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CUBANIA

**FOOD
& DRINK**

JAN | 2016

INCLUDING GUIDE TO THE BEST PLACES TO EAT, DRINK, DANCE AND STAY IN HAVANA



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We are deeply indebted to all of the writers and photographers who have shared their work with us. We welcome new contributors and would love hear from you if you have a Cuba-related project.



EDITORIAL

Liudmila y Nelson -El viaje-

Welcome to 2016. We wish you all the best and thank you for your continuing interest in *What's On La Habana*—the definitive cultural and travel guide to Havana.

This is mid Cuban winter, with temperatures usually dropping to 20–25 degrees Celsius. Although most Cubans don't go to the beach during this season, pay no attention. Unless a cold front is passing through, the beaches 20 minutes east of Old Havana are all gorgeous and pleasantly deserted this time of year—although perhaps not so because December temperatures rose up to 32 degrees.

This issue is dedicated to Cuban food and drinks. Sometimes you can hear someone saying that Cuban cooking is monotonous but what is certain is that there's a very unique tradition that is being salvaged and enriched under the impetus of the development of tourism both in the state and private sectors. We have also included a number of recipes for Cuban drinks so that you can prepare your own cocktails at home. And be sure to use Cuban rum!

January 2016 has some interesting events in store. If you're into dancing, the two-week-long-event *FolkCuba* is held with experts in Cuban folklore dances teaching Cuban dances and music of African and Spanish origin, including mambo, cha-cha-cha, rumba, mozambique, pilón and conga.

The grand reopening of the Gran Teatro de La Habana Alicia Alonso took place this past January 1st with a selection of the ballets *Giselle*, *Swan Lake* and *Coppelia* by the Ballet Nacional de Cuba. Ballet lovers will get the chance to enjoy the entire ballet *Giselle* from January 8 to 10 at the splendidly refurbished Gran Teatro.

Outside Havana, trova lovers will get a kick out of the Longina Festival, which will feature twenty concerts by thirty Cuban trovadores.

We wish you all the best in 2016! Abrazos!

The LaHabana.com Team

About our new look

This month we are introducing our new logo and look and feel. If you look closely, you'll see it's not a huge departure from the original *Cuba Absolutely* logo. Rather we're staying close to our roots, whilst we position ourselves for an expansion into the digital realm with *LaHabana.com*. Besides graphics, we're also introducing the concept of 'Magazine'; a monthly collection of in-depth articles about a central theme. The popular 'What's On' section is still an integral part of the Magazine, but in coming months we will bring this feature online, where we can offer you weekly updates on what to see and do in...La Habana.



