

US reduces tourist visa validity for Cuban nationals



Havana, March 15 (RHC) Citing matters of “reciprocity”, the US Embassy in Havana announced Friday that starting March 18, the United States will reduce B2 (tourism) visas for Cubans from five years with multiple entries to three months with a single entry.

“U.S. immigration law requires that U.S. visa fees and validity periods be reciprocal, insofar as practicable, with the treatment accorded to U.S. citizens. Cuba allows U.S. citizen tourists a single entry for a stay of two months, with a possible 30-day extension to three months total, for \$50,” the embassy said.

The US embassy added that the change will only apply for the B2 visa category and that no other visa categories will be changed for Cuban nationals. It also noted that existing five-year multiple entry B2 visas will remain valid until their date of expiration.

The official note says that “Cuba allows U.S. citizen tourists”, ignoring that current US laws prevent Americans from doing tourism in Cuba, and that travelers must fit into one of some 12 categories approved for travel to the island, such as people to people, and religious and cultural exchanges

According to specialized websites on travel from the United States to Cuba, US citizens visitors do not need tourists visas issued by Cuban consulates, instead, with a valid passport, they should purchase a tourist card from the airline before boarding the plane bound to the island, and the card may be also be purchased on line.

While US citizens get their card automatically, due to the unilateral decision by Washington to reduce the work at the US consular section in Havana since September 2017, Cubans seeking a tourist visa have to apply for it at US embassies in third countries, and are forced to spend additional money.

Cuban authorities then described that measure as a “financial punishment on tens of thousands of Cubans, bringing anguish and insecurity in their relationship with their relatives and close friends.”

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