

Information for a Destination Wedding in Cuba

(Click on the ☞ symbols for more detailed information)

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Page 1 of 6

This is the most complete, reliable and **straight-to-the-point** source of information for a destination wedding in Cuba. Here you will learn **What documents** ☞ you require, **How** ☞ and **Where** ☞ to get them and their **legalization process** ☞. This information was compiled from the websites of the Cuban Embassy, the Cuban Tourist Board in Canada and tips from clients who have “been there” and “done that”, plus my 15+ years of experience helping Canadians with their destination weddings in Cuba . If you continue beyond this point, you have read and accepted the **Waiver** ☞.

1. DOCUMENTS FOR TWO CANADIANS MARRYING IN CUBA

(If marrying a Cuban national, skip to section 2 ☞)

a. If never married before:

- i) **Passport** ☞ valid at least until one week after the return date.
- ii) **Tourist Card** available at airline, airport, travel agency or consulate.
- iii) **Bon voyage!** after reading the important information in numerals **5a to 5h** ☞.

b. If previously married:

In addition to the above, the previously married person must produce the following:

- i) **Canadian Divorce Certificate or Court Ruling** ☞ (Original or certified copy) or
- ii) **Death Certificate of Spouse** ☞ (Original or certified copy)
- ii) **Affidavit of Single Marital Status and/or change of name** ☞ if divorced/widowed 2+ years and/or to explain why full name in passport doesn't match other documents.⁽²⁾

2. DOCUMENTS FOR A CANADIAN **MARRYING A CUBAN** IN CUBA

a. If never married before:

- i) **Passport** ☞ valid at least until one week after the return date.
- ii) **Canadian Birth Certificate (long form)** ☞, not wallet-credit card size.
- iii) **Affidavit of Single Marital Status and/or change of name** ☞ (the latter if name in passport not an exact match with all other documents⁽²⁾).
- iv) **Tourist Card** available at airline, airport, travel agency or consulate.

b. If previously married:

The non-Cuban citizen must also produce the following documents:

- i) **Canadian Divorce Certificate or Court Ruling** ☞ (Original or certified copy) or
- ii) **Death Certificate of Spouse** ☞ (Original or certified copy)
- iii) **Affidavit of Single Marital Status and/or change of name** ☞ if divorced/widowed 2+ years and/or if name in passport doesn't match other documents⁽²⁾.

3. LEGAL DUE PROCESS OF DOCUMENTS

For a foreign document in a language other than Spanish to valid in Cuba, it must be:



- a. **Officially translated into Spanish** by an accredited translator and professionally typewritten (without corrections or erasures). For the most convenient price and turnaround, deal directly with the translator (not an agency). Contact Victor toll free at 1-888-847-8906 or by **e-mail** ☞.

Important Notes:

1. **Documents not issued in Canada**, must be authenticated by the Embassy or Consulate in Canada of the issuing Country or by the Cuban Consulate in the issuing country.
2. **The template for the affidavit** of single marital status and/or name change is provided with the translation at no additional cost.


Information for a Destination Wedding in Cuba

(Click on the  symbols for more detailed information)

- b. **Legalized (Apostilled) by local Canadian Government** by the Provincial Official Document Services or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ottawa (CN\$32.00/document). This is on you in the **DIY**  option (4a), but included in the **SMAT**  option (4b).
- c. **Legalized by the Cuban Consulate** Take the package of apostilled documents (3a & 3b) and copy of the 2 main pages of your passport to the Cuban Consulate (10:00 am to 1:00 pm only) with your payment in cash or money order (no credit/debit cards accepted). Their fee is CN\$352.00 per set of Spanish/English documents (\$176.00/page). Depending on your luck, be ready to stand in line for up to two hours. Return to pick up 10 to 15 business days later.
Note: There was a special 3 day rush service, but it is no longer available. There is a mail-in service, call the consulate for details.

Warning: Don't be surprised by some unscrupulous misinformation stating that for translations to be valid in Cuba, they must be done only by the consulate or certain "appointed" persons/agencies or by the destination hotels/resorts/operators. These are false allegations just to get your money because for the Canadian documents to be valid in Cuba, they and their translations must be legalized in Canada by the Cuban Consulate, something that can not be done from Cuba.

