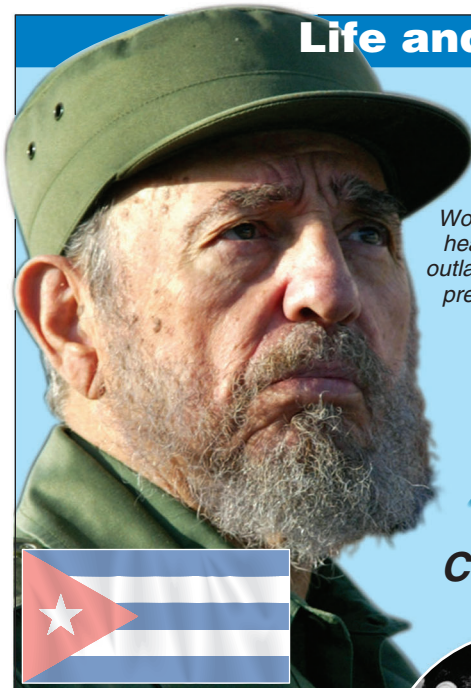


Life and times of Fidel Castro



100km
62 miles

Fidel Castro:
World's longest-ruling
head of government
outlasted nine American
presidents during his
49-year rule

UNITED STATES
FLORIDA

Miami: Home
to around
650,000
Cuban
exiles



1926 **Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz**
born August 13 on family's sugar
plantation near Biran



1945-50 Graduates
from University of
Havana as lawyer.
Becomes involved
in revolutionary
politics in Colombia

1952 Parliamentary candidate –
election cancelled after coup led by
General Fulgencio Batista

1953 Castro leads unsuccessful
revolt in July 26 attack on **Moncada
Barracks** in Santiago de Cuba.
Castro and younger brother **Raúl**
taken prisoner – released two years
later as part of general amnesty

1955 Relocates to Mexico to
reorganize **26th of July Movement**
into disciplined guerrilla force

Dec 2, 1956
Castro (*right*)
and small band
of rebels sail to
Cuba in yacht
Granma



Rebels routed. 12 survivors – including
Raúl and **Ernesto "Che" Guevara**
(*above left*) – take to **Sierra Maestra**
mountains to wage guerrilla war

1959 Castro leads 9,000-strong
guerrilla army into Havana, forcing
Batista to flee. Becomes Prime Minister



nationalized
without compensation. U.S.
breaks off diplomatic relations

1960 Forms
close alliance
with **Soviet
Union**, led by
Khrushchev.
All U.S.
interests
in Cuba

1961 U.S. sponsors
abortive invasion
by 1,300 CIA-
trained Cuban
exiles at **Bay
of Pigs** –
misjudging
Cuban
support for
Castro



1962 **Cuban Missile Crisis** brings
world to brink of nuclear war – only
resolved when Soviets agree to remove
missiles in return for withdrawal of U.S.
missiles from Turkey



President **John F. Kennedy** announces
dismantling of Soviet bases, Nov 2, 1962

1976 **Communist Party of Cuba**
approves new socialist constitution –
Castro elected president

1976-81 Cuban military supports pro-
Soviet forces in Angola and Ethiopia

1980 Refugee crisis – some 125,000
Cubans flee to U.S. via port of **Mariel**

1991 Collapse of Soviet Union leads
to crippling financial hardship in Cuba

1993 U.S. tightens 30-year embargo
on Cuba. To boost failing economy,
Castro legalizes U.S. dollar and allows
limited individual private enterprise

1994 U.S. agrees to admit 20,000
Cubans each year in return for Cuba
halting exodus of refugees



1996 U.S. trade embargo made
permanent after Cuba shoots down two
U.S. aircraft piloted by Cuban exiles

2000 Castro wins seven-month fight
to return six-year-old Cuban refugee
Elían Gonzalez from
Florida to his homeland

2002 U.S. adds Cuba
to "**axis of evil**"



2003 Harsh crackdown
on Castro's critics draws
international condemnation

Jul 2006 After emergency surgery
Castro hands temporary control to **Raúl**

Feb 19, 2008 Castro announces his
resignation in letter published in
Communist Party newspaper,
Granma. The National Assembly will
elect his successor on February 24

