenty of dancing. This was all outside and during one part of the show there was a horse presentation. Mike and Fraser (after a few drinks . . . remember the free ones during the first hour) at this point though they would like a little jaunt on the horses so they charmed the original riders to let them borrow them for a while. Horsemanship being one of their claims to fame, they proceeded to ride them through the outdoor cabaret and successfully upset a few tables and at the same time providing unscheduled entertainment for all. Remember that except for drinks after the first hour this is ALL FREE.

After a few hours of recuperation they gallantly faced Tuesday and decided to go sailing. Costs are flexible and the boat worked out to cost about 50 centavos per hour for each of them. Hospitality abounds everywhere and Mike and Fraser, not to be outdone by the Cubans, hosted a party in their villa that evening. A great time was had by all.

After a morning on the beach Mike and Fraser and friends had a baseball game with the Cubans . . . much to my surprise Canada won 18 to 10. We need not guess who were the heroes of the hour. Fresh coconuts were on hand after the victory.

Wednesday night they went to the TROPICANA which was about 20 kilometers away. The cost was 13 pesos and this included bus fare, admission and two free drinks. This was a super show and could compete with stage show or Folly Bergere in Paris. This is a two hour non stop performance that should not be missed. You can make arrangements to go for dinner as well if you want.

I notice that the notes for the remainder of the holiday are rather skimpy (as in none) so I can only assume they were busy with daily beach activities and nightly visits to the Cabaret.

The flight back was not delayed and certainly equalled the excellent service they had going down. Baked chicken and rice was the hot meal served on the return with free drinks, cigars, candy and cigarettes. The Sunlight Representative and Cubatours people did an excellent job and everything was very well organized.

After a few days of recuperation Mike ventured in to the Travel Office in his golden tan and tales of fun; I shared in his stories each moment growing more green with envy. Fraser took a week before he ventured back with the same stories and I again with the same reaction.

It is quite obvious that Cuba should certainly be one of the number one destinations for students as well as any one else who enjoys good food, hospitality, sun, and good accommodations. I have yet to get a complaint from any passengers who went to Cuba and Mike and Fraser further confirm the excellent reports on the Fantastic island that has opened new doors in the world of vacationing.

Again my thanx for your co-operation Mike and Fraser . . . you also confirm my opinion that students make my job a little bit easier.

Cuba is not expensive . . . there is no tipping . . . all meals are paid for . . . it is not a tourist trap . . . well what do you say????? start saving your pennies . . . you would look great in a tan.



One of the Scenic Views on the Afternoon Bike Ride



Cuban Night-Anyone Hungry?!



Bike Riding in Santa Maria