42nd Southern Cross Brigade to Cuba

27 December 2026-12 January 2027

Information Booklet

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Introduction

The Southern Cross Brigade is organised by friendship societies in Australia and Aotearoa/NZ, in collaboration with the Cuban Institute of Friendship Amongst the Peoples (ICAP), to strengthen international friendship and solidarity.

Participants in the Southern Cross Brigade are known as *brigadistas.* Brigadistas are more than tourists, they are people who wish to extend solidarity with the Cuban people and the Cuban Revolution, wishing to learn more about the Cuban socialist experiment and its unique medical, educational, economic, and democratic system Brigadistas learn about and participate in many aspects of Cuban life, following a schedule of activities that has been thoughtfully put together by staff at ICAP to give them a comprehensive understanding of what the Cuban Revolution stands for and how it works in the current context of escalating threats from the United States.

The 2026-2027 Southern Cross Brigade will be the 42nd iteration of the Southern Cross Brigade.

In this document you will find information and tips about your upcoming Brigade to Cuba.

Feel free to contact us by email (southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com) with any questions.

Please note that this is not a Cuba travel guide – as well as reading this document thoroughly, we recommend that you also read up on Cuban culture, economy and travel tips so that you are fully prepared for your trip.

Register online for the 2026-2027 Southern Cross Brigade by following this link. A deposit of $250AUD is required and paid through this website.
Potential brigadistas are encouraged to express interest by emailing southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com so that further information can be provided as it is finalised.

Program

Escalations in illegal sanctions by the United States has added significant challenges to everyday life in 2026. In January, the Trump regime applied sanctions that affected oil imports to the island, halting the flow of traffic, and strangling essential services such as hospitals. Since then, Cuba has implemented a plan for a dramatic shift to solar power, and has developed its own oil refineries. Despite the adjustments, life and planning for the future remains difficult.
The program is subject to change, depending on participant numbers, fuel costs, and unexpected circumstances that are the reality of life under the blockade (e.g. extended blackoutsThe program below has been designed to use a minimal amount of fuel. We will spend time in Havana, Santa Clara, and Cienfuegos.
2026 also saw the celebration of the centenary since the birth of Fidel Castro. We will spend time at the Fidel Castro Centre in Havana, and have plenty of opportunities to engage with the commemoration that has occurred in Cuba.

The program will run from the 27th of December 2026 to the 12th of January 2027, inclusive. The first and last days of the program allow for travel time to the airport and transfer is included on these days.
If you wish to extend your stay in Cuba either side of the Brigade, please email southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com if you need assistance booking accomodation or making plans.

Day 1, Sunday 27 December 2026

Arrival of the brigadistas at Aeropuerto Internacional José Martí.

Transfer to Hotel Habana Paseo.

18:30 PM dinner at Hotel Habana Paseo.

Day 2 Monday 28 December, 2026

07:00 AM Breakfast at the hotel

10:00 AM Opening event and inauguration of the 42nd edition of the Southern Cross Brigade. Held at Friendship House (Casa de la Amistad).

12:30 PM Lunch at Casa de la Amistad.

02:30 PM Workshop on current US-Cuba relations.

06:30 PM Dinner at the hotel.

Day 3, Tuesday 29 December 2026

07:00 AM Breakfast at the hotel.

07:30 AM Visit to Quisicuaba headquarters in Old Havana. Meeting with the directors and members, volunteer work.

12:30 PM Lunch at Casa de la Amistad

14:30 PM Meeting with combatants.

19:00 PM Dinner at the Hotel.

Day 4, Wednesday 30 December 2026

06:30 AM Breakfast at the hotel.

07:00 AM Visit to Alamar urban agriculture project.

12:00 PM Lunch at Casa de la Amistad.

14:30 PM Conversation on the Cuban economy and challenges to development. Emphasis will be on the impact of the sanctions introduced in the last year.

18:30 PM Dinner at the Hotel.

