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Cuba

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Abstract

Suggested resources for the Penn Alumni Travel excursion to Cuba. See the Library Guide for this bibliography [here](#).

Comments

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Alumni Travel Reading List

Cuba

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“Join Penn Alumni Travel on a weeklong immersion in the fascinating history and warm hospitality of Cuba. Stroll the streets of atmospheric Old Havana and meet some of the country’s leading artists on visits to their studios and homes, and at private receptions. Drive southeast to explore Cienfuegos, the “Pearl of the South,” and Trinidad, one of the island’s UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Lectures on Cuban history, society, and race relations will enhance our visit, as will specially arranged performances of dance and music and after-hours visits to prominent museums. Don’t miss this exceptional opportunity!” (From the Penn Alumni Travel webpage)

There has been plenty to read about Cuba ever since getting there became more difficult for Americans. Here are a few suggestions of works published in the new century that can provide some context for the first-time visitor.

Suggested Resources

La Revolución

Farber, Samuel. *Cuba Since the Revolution of 1959: a Critical Assessment*. Haymarket Books, 2011.

For assessments of the Cuban Revolution and Cuba's political situation in the wider world, popular recent accounts include Samuel Farber's book. His critical evaluation comes from a democratic socialist viewpoint. His account is critical, yet sympathetic, and lies very much in the middle between those held by the enemies and apologists of the Cuban government.

Sweig, Julia E. *Cuba: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press, 2009.

Sweig frames her book in a question-and-answer format. Also a critical, yet sympathetic, account, her book lies very much in the middle between those held by the enemies and apologists of the Cuban government.

Cuba in Pictures

Treister, Kenneth, Felipe J Préstamo, and Raul B Garcia. *Havana Forever: a Pictorial and Cultural History of an Unforgettable City*. University Press of Florida, 2009.

Colorful photographic overviews of Havana.

Cooper, Chip, and Nestor Marti. *Old Havana: Spirit of the Living City*. University of Alabama Press, 2012.

Cuban History and Culture

Chomsky, Aviva, Barry Carr, and Pamela Maria Smorkaloff, eds. *The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Duke University Press, 2003.

For a collection of readings there is this heavy weight 723 page volume, the Cuban entry in the excellent Duke University Press “Latin American Readers” series of documentary histories. It covers Cuban history far back before 1959.

Miller, John, and Aaron Kenedi, eds. *Inside Cuba: The History, Culture, and Politics of an Outlaw Nation*. Marlowe & Co., 2003.

A more current focus comes from this book, which features primarily foreign, mostly American, writers (e.g., Paco Ignacio Taibo II, Christopher Hitchens) on a variety of topics.

Travel and Memoir

Chang, Lynette. *The Handsomest Man in Cuba: An Escapade*. Globe Pequot Press, 2007.

“An engaging, witty account of the people, customs, food, and culture of Cuba framed by a fascinating approach to travel. With only a folding bicycle and a towable suitcase, Australian Lynette Chiang spent three months touring Cuba, eschewing tourist hotels and typical itineraries in favor of an unpredictable day-to-day existence among ordinary citizens.” (From the publisher)

Jordan, Rosa. *Cuba Unspun*. Oolichan Books, 2012.

“Rosa Jordan introduces readers to Cubans in all walks of life, people whom she has met during travels around the island by bike, bus, plane, train, truck, and car. Familiar places like Havana and Varadero are viewed from unfamiliar angles and serve as starting points for adventures that began in 1996 and continue into the future.” (From the Publisher)

Millar, Peter. *Slow Train to Guantánamo: a Rail Odyssey Through Cuba in the Last Days of the Castros*. Arcadia Books, 2013.

“A rambling odyssey set in the later days of the Castro regime, on the Cuban rail system.” (From the Publisher)

Guillermoprieto, Alma. *Dancing with Cuba: a Memoir of the Revolution*. Pantheon Books, 2004.

The excellent journalist Alma Guillermoprieto has written a memoir of living in Cuba in 1970 during which time she was a dancer working with Cuban dance students.

Architecture of Havana

Galmiche, Xavier. *Havana: Districts of Light*. Vilo, 2001.
An account of Havana's architecture over time.

Alonso, Alejandro G, Pedro Contreras, and Martino Faggiuoli. *Havana Deco*. Norton, 2007.
Covers architecture, interior design, and the visual arts.

Rodríguez, Eduardo Luis. *The Havana Guide: Modern Architecture, 1925-1965*. Princeton Architectural Press, 2000.
A light-weight volume that can travel.

Mallea, Hermes. *Great Houses of Havana: a Century of Architecture and Design*. Monacelli Press, 2011.
Another book in the coffee table vein.

Griffith, Cathryn. *Havana Revisited: An Architectural Heritage*. Norton, 2010.
Interpreting the present in light of the past, eleven renowned architects, historians, scholars, preservationists, and urban planners in Cuba and the United States provide a rigorous examination of Havana old and new that provokes exploration of the ways we look at all cities. (From the publisher)

Cuban Art

Winkler, Andreas, and A. C. Berger Sebastiaan. *Cuba: Arte Contemporáneo*. Overlook Duckworth, 2012.
“Profiles of fifty artists over fifty years, telling the story of modern Cuba through visual art the recent loosening of the U.S. embargo and Castro's opening up of state-regulated tourism has yielded a flurry of student programs, professional conferences, books, movies, and general enthusiasm in this country for all things Cuban.” (From the Publisher)

Hernández, Orlando. *Without Masks: Contemporary Afro-Cuban Art: The Von Christierson Collection*. Watch Hill Charitable Foundation, 2010.

Delson, Susan, ed. *Cuba Avant-garde: Contemporary Cuban Art from the Farber Collection*. Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art, University of Florida, 2007.
“This volume presents 59 examples of contemporary Cuban art drawn from the distinguished collection of Howard and Patricia Farber (New York and Miami Beach).” (From the Publisher)

Weiss, Rachel. *To and from Utopia in the New Cuban Art*. University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
A textually denser discussion of developments in contemporary Cuban art.