CH>RITY
CH>LLENGE

TRIP NOTES

BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE

CUBAN MOUNTAIN TREK
CUBA

Thu 18 Nov - Sat 27 Nov 2027

In aid of your choice of charity

18 Nov - 27 Nov 2027

10 DAYS | CUBA | CHALLENGING

Your trek starts in the vibrant capital and UNESCO World Heritage Site of Havana. Much of Havana's old quarter remains untouched despite wars and revolution that have taken place over the last 200 years. You will be trekking for five days, passing farms and coffee and fruit plantations along the way. The terrain is undulating and can be tough in parts, but with amazing views and tropical waterfalls. You will also visit the charming and colourful city of Trinidad. Trek on undulating terrain, expect a couple steep ascents and descents with an average walking day of 6-8 hours.

- Explore the World Heritage sites of Havana and Trinidad
- Head into the heart of the island to trek in its lush tropical jungle
- Trek through citrus groves and sugar plantations
- Discover hidden treasures in Havana's preserved old quarter

YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 *Thu 18 Nov*

-

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!

On arrival in Havana, you will be met at the airport by your Charity Challenge local expedition leader who will transfer you to your hotel for a welcome cocktail and dinner. (D)

Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 2 *Fri 19 Nov*

-

Discover Havana and transfer to Hanabanilla Lake (approx. 5hrs)

Havana, founded in 1519, is now the Caribbean's largest city. The week's challenge takes place in Cuba's countryside, trekking through rural villages. Today you get the chance to experience city life in Havana, with a panoramic tour of the city. After breakfast, check out of the hotel and hop on the bus for an overview of Cuba's glorious capital, stopping at Revolution Square for iconic shots of Revolutionary heroes and classic cars. Continue on to Old Havana and make another stop near the Capitolio building which has recently been restored and will once again become the seat of Cuba's parliament.

Leave Havana for the transfer(four to five hours) to Hanabanilla Lake. Stop on route for lunch, arriving at the hotel late afternoon. (B,L,D)

Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 3 *Sat 20 Nov*

-

Hiking in Hanabanilla Lake (approx. 5-6hrs)

After breakfast you set off from the hotel on foot to trek around Hanabanilla Reservoir. The hotel and reservoir are set high in the Escambray Mountains, and this was formerly a favourite spot for high level Cuban leaders to come to rest, walk and fish. The hotel is simple, but the surroundings are spectacular and provide a wonderful introduction to Cuban endemic flora and fauna. Expect to see the Cuban National Bird, the Tocororo, and many others who make their habitat in the lush tropical vegetation. The hike takes you along narrow paths around the lakeside, and into the tropical forest where you'll be introduced to some of Cuba's extraordinary flora and fauna. A steep climb takes you up to El Atalaya viewpoint with incredible views across surrounding forests and mountains. Then take a steep descent to the lakeside where your boat awaits, to take you to for a Cuban country lunch. Arrive back at the hotel mid afternoon to relax after your first days hike before tonights dinner. (B,L,D)

Approx Distance: 15km

Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 4 *Sun 21 Nov*

-

From Lake Hanabanilla to Salto de Rocio (approx. 7-8hrs)

Lake Hanabanilla is Cuba's largest man-made reservoir, surrounded by tropical vegetation and small farmsteads. You will take a boat across the lake and continue trekking passed coffee plantations tucked into the forest to Casa de la Gallega, an old hacienda. A further hour's walk brings you to the Salto de Rocio, a 25m high waterfall. From here you will transfer to your accommodation for the night sleeping under the eaves of a Hacienda on foam mattresses. (B,L,D)

Approx Distance: 15km

Accommodation: Hacienda

DAY 5 *Mon 22 Nov*

-

Hike Guanayara to Codina (approx. 5-6hrs)

Over the next couple of days, you will trek across the awe inspiring Escambray Mountains, Cuba's second largest range. The highest peak is Pico San Juan at 1,140m. The slopes are swathed in Caribbean pines and an abundance of ancient tree-ferns, bamboo and eucalyptus. After breakfast you will have an arduous, mostly uphill trek along the trail known as Caburní -Vegas Grandes. This trail takes you through dense vegetation deep into the heart of the Escambray Mountains until an astonishing waterfall and natural pond Vegas Grandes. Enjoy a Cuban country lunch before arriving at the hotel where you will stay for the next two nights. (B,L,D)

Approx Distance: 12km

Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 6 *Tue 23 Nov*

-

Caburní to Vega Grande (approx. 7-8hrs)

After breakfast it's an arduous – mostly uphill trek – along the Vega Grande, which means large fertile plain. This trail takes you through dense vegetation deep into the heart of the Escambray Mountains and a visit to a waterfall and natural pond. You reach Mi Retiro hacienda for a late lunch, before returning to the hotel. (B,L,D)

