

Timeline of U.S.-Cuba Relations

1492	Christopher Columbus lands in Cuba and claims the island for Spain. (Spain rules Cuba for the next 400 years.)
1868-78	Cuban revolutionaries fight Spanish rule in the Ten Years' War. Spain retains control but promises reforms.
1895	Cubans again revolt against Spanish rule, and a second war of independence begins.
1898	The U.S. joins Cuba in its war after the U.S. battleship <i>Maine</i> is blown up in Havana harbor. The U.S. and the Cuban rebels defeat Spain in the Spanish-American War (known in Cuba as the "Spanish-Cuban American War"). Spain gives up all claims to Cuba.
1898-1902	A U.S. military government controls Cuba.
1901	Cuba adopts a constitution that includes a set of provisions called the Platt Amendment . The amendment allows the U.S. to intervene in Cuban affairs.
1902	Tomas Estrada Palma becomes the first president of the Republic of Cuba.
1903	Under a treaty with Cuba, the U.S. receives a permanent lease on Guantanamo Bay and begins to build a large naval base there.
1906	U.S. troops return to Cuba, and a government headed by American Charles E. Magoon rules Cuba until 1909.
1933	A revolutionary group led by Fulgencio Batista y Zaldavar (" Batista ") takes control of the government.
1934	The U.S. and Cuba sign a treaty that cancels the Platt Amendment. International investments in Cuba expand during the 1940s and 1950s.
1959	Fidel Castro's forces overthrow Batista's government, and Castro becomes the ruler of Cuba.
1961	Fidel Castro declares Cuba a Communist country. Cuban exiles sponsored by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) invade Cuba at the Bay of Pigs and are quickly defeated by Castro's army.
1962	U.S. begins a trade embargo : It becomes illegal for U.S. citizens to conduct business with Cuba or travel there. One of the most serious incidents of the Cold War, the Cuban missile crisis , occurs in October when the U.S. learns that the Soviet Union has secretly installed missiles in Cuba. The Soviet Union agrees to U.S. demands that it removes its missiles and dismantles the remaining missile bases.
1976	Cuba adopts a new constitution that establishes the Communist Party as the leading authority in the government and society.
1980	More than 125,000 Cubans move legally to the U.S. This event becomes known as the Mariel boat lift because the refugees leave from the Cuban port of Mariel.
1991	The Soviet Union and its Communist government are dissolved. Cuba loses its most important source of aid, and its economy suffers greatly.
1993	Cuba institutes economic reforms that allow some workers to start private businesses.
1994	After another large wave of immigration, Cuba and the U.S. reach an immigration agreement . The U.S. will admit at least 20,000 Cuban immigrants annually. In return, Cuba pledges to do more to prevent illegal departures.
1999	Elian Gonzalez , a six-year-old illegal immigrant, is rescued off the coast of Florida. The event sparks controversy about how the U.S. should handle Cuban exiles; Elian is returned to his father in Cuba in 2000.
2001	The U.S. exports food to Cuba for the first time in more than 40 years after a request from the Cuban government to help it cope with the aftermath of Hurricane Michelle.
2002	Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter makes landmark goodwill visit to Cuba. Carter is the first former or serving president to visit Cuba since 1959 revolution.
2009	President Obama lifts restrictions on family and travel remittances to Cuba.
2016	The U.S. eases restrictions on travel to Cuba allowing U.S. citizens to visit without special permission from the United States government.

Adapted from a Discovery Education Lesson Plan created by Joy Brewster.