Day 5, Thursday 31 December, 2026

08:00 AM Breakfast at the Hotel.

Free morning

12:30 PM Lunch at Casa de la Amistad.

Free afternoon, preparations for the New Year and anniversary of the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution celebrations.

08:30 PM Dinner.

Day 6, Friday 1 January 2027

07:00 AM Breakfast at the Hotel.

09:00 AM Havana city tour.

12:30 PM Lunch at a local restaurant.

17:00 PM National Ballet of Cuba performance.

19:30 PM Return to the Hotel.

20:30 PM Dinner at the hotel. Free night.

Day 7, Saturday 2 January 2027

07:00 AM Breakfast at the Hotel.

08:30 AM Optional visits organised by AMISTUR.

- Visita a las Terrazas.

19:00 PM Dinner at the hotel. Free night.

Day 8, Sunday 3 January 2027

07:00 AM Breakfast at the Hotel.

08:30 AM Optional visits organised by AMISTUR.

- Playas del Este.

19:00 PM Dinner at the hotel. Free night.

Day 9, Monday 4 January 2027

07:00 AM Breakfast at the Hotel.

08:30 AM Departure and visit to the Fidel Castro Centre. Interactive workshop on Fidel Castro thinking.

11:00 AM Departure and visit to the Memorial of the Denunciation (Museum dedicated to the history and memory of CIA operations in Cuba).

13:00 PM Lunch at Casa de la Amistad.

15:00 PM Visit to “La Manigua” project in Revolution Plaza.

17:00 PM Return to hotel Hotel.

19:00 PM Dinner at the hotel. Free night.

Day 10, Tuesday 5 January 2027

06:30 AM Breakfast at the Hotel.

07:30 AM Departure for Villa Clara.

11:30 AM Reception of brigadistas by ICAP and local authorities.

12:30 PM Check In at Casa de la Amistad in Villa Clara.

13:00 PM Lunch at Casa de la Amistad in Villa Clara.

14:30 PM Visit to the centre of Santa Clara and visit Museo de Artes Decorativas (Museum of decorative arts).

20:30 PM Dinner, cultural activities and exchange with local ICAP members and leaders of local organisations.

Day 11, Wednesday 6 January 2027

07:00 AM Breakfast at Casa de la Amistad in Villa Clara.

08:00 AM Volunteer work in urban agriculture project Riviera.

11:00 AM Return to Casa de la Amistad in Villa Clara.

12:30 PM Lunch.

15:00 PM Visit to El Mejunje de Silverio, cultural centre. Exchange with its founder and cultural display.

17:00 PM Return to Casa de la Amistad in Villa Clara.

19:00 PM Dinner and opportunity to enjoy local live acts.

Day 12, Thursday 7 Janaury 2027

07:00 AM Breakfast at Casa de la Amistad in Villa Clara.

08:00 AM Departure and visit to the historic court of Villa Clara.

09:00 AM Visit to the Museum of the Armored Train (Museo del Tren Blindado).

10:00 AM Visit to the Ernesto Che Guevara Memorial.

11:30 PM Lunch at Casa de la Amistad in Villa Clara.

14:30 PM Departure and visit to development project in Relux. Exchange with leaders, workers and members of the project including public health workers.

17:00 PM Visit to care home for children (Casa no.1 Escambray

18:00 PM Return to Casa de la Amistad in Villa Clara.

19:00 PM Dinner

21:00 PM Exchange with Yordan Romero, first vice president of UNEAC in Villa Clara, at the project "La Luna Naranja".

Day 13 Friday 8 January 2027

07:00 AM Breakfast at Casa de la Amistad in Villa Clara.

08:00 AM Departure for volunteer work in development project "La Victoria".

11:00 AM Return to Casa de la Amistad in Villa Clara.

12:30 PM Lunch.

15:00 PM Departure and visit to the recreation centre Los Pinos.

17:30 PM Return to Casa de la Amistad in Villa Clara.

