Cuba History

Cuba is a country comprising the island of Cuba as well as Isla de la Juventud and several minor archipelagos. Cuba is located in the northern Caribbean where the Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean meet. It is east of the Yucatán Peninsula (Mexico), south of both the U.S. state of Florida and the Bahamas, west of Haiti and north of both Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. Havana is the largest city and capital. The island of Cuba is the largest island in Cuba and in the Caribbean, with an area of 40,543 square miles, and the second-most populous after Hispaniola, with over 11 million inhabitants.

The territory that is now Cuba was inhabited by the Ciboney Taíno people from the 4th millennium BC until Spanish colonization in the 15th century. From the 15th century, it was a colony of Spain until the Spanish–American War of 1898, Cuba was occupied by the United States and gained nominal independence as a de facto United States protectorate in 1902.

As a fragile republic, in 1940 Cuba attempted to strengthen its democratic system, but mounting political radicalization and social strife culminated in a coup and subsequent dictatorship under Fulgencio Batista in 1952. Open corruption and oppression under Batista's rule led to his ousting in January 1959 by the 26th of July Movement, which afterwards established communist rule under the leadership of Fidel Castro. Since 1965, the state has been governed by the Communist Party of Cuba. The country was a point of contention during the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States, and a nuclear war nearly broke out during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. Independent observers have accused the Cuban government of numerous human rights abuses, including short-term arbitrary imprisonment.

Culturally, Cuba is considered part of Latin America. It is a multiethnic country whose people, culture and customs derive from diverse origins, including the aboriginal Taíno and Ciboney peoples, the long period of Spanish colonialism, the
introduction of African slaves and a close relationship with the Soviet Union in the Cold War.

Cuba is a sovereign state and a founding member of the United Nations. It has currently one of the world's only planned economies, and its economy is dominated by the tourism industry and the exports of skilled labor, sugar, tobacco, and coffee. According to the Human Development Index, Cuba has high human development and is ranked the eighth highest in North America. It is the only country in the world to meet the conditions of sustainable development put forth by the WWF.