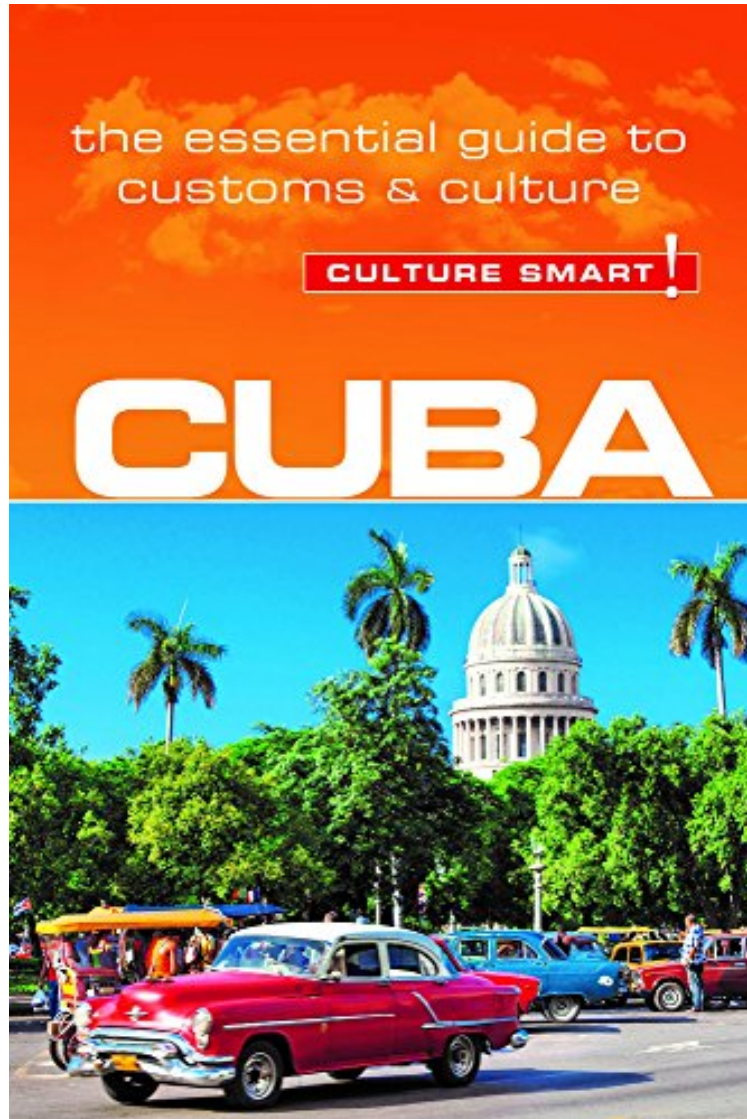


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# Cuba - Culture Smart!: The Essential Guide to Customs Culture

*Russell Maddicks*

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Cuba is a land of contradictions that is easy to enjoy but difficult for first-time visitors to decipher. The largest island in the Caribbean, it is a tropical paradise that Christopher Columbus called the most beautiful land that human eyes have ever seen. It is famous for the romantic charm of its crumbling colonial cities, the beauty of its white sand beaches, and its irresistible Afro-Cuban dance beats. But it is also a land of shortages and tight government control, which has been in a sixty-year political standoff with its superpower neighbor, the USA. The homegrown version of single-party socialism created by Fidel Castro has kept Cuba in a Cold War time warp that only now is beginning to change. As travel restrictions are relaxed US tourists can once again visit the island. Greater flexibility toward private enterprise is opening it up to boutique hotels and high-quality home-based restaurants. There is a boom in special-interest tourism for cyclists, hikers, birdwatchers, and scuba divers, while foreign entrepreneurs are eagerly exploring investment opportunities. Culture Smart! Cuba will take you beyond the usual descriptions of Havana nightlife, vintage cars, and hand-rolled cigars and give you an insiders view of an island that is teetering on the brink of historic change. It offers insights into Cuba's fascinating history, national icons, unique food, vibrant cultural scene, and world-renowned music. Practical tips help business travelers gain an edge on the competition. But most of all, this book aims to show you how best to break the ice and get a better understanding of the infinitely resourceful Cuban people, who despite severe hardships and shortages over many years remain optimistic and fiercely proud of their heritage and culture.

"Culture Smart! has come to the rescue of hapless travellers." Sunday Times Travel