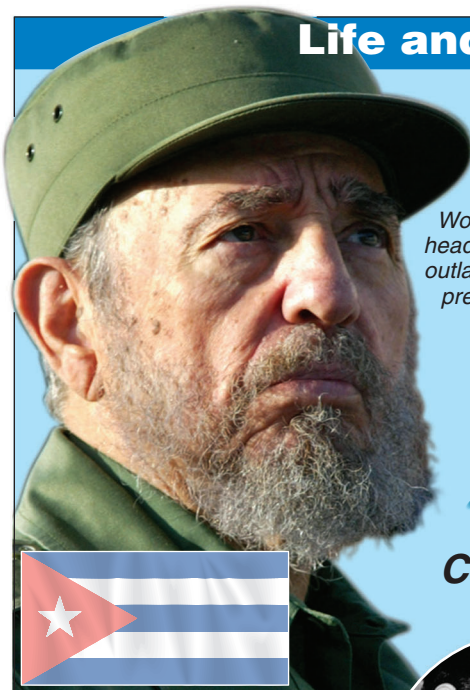


Life and times of Fidel Castro



100km
62 miles

Fidel Castro:
World's longest-ruling head of government has outlasted nine American presidents during his 47-year rule



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



1960 Forms close alliance with **Soviet Union**, led by **Khrushchev**. All U.S. interests in Cuba nationalized without compensation. U.S. breaks off diplomatic relations

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

Nov 28 Castro misses start of five days of 80th birthday celebrations postponed due to his illness and rescheduled to coincide with 50th anniversary of Cuban revolution

