

CUBA TRAVEL ADVISORY

WARNING: TOUR PACKAGES FOR SCUBA DIVING,
BICYCLING, HUNTING, FISHING, HIKING OR
OTHER TOURIST TRAVEL IN CUBA ARE ILLEGAL

It has come to the attention of the Office of Foreign Assets Control ("OFAC") that certain specialty tours to Cuba that are offered by travel agencies in third countries are marketed to U.S. travelers as being in compliance with the prohibitions of the U.S. embargo against Cuba. These trips are usually designed for individuals with an interest in outdoor activities, such as scuba diving, bicycling, hunting or fishing. The sales material often maintains that because the traveler prepays the third-country travel agency for expenses that otherwise would be paid by the traveler while within Cuba, such as hotels, meals, ground transportation, equipment rental and services, etc., this type of trip is in compliance with the applicable U.S. regulations on travel-related transactions involving Cuba that apply to persons subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

This advisory is to alert U.S. travelers who participate in such trips that engaging in prepaid arrangements for travel expenditures otherwise prohibited by the Cuba Assets Control Regulations, 31 CFR Part 515 (the "Regulations"), will expose travelers to the possibility of civil monetary penalties from OFAC. [Return to the OFAC directory and click on the button marked LEGAL to see a copy of the Regulations.]

A Cuban vacation package that is prepaid by U.S. travelers through a travel agency located in a third country does not qualify as "fully-hosted" travel as described in the Regulations. This is true regardless of the type of currency that is used to purchase the package tour. This type of trip is simply an "all-inclusive" vacation package similar to ones available at most resort and vacation destinations anywhere in the world. The Regulations prohibit all transactions relating to travel-related tourist transactions in Cuba including prepayment in third countries for Cuba-related expenses.

U.S. travelers must take care in relying upon the Cuba travel-related information made available by travel agencies operating within or outside the United States as a definitive source of information on the U.S. economic embargo against Cuba. In the event you have any questions about travel transactions with Cuba, please contact OFAC or carefully check the Regulations before you engage in any activities that may be in a violation of the law. The Regulations are the definitive statement of the law with respect to the prohibitions of the U.S. embargo with respect to Cuba.

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