

Information for DoDDS Employees Considering Transferring to Cuba

This information was provided by FEA member DeAnna Shaw-Berget and was current as of October, 2018. FEA makes no claims as to the accuracy of this information. It is provided strictly for informational purposes.

Naval Station Guantanamo Bay is a highly secured base with restricted access. There is NO access to Cuba or the local economy. As such there are several factors that make teaching at GTMO more challenging than the average overseas locations.

Challenge # 1: Traveling on and off base is accessible by military contracted aircraft through AMC, one flight per week (Wednesdays only) through a small local carrier out of Ft. Lauderdale (approximately \$700 roundtrip to Ft. Lauderdale) , or Space A on assorted military aircraft when compatible with the mission of that flight. Teachers receive two unfunded EML opportunities to fly Category II, Space A. This is also a yearly RAT location.

Traveling at peak travel times such as Christmas and Spring Break can be stressful because of the limited number of seat that are available for purchase and the number of residents on base that use Space A.

Also, because of the timing of the flights it is often difficult to get connecting flights on the same day, so travel often takes two days, especially for those who are traveling to the West.

Challenge # 2: Health Care on base is provided by the Naval hospital. Naval hospitals do not bill third party insurance. If you use this facility you will have to pay and be reimbursed by your insurance. Also not all services are available to civilians and many services are not available on base. It is highly recommended that community members have air – ambulance insurance in the event of a medical evacuation is required. There is no access off base, so there are no services available on the local economy. Due to the limited flights to/from the US, traveling to the US for medical care uses a great deal of leave time. Persons with significant medical concerns should not consider a transfer to Cuba.

Challenge # 3: You may have visitors, but all visitors must go through a base clearance before they can come. They can fly on the local carrier or they may fly Space A on the AMC rotator. On average you will need 30 -45 days to get the paperwork needed to bring someone to base on Space A arrangements.

Challenge # 4: There is very limited shopping and dining options on base. Persons on a restrictive or very limited diet may find it difficult to shop.

Challenge #5: Housing options are limited and change with the needs of the military.

There are also some advantages to living on Naval Station Guantanamo Bay.

Advantage # 1: The community is small (about 6000). There is a strong sense of community, and it is very safe. It is a great place for families. Many people compare it to “Mayberry”.

Advantage # 2: Civilians are able to take advantage of all base facilities (e.g. free movies, use of the gymnasium, arts and crafts, marina, special events (except for Liberty events)).

Advantage # 3: It is a great place for outdoor enthusiasts. Many people take up the sport of SCUBA diving. It is very affordable and can be taken advantage of on almost a daily basis year-round. There are

also boats to rent for fishing or recreating, kayaking and paddle-boarding, hiking trails, and snorkeling and swimming.

Guantanamo Bay is a unique environment and many people love their time here, but others find it very confining and restrictive. Employees looking to transfer to Cuba should carefully consider the challenges and do their research prior to placing it on their list.