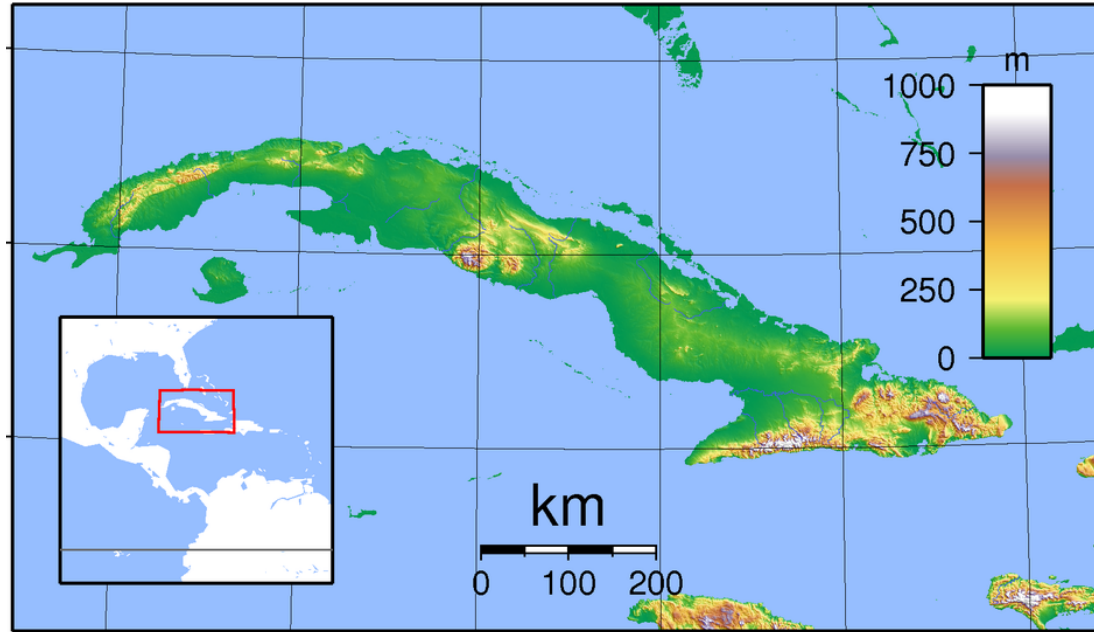


What Happened in Cuba After Independence?

By Fishtank Staff



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/83/Cuba_Topography.png

Cuba is a large island located in the Caribbean Sea, south of the United States and east of Mexico.

Cuba's Long Road to Freedom

The Taíno people were the first to live in Cuba and had a rich and peaceful culture. They were skilled farmers, fishermen, and artists who made beautiful pottery and carvings. The Taíno also told stories, played music, and held special ceremonies to honor their gods.

In 1511, Spanish conquistadores arrived in Cuba, led by Diego Velázquez de Cuéllar. This marked the beginning of Spanish colonization on the island. The conquistadores came to Cuba to claim land, find gold, and expand Spain's empire. They also wanted to spread the Christian religion to the people who lived there. Many were looking for riches and power in the New World. When the conquistadores came, they brought violence and destruction to the Taíno people. Many Taíno were killed, others died from new diseases, and many were enslaved. Their population was nearly wiped out, and much of their culture was destroyed.

As Spain profited from the colony by growing sugarcane and tobacco using enslaved labor, the country sent others to kidnap people from Africa and enslave them, forcing them to work on the plantations. Over time, Cuba became home to a mix of Indigenous, Spanish, and African people.

Spain, a powerful European country, continued to rule Cuba, even though many people on the island wanted independence and the right to govern themselves.



HABANA CORTE DE CAÑA.—CANE CROP GATHERING
N.º 19.—EDICIÓN JORDI

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3a/Cuba_-_cortando_ca%C3%B1a.jpg

As time went on, the Cuban people wanted sovereignty, which means the power to govern themselves and make their own decisions as a free nation without interference from outside powers. In 1898, after many years of fighting, they finally got help from the United States to win a war against Spain, called the Spanish-American War. As a result, Spain gave up control of Cuba.

At last, Cuba was free... or was it?

Trouble After Freedom

After the war, Cuba expected to become a free country. But instead of giving Cuba complete independence, the United States stayed and established authority over the island.

From 1898 to 1902, the U.S. Army occupied Cuba. American soldiers and leaders were in charge, not Cubans. The Cuban people had fought hard for independence from Spain, but now they were subject to the authority of a different country. Eventually, Cuba gained true independence in 1902, when the United States ended its military occupation.

Struggles for Equality in Cuba

In 1912, Cuba was going through a hard time. There was a lot of fighting and unfair treatment, especially toward Afro-Cubans who were asking for equal rights. A group called the Partido Independiente de Color tried to peacefully ask for better treatment, but the government didn't listen and sent the army to stop them. Many people were hurt or killed. While it wasn't completely lawless, the laws were not fair to everyone, and the government used its power to stay in control. So, Cuba in 1912 was a place where people were struggling to be treated equally, and things were not very peaceful.

Bandits in the Countryside

In the countryside, where farmers lived and worked, bandits started causing trouble. These were groups of men who would steal from farms, take animals or supplies, and sometimes even kidnap children. Although the bandits stole from others, they usually did this because they didn't have enough for their own families or because they wanted to fight against unfair rules. They weren't just stealing for fun—they were trying to survive.

Some bandits sent ransom letters to families, warning them: "Pay us money in advance—or we'll take your child."

Why Did This Happen?

There were a few reasons:

- The government wasn't strong or organized, especially in rural areas far from the cities.
- Many people were poor after years of war and didn't have jobs or enough food.
- Some former soldiers from the war had no work and joined bandit groups instead.
- People were angry and felt forgotten by the leaders in the cities.

Because of all this, crime grew, and regular families felt they had to protect themselves.

Road to Stability and Security

Over time, the Cuban government got stronger, and roads and towns became safer. But for many years after independence, especially in the early 1900s, life outside the cities could be scary and uncertain.

This part of history shows that even after winning freedom, a country can still face big challenges, like building safety, trust, and fairness for its people.