Approx Distance: 13km

Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 7 *Wed 24 Nov*

-

Mangos Pelones – Javira - El Cubano(approx. 5-6hrs)

The last day of your trek is through dry scrub with occasional views of the turquoise Caribbean. As the hours pass, you visit our third and final waterfall before celebrating your achievements with lunch and cocktails at a local restaurant. From here you drive to the coast of the Ancon Peninsula, just outside Trinidad. The night is spent in a hotel on southern Cuba's best beach. (B,L,D)

Approx Distance: 13km

Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 8 *Thu 25 Nov*

-

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. Later 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

DAY 9 *Fri 26 Nov*

-

Discover Havana

Following breakfast, take on a tour of Havana. Founded in 1519, Havana is the Caribbean's largest city and you will have plenty of time to explore it. Among other attractions in the Cuban capital, you will visit Old Havana, Plaza de Armas and Cathedral Square street markets. Lunch will be at a typical cuban restarant and then late afternoon transfer to the aiport for the flight home. (B,L)

DAY 10 *Sat 27 Nov*

-

UK Arrval

You arrive back in the UK at London airport in the afternoon.

NB

B = Breakfast; L = Lunch; D = Dinner
The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather patterns, 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 might 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	MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP	FLEXI
-	-	-
Pay a registration fee of £495.00 when you book *Then a balance of £2350.00 (10 weeks before your challenge)* *Raise as much as you can for your charity.*	*Registration fee of £495.00 when you book* *Raise a minimum of £4795.00 for your charity.*	*Registration fee of £495.00 when you book* *Then £495.00 towards challenge costs (10 weeks before your challenge)* *Raise a minimum of £3785.00 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

-

- Support materials (itinerary, kit list, visa information, travel tips, responsible travel policy and guidance)
- Sponsorship forms
- Members only benefits and discounts at a wide range of clothing and equipment suppliers including Outdoorhire, Cotswold Outdoor, Runners Needs, Snow + Rock, Water to Go, The Altitude Centre, Sporttape and Nomad & MASTA.
- Access to your own password protected account including support materials and training schedules
- Warm up exercise routines
- Risk assessment and emergency management planning
- Public liability insurance
- Fundraising advice
- Fitness training notes
- Access to training weekends (optional and at additional expense)
- 16 and 20 week trek/bike training schedule

On your challenge

-

- Accommodation during the challenge (usually in twin share)
- Drinking water on challenge days
- UK-based 24-hour emergency support line
- Internal transfers (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- Full back-up support including first-aid qualified staff and first-aid supplies
- 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
- Three meals a day (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- Entrance fees to national parks or other places of interest visited on the itinerary
- A Charity Challenge T-Shirt
- International flights to and from the UK, in economy class (see air tax exclusion below)

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Before you go

-

- Visa (if required)
- Travel to and from the UK airport of departure
- Vaccinations (please check Trip Notes for requirements)

On your challenge

-

- Contribution towards air taxes and fuel element (please see the section below on "Air Tax and Fuel Element Contribution")
- Tips
- Departure Tax (if applicable)

THE DETAILS

Registration fee in instalments	The first instalment of £247.5 is due at the time of booking. The second instalment of £247.5 will automatically be debited from your credit/debit card 31 days after you book. We can only accept payment for your registration fee by instalments if you book and pay online.Please note that when paying your registration fee in instalments, a £10 admin fee will be added to your first registration fee payment. Please note that your booking will not be processed (and we will not send an authorisation request to your charity) until we receive the payment for your second instalment. Your place on the challenge will only be held until 31 days from your initial booking. If we are unable to take your second instalment, your booking will be cancelled and normal cancellation terms will apply.
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 26/08/2027), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 25/12/2027). 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 15 - 17 participants
Small group supplement	The costs and sponsorship levels on our website are based on a minimum of 15 participants. We can run this trip with 10-14 people, but there will be a small group supplement of £95. This is payable by you if you book as a Self Funder or your charity under the Minimum Sponsorship or Flexi payment option if you have raised the necessary minimum fundraising target. For Self Funders, we will notify you 12 weeks before departure if this is necessary, and it will be added to your final balance of challenge costs invoice.
Optional extras	Business class upgrades* Single room supplements* Extensions at end of trip* Travel insurance (*subject to availability)

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. Charity Challenge has chosen to partner with specialist travel insurance providers Campbell Irvine (for UK residents) and Rise & Shield* (for non-UK residents). Both companies can arrange cover for an extensive number of activities, such as high-altitude trekking and cycling events, which include emergency medical treatment and repatriation expenses. Please note that Charity Challenge is not able to advise on matters relating to individual travel insurance policies and does not accept any liability for policy matters or claims. Full details including costs may be found at https://www.campbellirvine.com/charitychallenge and https://riseandshield.com/partners/charity-challenge/ * Rise and Shield do not provide cover to Cuba.