4. DUE PROCESS OPTIONS

- a. **The Do It Yourself option** Victor will deliver you the package of documents translated and certified by a Notary Public for you to take care of steps 3b & 3c.
- b. **The Save Money, Aggravation and Time option** In addition to translating your documents (3a), Victor can take care of the whole legalization processes (3b & 3c) for you in +/-10 days and in a more cost-effective way. Contact Víctor **toll free at 1-888-847-8906** or by **e-mail** .

5. IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR A DESTINATION WEDDING IN CUBA

- a. **Confusing information** For a long time, and until a couple years ago, Canadian couples marrying in Cuba were required all the same documents as if marrying a Cuban national. This is NOT the case anymore, it was simplified about two years, but the old information is still lingering around in some sources (even in Cuban websites) and some hotels/resorts and tour operators.
- b. **Prepare a sheet** with the following information of the bride and groom: names, home address, occupation, highest level of education, nationality and the full names of the parents (alive or deceased). All names must match in all documents.
- c. **Photocopy** the two main pages (photo and personal data) of the passports and other applicable English documents and their Spanish translations (from 1b, 2a and 2b).
- d. **Fax the above** to your Cuban hotel/resort at least three (3) weeks prior to your arrival.
- e. **Take all your original documents to Cuba** with you, even if you are taking certified copies.
- f. **Your Cuban marriage certificate** will be prepared (in Spanish) to the names on the passport, and will follow a lengthy Cuban red tape process of authentication, which in reality is not needed in Canada to record your marriage when you return.

You will be told that, time permitting, the Marriage Certificate will be given to you before leaving Cuba (**never happens!**) or couriered to you in Canada at your hotel's expense (usually 4+ months of aggravating follow ups on your part). Confirm this with the hotel/resort.


- g. **Tips from clients:** "Bottom line, do not leave Cuba without your marriage certificate"
 - i) Ask (pay) for an additional original copy of your marriage certificate bearing only the signature/seal the Officer or Notary of the Civil Registry, to bring with you to Canada and let the other one follow the whole red tape and be couriered to you.
 - ii) Make things easier by arranging for your wedding ceremony to take place as soon as possible after your arrival.

Information for a Destination Wedding in Cuba

(Click on the  symbols for more detailed information)

- h. Prenuptial Agreement (optional):** Cuban matrimonial legal terms and conditions (ownership of property, inheritance, parental rights and other matters) are enforceable in Canada, even among Canadian couples; so you might want to supersede that by signing a prenuptial agreement in Canada prior to the wedding. When the spouse is Cuban, the pre-nup must be translated into Spanish so both will sign the English and Spanish versions in front of a Notary Public in Cuba prior to the wedding.

6. OFFICIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF YOUR SPANISH MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE

When you have your Spanish Cuban marriage certificate, I will provide you with its official certified English translation to register your new marital status and change of name in the Social Insurance, new passport, Provincial health Plan, Driver's license, incorporate your spouse to your employer's benefits plan, etc. I am an accredited translator by the Ministries of Citizen and Immigration of Canada (CIC-IRB) and of the Ministry of the Attorney General. Contact Victor toll free: 1-888-847-8906 or by [e-mail](mailto:Go@SoloSpanish.com) .

Warning Regardless of what you might have heard, even if it is from the Cuban Consulate, **there is no need** for the Cuban Consulate to intervene in the translation of the Cuban Marriage Certificate for it to be valid in Canada (no validation, legalization or certification is needed for which they will charge you US\$352.00 (\$176.00/page,) on top of the translation cost.

7. PERMANENT RESIDENCE OF CUBAN SPOUSE AND MINOR CHILDREN IN CANADA

Marriage to a Cuban national does not guarantee your spouse's immediate access to Canada, you must file a sponsorship application accompanied by the following documents with a certified English translation that I can provide you.