19:00 PM Dinner and community celebration with live performances.

Day 14 Saturday 9 January 2027

07:30 AM Breakfast at Casa de la Amistad in Villa Clara.

08:30 AM Departure and meeting with members of the leaders and members of the Association of Combatants, leaders from the local area, the Cuban Women's Federation (FMC), and Committee for the Defence of the Revolution (CDR).

11:00 AM Return to Casa de la Amistad in Villa Clara.

12:30 PM Lunch.

14:30 PM Departure and visit to the Provincial Museum of Villa Clara.

16:00 PM Climb Capiro's Hill, lookout and historical site.

17:30 PM Return to Casa de la Amistad in Villa Clara.

19:00 PM Dinner.

21:00 PM Farewell activity at the cinema complex "La Rotonda"

Day 15, Sunday, 10 January 2027

07:00 AM Breakfast at Casa de la Amistad in Villa Clara.

08:00 AM Check out and departure for Cienfuegos.

09:30 AM Reception of the brigade in ARTEX headquarters in Punta Gorda, Cienfuegos.

10:20 AM Presentation and forum at ARTEX headquarters with city conservator.

11:30 AM Meeting with members of the Union of Young Communists (UJC) and the Hermanos Saíz Association (AHS) at the Cienfuegos Club.

12:30 PM Lunch at Club Cienfuegos.

14:00 PM Departure for Havana.

17:30 PM Check in and free afternoon.

19:00 PM Dinner.

Day 16, Monday 11 January 2027

07:00 AM Breakfast at hotel.

09:00 AM Departure and meeting with local Committee for the Defence of the Revolution.

11:00 AM Meeting at the Cuban Women's Federation headquarters.

12:00 MD Lunch at Casa de la Amistad.

14:00 PM Meeting with the Workers' Central Union of Cuba.

16:00PM Meeting with representatives from the Union of Young Communists.

18:00 PM Return to Hotel.

19:30 PM Dinner. Free evening.

Day 17, Tuesday 12 January 2027

08:00 AM Breakfast at the hotel.

10:00 AM Check out and transfer of brigadistas to Aeropuerto Internacional José Martí.

Costs

Pricing for 2026-2027

- $250AUD registration fee (deposit).

- €1535, in cash on arrival in Havana.

1. There is a non-refundable registration fee of 250AUD to be paid by end of November 2026 to secure your place on the Brigade. This fee is paid at registration, through the Humanitix website.
2. Payment in person on arrival in Cuba. €1535 (roughly $2500AUD). Please note that this cost is based on participant numbers of at least 7 Brigadistas.

   This cost covers all accommodation, food, transport, and activities during the program. ***International flights, visas and health insurance are not included and must be arranged separately by each brigadista.***

   Cuban travel insurance can be bought at José Martí International Airport (HAV) upon arrival. Brigadistas can also purchase travel insurance prior to their arrival with major insurance brokers. Please note that, due to the US blockade, some insurers will not insure travel to Cuba.

   The cost of the Brigade covers all basic necessities, however we recommend that each brigadista bring a minimum of 500AUD spending money in a suitable currency (euros or USD) for snacks, drinks, toiletries, souvenirs and gifts, personal outings and optional activities. Please bring enough extra cash to suit your travel style.

Flights, travel insurance and visas

It is the responsibility of each brigadista to organise their own flights, visas and travel insurance.

Here is a little info to get you started:

Flights

2026 saw further cuts to flights to Havana, and any trip from Australia/Aotearoa will include at least two stops. We advise booking your flights early, as flights to Cuba around the Christmas period can be expensive and fill fast. Booking your flights in two parts also tends to be more economical.

Flight suggestions and offers will be provided via the Brigade newsletter over the course of the year. Sign up to the newsletter here.

Do not travel to Cuba via the US or US airspace. The United States — against the advice of former government officials and US lawyers — continues to place Cuba on the State Sponsors of Terrorism list. Australians and New Zealanders who travel to Cuba are barred from gaining a US ESTA (visa waiver) in perpetuity.