Level of Difficulty

The Cuban Mountain Trek 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 you will be:

- Trekking between 6-8 hours a day
- Battling through muddy, slippery, hilly and undulating jungle terrain
- Experiencing high temperatures and humid conditions
- Sleeping under the stars for two nights at local haciendas, with very basic facilities
- The shortest trekking day will be 9km and the longest 18km (approximately)

Typical Day

During the trekking days you will rise early and pack after breakfast, then trek for 4 - 8 hours. There will be a mid-morning water and snack stop, and a picnic lunch on route to try and avoid the midday sun. Accommodation will include basic facilities. 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 Cuba Mountain Trek challenge, there are a couple of important points that you should be aware of:

- The weather conditions are hot and humid, and as such you should be drinking over 2L of water every day.
- Smoke alarms are not a legal requirement in Cuba, and as such most of the accommodations don't have these safety features. Your leader will explain the emergency procedures to you.
- It is common to see 'jineteros' working the streets in Havana - whether in prostitution or street hustling. A polite 'no thanks' will suffice and you do not need to feel worried for your safety, but as always in a strange city do go out in pairs/groups.

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 pages section.

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 hustel and bustle. Enjoy a 1 hour classic car tour and a deliscious 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.
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.

Flights

You will be flying from London to Havana and returning via the same route. You will either fly from Gatwick or Heathrow, and this will be confirmed in your account as soon as the flight details are confirmed. The flight will take approx. 10hrs without any connection times.

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 dietray requirements such as Vegetarian, Vegan, Gluten free please anticipate you will need to bring additional snacks for the flight.

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 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.

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.

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. 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 easliy then be able to be exchanged back. With the local CUP currency fluctuating you will oftern 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.

Visa

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. You will be required to apply for a Cuban Tourist Card for entry into Cuba which will cost around £24. Instructions on how to do this will be given at 3 months prior to departure.

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/country/60/cuba#Vaccine_recommendations
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

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.
Like the UK, the weather is changeable, and you should be prepared for anything.

Terrain

The terrain is typical jungle terrain, it will be occasionally muddy and slippery, and there could be steep downhill sections. You should wear river shoes when swimming in the waterfalls to protect your feet. Generally speaking the paths are clear, well trodden and easy to navigate.

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. Walking up hills and climbing stairs are both ways 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 hike (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. 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

To minimise the impact of trekking in this area we will split the group into two smaller groups with one Challenge Leader per group of 16 people. YOu will be staying each night during the trek in haciendas as one group but any group size over 17 people will be split into two trekking groups staggered by 30 mins to leave less footprint.

Each group is intended to be a minimum of 15 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 10 to 14

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 this challenge, waterproof, well-worn in boots will be indispensable, particularly coupled with some really good quality walking socks. The benefits of a comfortable day sack cannot be underestimated, so make sure that you train with this. Other essentials are a high quality Gore-Tex waterproof jacket and technical/wicking t-shirts rather than cotton shirts. Walking poles are also highly recommended for steep slippery descents. Some trails will requre you to wear longs to avoid being scratched.

It is a good idea to purchase several dry bags 20l-40l to section your kit out in and to keep everything in your day sack protected. A good mosquito reppellant is essential and water shoes with grip and toe covered (such as tevas) is necessary for any waterfall visits. This can also double up as a comfortable shoe for the evenings.

Please click here for a full kit list for this challenge. As a Charity Challenge participant, you will get members only benefits and/or discounts at a wide range of clothing and equipment suppliers including Outdoorhire, Cotswold Outdoor, Snow + Rock, Water to Go, Sporttape and Nomad & MASTA.

Water Bottles: You should bring your own water bottles. 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 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.

Accommodation & Toilets

Accommodation
The accommodation, except in Havana and Trinidad, will be quite basic. On two of the trekking nights you will be sleeping on mattresses under the stars (with shelter under the eaves of the Hacienda, or in tents if necessary). There may not be electricity so remember your torch, and other facilities will be basic. In the hotels, you will be sharing rooms of two. 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

Toilets
While staying at hotel you will have private toilet facilities in your twin room. While staying in the haciendas facilities are very basic, with no showers and squat toilets.

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 rice and beans accompany the main meat dish, along with a green salad and fried banana chips. Cerdo Asado; roasted pork, especially spit roasted, is famous in the countryside and is delicious!

Vegetarians and Vegans will have a very limited diet in Cuba; please do bring any protein substitutes that you are happy to eat enroute. In the past challengers, who are happy to eat fish, have taken tins of of tuna, mackerel, sardines etc to help their protein intake.

Please let Charity Challenge know if you have any dietary requirements or allergies.

