

Telecommunications FAQs for Travelers to Cuba

Will my U.S. mobile phone work in Cuba?

Maybe. Some U.S. carriers have or are beginning to make agreements with ETECSA (the Cuban national telecommunications company) to provide roaming services in Cuba. Sprint and Verizon, for example, currently offer roaming services in Cuba. If your carrier offers a roaming plan and your mobile phone is capable of roaming in Cuba, you should ask your carrier about any additional charges for voice calls, data, and outgoing text messages that you may incur during your trip. The telecommunications market in Cuba is changing rapidly, so before you travel, be sure to check with your wireless provider for the latest developments.

Another way you can use your U.S. mobile phone in Cuba is to rent a SIM card. If you have an unlocked GSM-capable mobile phone, you can rent a SIM card from Cubacel (ETECSA's mobile phone arm) that will allow you to use your mobile phone in Cuba. Cubacel's SIM cards come with pre-paid minutes in amounts of 10, 20, or 40 Cuban convertible pesos (CUC\$) (US\$10, \$20, or \$40), plus a daily rental fee for the SIM card of CUC\$3 (US\$3). The per-minute call charges and texting fees for renting a mobile phone (as listed below) also apply to renting a SIM card. Contact your wireless provider to check whether your mobile phone operates on the compatible standard and request that your carrier unlock your mobile phone.

Can I buy or rent a mobile phone in the United States to use in Cuba?

Yes. Some U.S. carriers, such as Sprint and Verizon, now offer mobile phones and international roaming services for customers in the United States traveling to Cuba. Before you leave for Cuba, you should check that your mobile device is compatible with the Cuba-related roaming service offered by the carrier and that international roaming is enabled on your mobile device. You should also verify current (or any recent changes in) rates and terms of service applicable to roaming in Cuba.

Additionally, there are some specialized mobile phone companies that provide travel phones for Cuba and other countries. Before you leave for Cuba, you can rent a compatible mobile phone from companies such as Cellular Abroad (offered by National Geographic), Cello Mobile, or Mobal for use in Cuba. In addition to daily rental fees, you should expect to pay approximately US\$3 per minute of call time and up to US\$1.50 per outgoing text message. Depending on the type of phone rented, data may also be available at an additional cost.

Can I rent a mobile phone in Cuba to use in Cuba?

Yes. An alternative to using your mobile phone or purchasing a SIM card in the United States is to rent a phone upon arrival in Cuba. Once you arrive in Cuba, you can rent a mobile phone from Cubacel. There are Cubacel offices in Terminals #2 and #3 at José Martí International Airport in Havana.

Cubacel charges a one-time refundable deposit of CUC\$100 (US\$100), plus a daily fee of CUC\$10 (US\$10). Additionally, you should expect to pay all of the applicable per-minute call charges – approximately CUC\$0.35 (US\$0.35) per minute for calls within Cuba and CUC\$1.85 (US\$1.85) per minute for calls to the United States. Outgoing text messages cost CUC\$0.16 (US\$0.16) to send within Cuba and CUC\$1 (US\$1.00) to send abroad, and data are not available.

Can people in the United States call me in Cuba?

Yes, people in the United States can call you in Cuba if you are using an operating phone in Cuba. As discussed above, customers of Verizon and Sprint also offer international roaming in Cuba per the rates and terms of service specified by each carrier.

Prices for calls to Cuba from the United States vary and depend on the provider and the caller's plan. You should check with your provider about the cost of making a call to Cuba using its service prior to making the call, as calling without an international calling plan or similar arrangement can cost several dollars per minute. To call from the United States, the caller will need to dial 011 (or + sign from a mobile phone), followed by 53 (Cuba's country code), followed by the Cuban phone number, which consists of six to eight digits for landlines (including the area code) or eight digits for mobile phones.

Example (calling Cuba from a U.S. landline): 011-53-5555-5555

Example (calling Cuba from a U.S. mobile phone): +53-5555-5555

How can I place phone calls to the United States from Cuba?

Calling the United States from a landline in Cuba:

To make landline phone calls from Cuba, you can buy a pre-paid calling card (available at certain hotels and resorts) for use at public payphones. To call the United States using a pre-paid calling card, follow these steps:

1. Dial 166, then dial the card code, followed by the hash key (#).
2. Dial 119 (the international line access code), then 1 (the U.S. country code).
3. Enter the ten-digit area code and phone number you wish to call, followed by the hash key.

Another option, although a more expensive one, is to place international phone calls from a hotel landline, either in your room or the lobby. On average, calls from a tourist hotel to the United States cost about US\$2.50 per minute. To call the United States from a hotel landline, dial 119, then 1, followed by the ten-digit area code and phone number.

Calling the United States from a mobile phone in Cuba:

To call the United States from Cuba using a mobile phone, use the same dialing format as calling from a hotel landline – dial 119, then 1, followed by the ten-digit area code and phone number.

Can I access the Internet in Cuba?

In larger cities like Havana and Santiago de Cuba, ETECSA runs an increasing number of *telepuntos*, or small Internet cafés. You can purchase an access ticket at the *telepuntos* that will provide you with a username and password, allowing you to log on to the public computers and use the Internet by the minute or the hour. Internet access costs approximately CUC\$2 (US\$2) per hour. Connection speeds vary widely and may not support voice or video calls.

Many of the larger hotels also have either a computer or business center where you can purchase Internet access at an average price of CUC\$4 to \$8 (US\$4 to\$8) per hour. You should check Internet availability and charges at your intended hotel before booking and travel.



Is there WiFi in Cuba?

More than 50 major hotels and resorts across Cuba offer WiFi, with hourly rates varying from CUC\$2 to \$10 (US\$2 to \$10). Be sure to contact your hotel to verify availability, speed, and cost in advance of travel.

As of January 2016, ETECSA also offers 65 public WiFi hotspots. Some travel websites provide lists of WiFi hotspot locations. WiFi access costs US\$2 per hour. Like at the *telepuntos*, you need to purchase an access ticket from ETECSA before you can log on to the WiFi network.

Consumer Help Center

For more information on consumer issues, visit the FCC's Consumer Help Center at www.fcc.gov/consumers.

Alternate formats

To request this article in an accessible format - braille, large print, Word or text document or audio - write or call us at the address or phone number at the bottom of the page, or send an email to fcc504@fcc.gov.

Last reviewed: 10/31/16