Some flight options you may want to investigate include:

Most direct from Australia or New Zealand

- Qantas and LATAM conduct nonstop flights to Santiago de Chile. You can fly to Cuba (with one stop) from there with Copa, who fly Santiago-Havana with a stop in Panama City.
- Air Canada fly direct to Vancouver from Sydney and to Cuba from Toronto and Montreal via Mexico.

Most affordable options from Australia or New Zealand

Europe

- If you can make your way to Europe, there are a number of cities that conduct flights to Havana, including Madrid, Istanbul, Milan and Paris. Cities such as London, Amsterdam provide connecting options, e.g. via Madrid.

China

- There are a number of transit options via China on the way to Cuba. There are no direct flights to Cuba from any Chinese city, so these aren't the quickest options, but they can save you some money.
- Return flights from major Australian cities to Chinese transit hubs like Beijing, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Xiamen, Guangzhou and Chengdu can be found for $1500-$2000AUD.
- From there, flights onwards to Havana tend to be cheaper than trying to book under a single ticket from Australia, for example Shanghai from $2,384, Hong Kong from $2,410, and Beijing from $2,300.
- Another positive of Chinese options is that they tend to stay cheaper for longer, so you might be able to find a more affordable flight closer to our departure than the other options here. Given that our dates are over the Christmas holidays, however, we still strongly encourage you to book your tickets as early as you can.

Americas

- If you can make your way to Central American hubs such as Mexico or Panama, you can get direct flights (e.g. Cancún or Panama City) or simple connecting flights (e.g. Mexico City to Havana via Panama City). Just make sure to avoid the US!

Travel insurance

It is a requirement of entry into Cuba that all travellers, both foreigners and Cubans living abroad, have medical insurance. To ensure that you comply with this requirement, you will need to have a travel insurance policy with a non-US-affiliated company that covers medical expenses in Cuba.

There are fewer and fewer companies that will cover travel to Cuba, and companies that we have previously recommended (for example Southern Cross Travel Insurance or CoverMore) no longer cover trips to Cuba. This is a direct result of new sanctions introduced in 2026 which have extended their reach to Australian and European insurance companies. However, 1Cover, World2Cover, Zoom Travel Insurance, at the time of writing, will give quotes for trips to Cuba.

Cuban travel insurance can also be bought at José Martí International Airport (HAV) upon arrival, however please advise us if you intend to do this (via email).

You will need to have a hard copy of your policy ready to show the officials at Cuban immigration.

Visas

You can apply for your Cuban e-visa via this link.

If you have any questions about the process, please don't hesitate to contact us.
You will need to complete an online questionnaire about customs prior to entering.

Money

***Cuba no longer has a dual currency system*.** There is one single official exchange rate applying to state companies and private individuals alike.

Cash

You must arrive in Cuba with enough cash in USD or euros for your entire time in the country, including the amount payable for the program. If this is not possible or you have concerns please contact us via email (southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com**)**

Neither Australian nor New Zealand Dollars can be exchanged in Cuba.
You can, however, exchange USD or euros for Cuban pesos. There will be time on the first day of the program to be able to do this, and ICAP staff will also assist us to do this throughout the trip. Money exchanges can also be found at the airport, in banks and some big hotels.

There is a money exchange in the departures lounge at the airport if you wish to change money back at the end of the trip, although it is best to change the majority of your money in the city, as the money exchange in the airport has been known to run out of foreign currencies.

Credit cards

ATMs have recently been closed and banks do not have large amounts of Cuban pesos.
For Cubans this means that there is only a limited amount of Cuban pesos that they can withdraw daily. For us this means that it is better if we come prepared with cash to convert as we go.

