

TIMELINE

Turning points in Cuban History

1492

Navigator Christopher Columbus arrives during his first expedition and claims Cuba for Spain.

1526

Importing of African slaves begins.

1762

Havana is captured by a British force led by Admiral George Pocock and Lord Albemarle.

1763

The Treaty of Paris returns Havana to Spain's control, but forces Spain to cede Florida and the Mediterranean island of Minorca to Great Britain.

1868-78

Ten Years War for independence ends in a truce; Spain promises reforms and greater autonomy. These promises were largely ignored.

1886

Slavery is abolished.



1895-98

Jose Marti leads Cuba in second war of independence; Spain responds under the leadership of General Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau. The U.S. monitors the growing tensions, yet doesn't actively participate in the conflict.



1898

On February 15, the USS Maine sinks in Havana Harbor, due to a mysterious explosion. Over 260 sailors are killed.



On July 1, Theodore Roosevelt and his "Rough Riders," along with several other regiments, participate in the battles of El Caney and San Juan Hill. Though American forces win the battles, more than 200 U.S. soldiers are killed and almost 1,200 are wounded.

On August 12, hostilities end, and a Protocol of Peace between Spain and the U.S. is signed.

On December 10, a formal peace treaty is signed in Paris. The U.S. gains almost all of Spain's colonies, including the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico. Cuba falls under the jurisdiction of the United States Military Government (USMG).

1902

USMG control ends; Cuba becomes independent with Tomas Estrada Palma as its president.

1906-09

Estrada resigns; the U.S. occupies Cuba following a rebellion led by Jose Miguel Gomez.

1909

Jose Miguel Gomez becomes president following elections supervised by the U.S., but his regime is soon tainted by corruption.

1912

U.S. forces return to Cuba to help suppress black protests against discrimination.

1925

Gerardo Machado becomes president and institutes vigorous measures promoting mining, agriculture and public works, but subsequently establishes a brutal dictatorship.

Socialist Party is founded, laying the groundwork for the future Communist Party.

1933

Machado is overthrown in a coup led by Sergeant Fulgencio Batista.

1934

The U.S. abandons its right to intervene in Cuba's internal affairs.

1944

Batista retires and is succeeded by the civilian Ramon Gray San Martin.

1952

Batista seizes power again and presides over an oppressive and corrupt regime.

1953

Fidel Castro leads an unsuccessful revolt against Batista.

1956

Castro lands in eastern Cuba from Mexico, taking to the Sierra Maestra mountains where, aided by Ernesto "Che" Guevara, he wages guerrilla war.



1959

Castro leads a 9,000-strong guerrilla army into Havana, forcing Batista to flee. Castro becomes prime minister and his brother Raul becomes his deputy.

1960

All U.S. businesses in Cuba are nationalized without compensation.

1961

Washington breaks off all diplomatic relations with Havana.