Phone & WiFi

Throughout the challenge the phone and WIFI signal will be limited. At Havana and Hanabanilla, you will have phone signal and WIFI access, but during the trek you will be outside of WIFI signal. This is your opportunity to escape the daily routine!

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-exiting 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.

"

The challenge was one of the best experiences of my life. I made friends with some very special people whom I hope will remain friends forever.

Elaine Nicholas

"

A once in a lifetime chance to experience the real Cuba! As well as seeing two contrasting cities you will get to stay in rural haciendas and visit local farmers and spend time in their homes. The walking is tough, but it's meant to be!

Jo Berridge

"

This challenge allowed me to experience Cuban history, culture, landscape, wildlife and tourism all in one trip! A fantastic trip for exploring those less travelled routes!

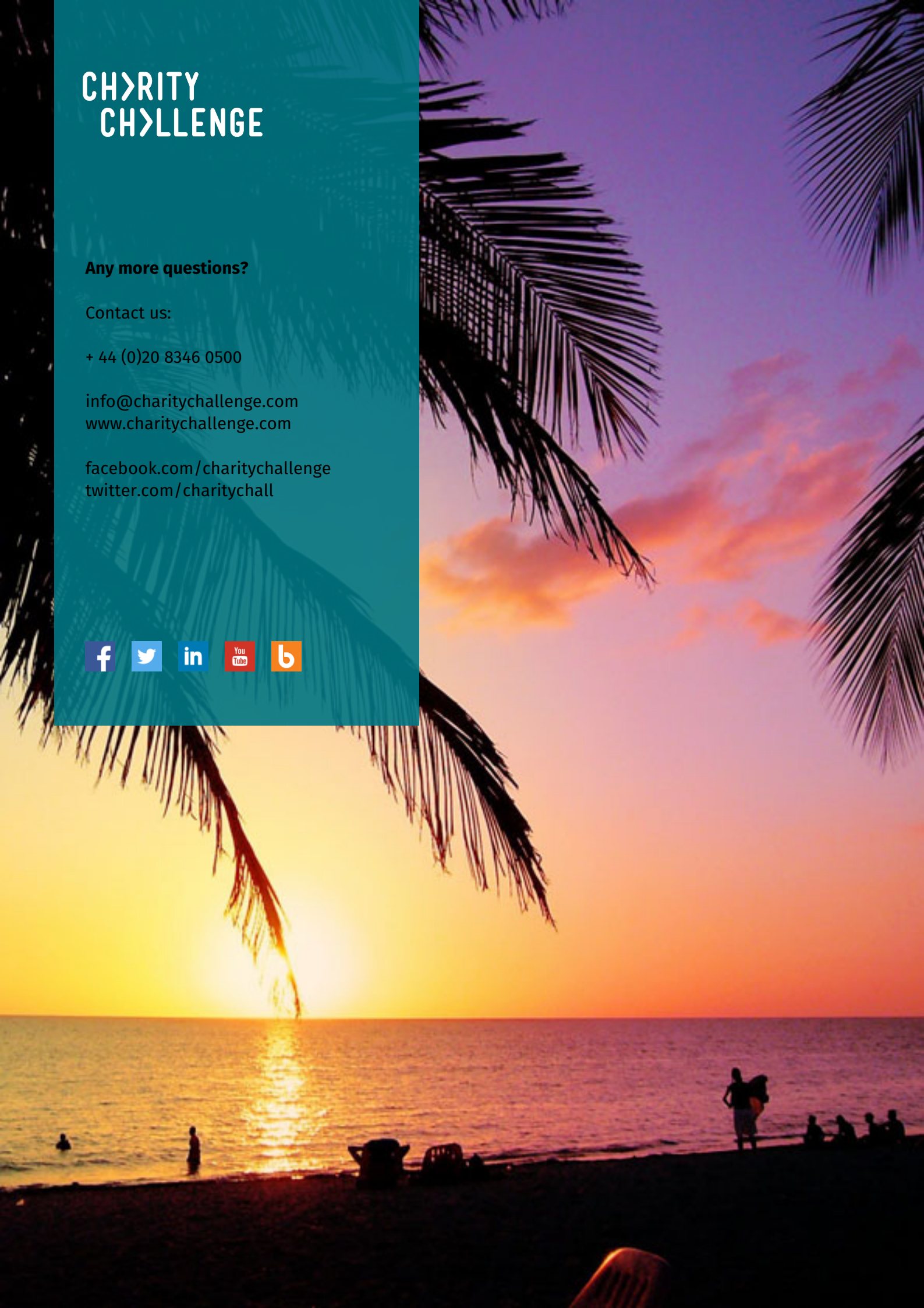
Sarah Tester

CH>RITY
CH>LLENGE

Any more questions?

Contact us:

+ 44 (0)20 8346 0500

info@charitychallenge.com
www.charitychallenge.com

facebook.com/charitychallenge
twitter.com/charitychall