It is very difficult for us to provide accurate information on what kinds of credit cards will or won't work in Cuba, as the situation changes year to year and is largely dependent on the state of the US blockade against Cuba. This is why we strongly recommend that you bring cash. Credit cards issued by American financial institutions, such as American Express, are never accepted in Cuba.

Credit cards are only sometimes accepted at large establishments. Many smaller businesses, including private restaurants (paladares) and private guest houses (casa particulares), do not accept credit cards of any kind. It is best to always carry some cash to ensure you can pay for goods and services.

The Southern Cross Brigade recommends that, as well as bringing ample cash, brigadistas also bring a credit card and one other card to Cuba. Please leave copies of your card numbers with a family member, in case of emergencies.

Cards that were found to work during recent Brigades:
- Bank Australia credit and debit cards.
- Beyond Bank debit cards.

Cards that were found not to work during recent Brigades:
- Commonwealth Bank credit and debit cards;
- ANZ credit and debit cards;
- ING credit and debit cards.

Due to the US blockade of Cuba, cash cards and travel cards (e.g. from Auspost or Qantas) do not work in Cuba. Debit cards are often similarly useless. You cannot rely on these cards as a backup.

Brigade staff and volunteers

The Brigade is supported by our Cuban organiser, Abraham, and at least one additional translator from Amistur. These staff speak English and have been working hard to coordinate and plan the Brigade all year. There are many other staff members of ICAP and Amistur who we will meet.

Each year, one brigadista is asked to be the Brigade Leader. This person should be fluent in English (a working knowledge of Spanish is also useful) and should be knowledgeable about the political, economic and social situation in Cuba. The job of the Brigade Leader is to liaise between brigadistas and locals to ensure that all brigadistas know what is happening and when. They will also be the 'go-to' person for sorting out admin issues, coordinating the Australia/New Zealand night and acting as an impromptu speech giver for the Brigade.

There is also a team of volunteer local coordinators living in Australia and New Zealand who are responsible for Brigade promotion and brigadista recruitment. It's possible you've already met some of these people! Any and all questions you have prior to leaving for the Brigade can be directed towards the National Coordinator (via southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com) or your local coordinator.

Arrival in Havana

Upon arrival, Cuban immigration is thorough, and you may be asked several questions. Wait times in immigration and customs can be long.

For your information:

- You are travelling to Cuba as a member of La Brigada Cruz del Sur (Southern Cross Brigade) organised by the Australia and New Zealand Cuba Friendship Societies in association with ICAP.
- You are in Cuba as part of a solidarity brigade.

The Christmas/New Year period is incredibly busy in Cuba, so if you arrive early you must organise your accommodation prior to arriving in Cuba. We can assist in arranging this accomodation through our contacts in Cuba.

Please notify the National Coordinator of your accommodation details in case of a change in arrangements.

Please send your flight details to our National Coordinator, MaryClare Woodforde by mid November by emailing her at southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com

Accommodation

Brigadista accomodation will majority be in a hotel in Havana, and at Friendship House in Santa Clara. Both accomodations are well situated and walking distance to shops and other attractions. Accomodation will be shared unless you have indicated otherwise. If you need accessible accomodation (e.g. no stairs), please email southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com and note this in your registration.
Families or partners will normally be put in the same room, and rooms will be separated by gender. There may be two-four people in each room. Blankets, sheets, pillows, and pillow cases are provided but you will need to provide a towel.
There will likely be other guests sharing our accomodation in Havana, however our accomodation in Santa Clara is organised and run by ICAP.

Food and water

There will be little choice in menu, however with forewarning dietaries will be catered to. Please make sure that you note any allergies or dietary needs in your registration.
Breakfast is a light meal of fruit juice, bread, eggs on occasion, coffee and hot milk or yoghurt. For lunch and dinner there is fresh fruit and salad and an emphasis on rice, beans, yucca and malanga. They also serve beef, pork, chicken and some fish. It is safe to eat all the food at places in the program, including the fresh fruit and vegetables.

It is not recommended to drink the tap water. However, there will be bottled water provided on long travel days, and with all meals.