JANUARY 2016

FOOD AND DRINK

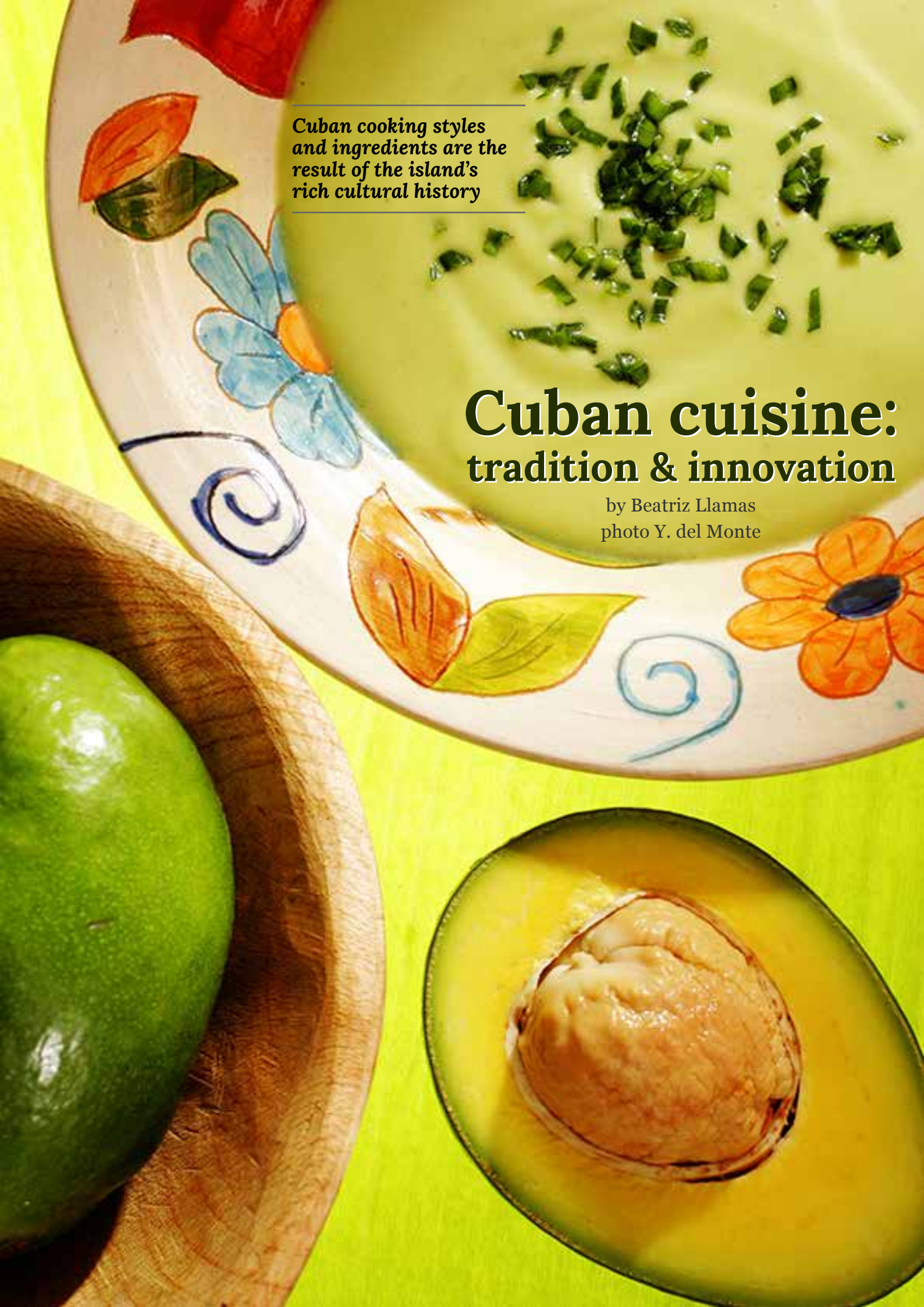
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A vibrant yellow background features a bowl of green soup topped with chopped green herbs. To the left, a wooden bowl contains a whole green lime. In the bottom right, a halved avocado is shown with a piece of crab meat resting on its surface. The bowl of soup has a decorative floral pattern in blue, orange, and green.

*Cuban cooking styles
and ingredients are the
result of the island's
rich cultural history*

Cuban cuisine: tradition & innovation

by Beatriz Llamas
photo Y. del Monte

Yuca con mojo



Thick and thin bean soups are an important part of the Cuban diet; many of these have their basis in traditional Spanish cooking. White, black and kidney beans, dried peas and chickpeas are the most commonly used legumes. Stews and casseroles also play a dominant role in Cuban cookery. The *sofrito*—a mixture of lightly fried onion, garlic, green pepper and sometimes tomatoes—is the basis for seasoning Cuban dishes to which spices including cumin, oregano and serrated cilantro are often added.



When Spaniards first arrived in Cuba in 1492 they encountered indigenous people who lived by hunting, fishing, gathering and the cultivation of cassava, yams, maize and black beans. As a result of the new illnesses and living conditions brought in by the colonisers, the original Cuban Indians eventually became all but extinct and crops that had been previously grown gave way to new ones brought from Spain. The only dish that has been handed down from that time is *casabe*, a round thin cake made from cassava which is grated, dried, pounded and cooked. The Spanish contribution to local cuisine included not only ingredients but also techniques and dishes that acquired their own idiosyncratic character once they took root in Cuba.

The second major influence was African, arriving with the slaves that were brought to the island to undertake the hardest physical labor. From Africa came foods such as okra, taro root and plantains. Another significant event was the arrival of Chinese immigrants during the mid 19th century. Their contribution includes soy sauce and Chinese-style rice.

Pork and chicken are favorite meats in Cuba. A leg of pork, marinated in the juice of bitter oranges, salt, crushed garlic and oregano before being roasted, always forms the centrepiece on special occasions. It is served with *congrí*—rice and black beans cooked together—, fried plantains and cassava spread with a dressing made of garlic, lemon or bitter orange juice and oil. This is accompanied by a leafy or vegetable salad. After everyone has gorged themselves on these succulent delights they somehow find room for traditional Cuban puddings so sweet as to defy credibility, which include custards and baked desserts and fruits such as guava, pineapple, mango, grapefruit, oranges, papaya and grated coconut poached in sugar syrup.