- a.** Send me the following documents for their official translation:
 - i) Cuban Marriage Certificate
 - ii) Spouse's Birth Certificate and
 - iii). Spouse's Cuban Certificate/Clearance of Criminal (Police) Records
- b.** If sponsoring any minor child(ren) of the spouse, also send me:
 - i) The child(ren)'s Birth Certificate(s) and
 - ii) Notarized consent of the other parent to permanently reside in Canada.
- c.** Send the sponsorship application to Citizen & Immigration Canada (CIC) attaching the translated documents. No need for further legalizations because I am certified translator by CIC. **Allow 10 months for the decision.** No need to retain the services of a lawyer at this stage either, but recommended in case an appeal is necessary.
- d. WARNING:** There is a considerable chance for the application to be denied on the basis that the wedding was not in good faith. In that case you must initiate a lengthy appeal process (think 1+ years). Then it is recommendable (but not mandatory) to retain the services of a lawyer for the appeal. To be prepared, you must be able to produce documented proof (starting with the wedding day and earlier if possible) that the wedding was in good faith and is still in good standing (for example: frequent long distance calls in telephone bills (NOT CALLING CARDS), airline tickets for trips, correspondence with dated postal seals, proof of economic support by remittance of money, etc.).

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News | Canada

Feds cracking down on immigration involving marriage

By **ELIZABETH THOMPSON**, PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU

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OTTAWA — The federal government is moving to crack down on those who use fraudulent or forced marriages to get into Canada.

Under proposed new regulations, published without fanfare in the Canada Gazette, it will be easier for immigration officials to refuse someone applying to immigrate to Canada if they believe they entered into a marriage in "bad faith."

The proposed new rules would also make it easier for officials to refuse adopted children if the adoption did not create a genuine parent-child relationship" or was done to immigrate.

"Relationships of convenience take advantage of programs that are intended to help reunite bona fide families and are unfair towards immigrants who immigrate based on bona fide relationships," the immigration department wrote.

"Strengthening provisions to prevent individuals from entering Canada through bad faith relationships supports bona fide immigrants and serves the best interests of Canadians by enforcing a fair immigration system."

Under the current regulations, officials have to establish two things in order to refuse a candidate — that the marriage is not genuine, plus that it is designed to allow someone to immigrate to Canada.

However, officials say having to prove both elements has made it difficult to prevent people from using relationships of convenience to circumvent immigration rules.

Under the proposed regulations, officials would just have to establish one of the two elements.

"Even if it cannot be established that a relationship was not entered into primarily to attain an immigration benefit, it may still fail to be a genuine relationship at the time the decision is made by an immigration minister," the government wrote. "An important example would be a forced marriage, where true consent between the parties is lacking, perhaps as the result of the undue influence of an overbearing third party."

They also cite cases where the marriage has broken down but is used to enable immigration.

Determining the legitimacy of a marriage or an adoption is sometimes difficult, the government concedes.

"Immigration officers called upon to decide these matters face an exceedingly difficult task. They must proceed cautiously and carefully, ever aware of the need to facilitate family reunification while at the same time safeguarding the integrity of the immigration process."

The government said the proposal has provincial backing as well as the support of the Canadian Bar Association, despite its misgivings it could be unfair to people in arranged marriages.

Montreal immigration lawyer David Chalk questioned whether the changes were necessary and suggested it could result in officials making mistakes that can't be easily remedied.

The Toronto Sun ■ FRIDAY, AUGUST 6, 2010



Dagnery Tita Abreu, 38, and Nick Mastrangelo are all smiles during their Cuban wedding in 2004. But the promise the wedding held — and much of Nick's money — are long gone.



Canuck discovers game of love rigged in Cuba

Nicola Mastrangelo knows what it's like to gamble in Cuba and lose.

He bet on love, a game on the communist island where the house often wins.

In his case, after betting the farm, he actually lost a house he built for his Queen of Hearts.

Fidel Castro may have banned Batista's casinos in 1960, but there's still high-risk gambling going on, especially if you decide to put money on any Cuban deal.

The deck is stacked. Cody LeCompte's family found out the pitfalls of this in renting a car.

They're \$30,000 in debt after officials forced the teen to stay in Cuba while they — nudge, nudge, wink, wink — investigated.

Unless there's one more Cuban card trick up their sleeve, his nightmare should come to an end tonight as he's set to fly home.

However, Mastrangelo's nightmare continues.

"I feel for the kid because I know how it is to get a bad deal in Cuba," says the 63-year-old, a well-known, well-liked, happy-go-lucky



JOE WARMINGTON

Woodbridge coffee truck operator. "They say with that car accident they were investigating a crime. I wish sometimes they would investigate some of their own people."

So far, his wager cost him \$40,000 in life savings on a relationship with a now 38-year-old woman named Dagnery Tita Abreu. In Cuba, that could end up as a sucker's bet.