Bathrooms and washing

The showers are often cold, and there may be limited water supply if there are prolonged blackouts (due to electric water pumps).
You may wish to bring a collapsable bucket to do your laundry, however there will be laundry services during weekdays in Havana and in Santa Clara.

Valuables
Theft is rare however you should not leave personal or valuable items on the bus at nighttime, or leave valuables exposed in your room.

Electricity
Cuba's power output is 110 volts (Australia and New Zealand use 220V). Because Cuba uses a lower voltage, it is safe to put our appliances in Cuban power sockets. Remember that this means that appliances like hairdryers and electric shavers may not work in Cuba. There are some 220V power points around the camp, which can be found if necessary.

You will need an adaptor. Cuban sockets generally use the North American style double flat prong, but some also use the European style with round prongs. For this reason, we recommend bringing a universal adaptor.

It is likely that there will be blackouts, or that power will be available at irregular intervals. For this reason we recommend that you bring a power bank and charge it when power is available.

Computer, phone and internet access

SIMs are widely available in Cuba. You can purchase a SIM prior to the commencement of the Brigade while at the airport or at an ETECSA store.

E-SIMs are also an option for Cuba, though it is difficult to know exactly which SIMs will continue to be usable in Cuba each year. Check the policy of the relevant provider to ensure Cuba coverage. GigSky has previously worked in Cuba. E-sim coverage has been patchy.

Contacting Brigadistas in Cuba

Our contact in Cuba is ICAP. This organisation acts as host to brigadistas during the time of the Brigade. You can contact ICAP via asia.pacifico@icap.cu.

Please note there is no Australian or New Zealand Embassy in Cuba (the nearest Embassy for Australians is in Mexico City), however, the Canadian Embassy in Havana deals with Australian matters in Cuba.

Packing list

Personal items

- Casual clothes
- A warm outfit for cooler weather
- One smart casual outfit for special events
- One work outfit for volunteer agricultural activities, including long sleeved shirt and sturdy shoes that can get dirty
- Gardening gloves
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Raincoat/umbrella
- Wind proof jacket
- Swimmers and a towel
- Hat

- Sunglasses
- A water bottle
- Powerbank
- Universal power adaptor
- Torch
- Toiletries – e.g. soap, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, razor blades, sunscreen
- Sanitary products (these items may be difficult to find in shops)
- A roll of toilet paper (for use in public bathrooms)
- Hand sanitiser
- Sufficient prescription medications for the duration of your journey overseas
- Anti-diarrheal medication (e.g., Gastrostop or Loperamide)
- Antibiotics for both bladder/urinary tract infections and bowel infections
- Motion sickness tablets
- Insect repellent
- Toilet paper
- Vegetarian supplements
- Personal mirror
- Snacks
- Plastic bags
- Bandaids
- Earplugs
- Towel (pillowcase, sheets, pillows and blankets are provided)
- Clothes washing powder or soap, clothes pegs, elastic or nylon washing line
- Any extra snacks or treats you might want, including tea bags, Vegemite, peanut butter, jam, dry biscuits, dried fruits, nuts
- Small gifts for Cuban staff and new friends (optional, see next subsection)
- Guide book and maps
- A copy of your travel insurance policy, passport, screenshot of e-visa
- Pens and paper, address book and diary
- Photo of yourself and your family, your house, street, work place, local shop, school, etc - helps with the conversation if your Spanish isn't too hot!
- A good sense of humour and desire to learn about Cuba

Anything you bring that you do not want to carry home (e.g. surplus medication) can be donated.

Gift ideas for your new Cuban friends

You will be overwhelmed with the kindness and generosity of the Cubans you meet, so you might find yourself wanting to show your appreciation with a small gift. The items on this list would be greatly appreciated.

