

2. Halbjahr 2025  
*Englisch am Abend A2-5*  
252-40625A, Mi, 18.00 – 19.30 Uhr

12th unit, 17 December 2025



How do people queue in Cuba?

Queuing in Cuba is quite different from the orderly, single-file lines many visitors expect. It's shaped by long-standing shortages and a lot of social adaptation.

Here's how it typically works:

- **The "list" system (la lista):**

Instead of standing in line for hours, someone starts a handwritten list of names. You add your name and position, then you're expected to stay nearby and check in when called.

- **Physical presence still matters:**

Even with a list, people often ask "*¿Quién es el último?*" ("Who's last?"). You're expected to remember who was before and after you. If you disappear too long, you can lose your spot.

- **Line-sitters and substitutes:**

Friends, relatives, or paid sitters may hold a place for someone else. This is widely accepted, though it can cause arguments.

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- **Multiple informal lines:**

There may be one line for the list, another for those already approved to buy, and sometimes a third for people hoping supplies arrive. It can look chaotic to outsiders.

- **Constant negotiation:**

Queuing involves talking, confirming positions, and collective monitoring. People rely on community memory more than physical order.

- **Scarcity-driven behavior:**

When goods are rare, queues can start before a store opens—or even before delivery is confirmed. People line up “just in case.”

In short, Cuban queues are **social systems, not just physical lines**—based on conversation, trust, and vigilance rather than strict spatial order.