'Fell for her'

"I really fell for her," he says of the woman he met in the village of Santa Marta, near Varadero, in 2001 and married in '04. "I wanted her to feel like a queen."

He worked hard at that. First, there was a \$6,000 beach wedding, then the purchase of land, the hiring of tradesmen, the hunt for building materials and eventually a state-of-the-art house with a custom kitchen

and bathroom

The problem is you can't officially own property in Cuba.

And you certainly can't put your name on it if you aren't from there.

But in Cuba anything can be done for a price — the old Havana Hustle.

In this case, it was the Santa Marta Shuffle.

"I was given building permits and I was told since she was my wife it was my house," says Mastrangelo, who was admittedly naive.

Divorced 25 years, lonely and enjoying the company of an attractive woman 25 years his junior, he fell into the tropical trap so many others have — hook, line and sinker.

Mastrangelo is a gullible but lovable type, the kind of guy who'll do anything for you.

He did lots for the love of his life.

He built the house, moved her in and started making plans for her to come here.

Missing her in '07, Mastrangelo jumped on a plane to surprise her.

In Cuba, a surprise can

often lead to exactly that.

"I caught her with a Cuban guy," he says. "I understand I should have known better, but I really trusted her."

To add insult to injury, the guy was living with Mastrangelo's wife in the house he built.

She's certainly able to tell her side of the story if she chooses, but Mastrangelo doesn't hate her as much as he feels violated.

"I am over it now, but I took it pretty hard at the time," he says.

Varadero Vengeance

Duped and full of understandable Varadero Vengeance, he set out to change the game and win some of his losses back.

But the game was rigged.

He hired local lawyers, sought help from the Canadian consulate and Cuban government authorities. He wanted her out of his house.

"Sorry, no can do," was always the answer.

The house is in her name and she still lives there.

He divorced her in '08 and tried to get some of the money out of his house, with no luck.

"I have been offered \$300 for the house," Mastrangelo says with a laugh. "In the end it's my own fault and a lesson was learned."

His buddies tease him. "I was thinking with my heart," he says.

For Mastrangelo, the issue now is trying to prevent it from happening to someone else.

Keep your eyes wide open, he says.

There are many good Cuban people and many solid marriages, but there are many trap doors, too.

Heck, the Latin-love-two-step is practically an industry down there. They look not only for the naive but the kind.

And it's not just men. Women have been duped by Cuban men too and the same goes for same-sex relationships.

Truth is, if you go even the slightest bit off track in Cuba, you could find yourself in a real jackpot.

As Nic Mastrangelo and Cody experienced, when you're playing the Cuban shell game, it's a really risky roll of the dice.


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8. CANADIAN CERTIFICATES

a. Birth Certificates


- **The long form** containing all the data in the record of birth: name, date and place of birth, sex, weight, attending physician, parents' info, registration dates of registration and issuance. *Spanish translation required* 
- **The short form** (wallet-credit card-size format) containing only your name, date of birth, sex, certificate number, dates of registration and issuance. Not Accepted in Cuba

b. How to obtain a Canadian Certificate of Birth, Marriage or Death


Most provinces allow you to get it over the internet, but a few won't. Get the information on how to obtain it, click on the bottom edge of the corresponding flag.



c. How to obtain a Canadian Divorce Certificate

Call the Central Registry of Divorce Proceedings in Ottawa (613)957-4519. This is a Canada-wide index of divorces begun after July 1968. Provide the names of the divorcing parties (including the wife's maiden name if known) and get the number of the Courthouse where the divorce took place, the file number and year; then contact the Clerk of that court and ask for your divorce certificate. *Spanish translation required* 

d. Affidavit of Single Marital Status

Must be drawn in English for each marrying person, signed and witnessed by a Notary Public (not just a Commissioner to take oaths or certify signatures) *before I translate it. If I do your translations, I will provide you with the English format for your lawyer/notary to complete.* *Spanish translation required* 

9. WAIVER

The information provided here, verbally or in any other way, is in good faith and believed to be true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. It is your responsibility to confirm it with the Cuban Consulate, the local Office of the Civil Registry and/or the resort/hotel where the wedding will take place and/or the travel agency arranging your trip. There will be no responsibility/liability of any kind on my part for the results of the decisions you make based on that information, and no money will be returned for any concept.

Return to the top