- Toys and educational resources or stationery for children
- Baby formula
- USBs – 4GB or more
- Bicycle spares and parts
- Pocket knives
- Paint supplies (brushes and rollers)
- Knife sharpeners
- English/Spanish dictionaries, English (travel) phrase book
- Paracetamol
- Tweezers, nail clippers, soaps, shampoos and other beauty products
- Blu-tac, pens and other office supplies

- Solar-powered calculators
- Wifi extenders and routers
- Photo albums
- Kitchen supplies
- Plumbing supplies
- Disinfectant
- Screws
- Guitar strings
- Political campaign merchandise e.g. stickers, posters
- Aus/NZ souvenirs; t-shirts, hats, tablecloths, tea-towels, coasters, calendars, etc.
- Union paraphernalia, such as t-shirts and caps
- Key-rings and other trinkets
- Quality dolls and toys, especially koalas, emus, kiwis, etc (no battery-operated toys). Small koala toys always go down a treat with big groups of kids.

Donations

Prior to December we will be updating a list of supplies that are most needed. We will distribute these lists to Brigadistas and Cuba Friendship Societies so that they can support in gathering items to donate.

FAQs

Q: Do I need vaccinations to go to Cuba?

A: Cuba is a healthy nation and it is unlikely that brigadistas will encounter any major health problems. Yellow fever, polio, malaria and diphtheria have been eradicated, while infectious diseases, including meningitis and tuberculosis, are rare.

We recommend that you organise vaccinations for Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Tetanus and Typhoid, as well as making sure you are up-to-date on your flu and COVID-19 vaccinations. We also recommend that you are vaccinated against yellow fever if you are travelling through countries where yellow fever still exists. Neither Australia nor Cuba will allow you past border control without a vaccination certificate if you have been in a country with yellow fever.

Q: Will I have access to health care while on the Brigade?

A: Yes. Healthcare in Cuba is of high quality. If you encounter any health issues during the brigade the first thing to do is to speak to the ICAP representative to arrange an appointment with a doctor or a visit to a hospital. This brigade will be in three major centres (Havana, Cienfuegos, Santa Clara) and so access to healthcare will be readily available. However, access to medication may be limited, which is why we recommend Brigadistas pack antibiotics, paracetamol, and anti-diarrhoea medication.

Q: Do I need to speak Spanish to go on this trip?

A: No, you do not need to speak any Spanish to be able to participate in the Brigade. Part of the cost of the program is to cover the cost of an interpreter, who will be with the group for the entire program. Like any trip overseas, it's always useful to learn a little bit of the local language to help you get about when you're not in the group.

Q: Do I need to be a member of my local Cuba friendship society to register as a brigadista?

A: No, it's not necessary. However, brigadistas are encouraged to make contact with their local Cuba Friendship Society branch and attend a couple of meetings prior to leaving for Cuba to give them a better understanding of what to expect in Cuba, why the friendship societies exist, and what solidarity work has been done in the past.

Q: What will the weather be like in Cuba in January?

A: Although it is technically winter in January, you can expect most days to be pleasantly warm. However, there are occasional cold fronts and nights and early mornings can also be cool. In January in Havana, the temperature range on an average day has a minimum of 18°C and a maximum of 27°C and there is an average total monthly rainfall of 64mm.

Q: What's involved in the voluntary agricultural work?

A: This work is a token contribution completed by those who are able as a gesture of solidarity with Cuban workers. Past work activities have included picking oranges; pruning orange trees, papaya and banana palms; picking beans; planting guavas; harvesting yucca; picking tomatoes; harvesting sweet potatoes and cutting weeds with machetes. We encourage you to participate to the best of your ability. Gentler alternatives can be found for those who are less able so that they can still contribute.
Brigadistas have also participated in environmental clean ups, painting and repairing buildings, and putting together furniture.

If you have particular skills that you would like to be utilised during the brigade please make sure to email southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com to let us know before the brigade begins.

Contacts

National Coordinator

Name	Details	Location
MaryClare Woodforde	southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com 0450578937	Canberra