Churros Rellenos



It is still unclear as to how rice became central to Cuban cuisine, but for a Cuban a meal without rice is simply not complete. It is usually eaten boiled with salt and mixed, at the table, with soup or stew. It may also, however, be prepared with fish, pork, chicken, vegetables or ham, or a combination of these, seasoned with spices and herbs and cooked in meat or chicken stock. The latter concoction is usually referred to as “yellow rice” because it acquires a yellow-orange colour from the annatto added to it.

Fried food is a constant feature of Cuban meals. The word *vianda* in Spanish means food, as in the slightly archaic English usage ‘viands’, but in Cuba it has become the collective term for root vegetables such as potatoes, cassava, squash, sweet potatoes and a wide variety of yams, all of which are normally eaten fried or boiled. In some cases an oil-based dressing is added to them and they are served as a side dish. Crisp green or mixed salads are always seen on Cuban tables. Favorite salad vegetables are lettuce, cabbage, green beans, cucumber, watercress, tomato, avocados and beetroot.

For this issue, I have devised a tasty menu which combines Cuban culinary tradition with new gourmet trends:

Chilled avocado soup, a “new fusion” recipe.

The omnipresent rice, combined with pork meat and green plantains and spiked with grapefruit juice, constitutes a substantial main dish.

Dessert is a rich cream cheese ice cream accompanied by the traditional guava halves poached in syrup and garnished with mint.



AVOCADO SOUP

4 servings

12 ounces peeled avocado
3 cups beef or chicken stock
1 teaspoon made mustard
2 teaspoons lemon juice
2 tablespoons chopped spring onions,
green part only

Mix all the ingredients in a blender until creamy. Season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper. If the mixture is too thick, add more stock.

Serve very cold, sprinkled with chopped spring onions.



RICE WITH GREEN PLANTAIN

4 servings

1½ cups short grain rice
1 pound lean pork meat (leg or shoulder)
3 cups fresh grapefruit juice
8 ounces green plantain, peeled and diced
1 cup tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
1 cup finely chopped onions
1 cup diced green pepper
4 tablespoons oil
½ teaspoon ground cumin
5 cloves of garlic, crushed
1 teaspoon vinegar
3 tablespoons chopped spring onion
1 branch of fresh coriander
salt to taste

Dressing 1:

2 heaped tablespoons chopped coriander
1 tablespoon virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon cider or balsamic vinegar

Dressing 2:

2 heaped tablespoons chopped spring onion
1 tablespoon virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon cider or balsamic vinegar

Slice the meat into cubes of approx 1 square inch. In a heavy pan, heat the oil over a medium heat; add meat, cumin and a pinch of salt and fry 20-25 minutes until meat is brown, stirring occasionally. Add tomato, sauté 1 or 2 minutes and add 1 teaspoon of vinegar. Add pepper, onion, 2 tablespoons of spring onion and garlic. Raise heat and sauté 4-5 minutes stirring occasionally, taking care that the mixture does not stick to the pan. Finally, mix in the rice, plantain and coriander; sauté a few more minutes; add the grapefruit juice. Season to taste. Cover tightly and cook at a medium to low heat for approximately 20 minutes or until the rice is tender and all the liquid has been absorbed. Allow the mixture to rest for 5 minutes and then place it in an earthenware dish and garnish with the remaining chopped spring onion. Serve with either of the two dressings.

Mix ingredients for each dressing in separate bowls and season with a pinch of salt.

Note:

1. Peel plantains under running water to avoid staining your hands. If the plantain is not to be used immediately, after it has been peeled and cubed keep it in water with a few drops of lemon juice to maintain its color.

2. Cuban grapefruit is not as acidic as other grapefruits. If your local grapefruit is very acidic, dilute the juice with stock or orange juice, taking care not to alter the proportions of rice and liquid.



CREAM CHEESE ICE CREAM WITH GUAVA POACHED IN SYRUP AND GARNISHED WITH MINT

6 servings

For guava in syrup:

3½ lb ripe (but firm) guavas
2 cups water
2 cups granulated sugar

For ice cream

1 lb cream cheese
1 cup granulated sugar
¾ cup milk

5 tablespoons fresh chopped mint leaves

Wash and peel guavas; cut into halves. Carefully scoop out the seeds leaving only the pulpy cups. Continue until you have approx 2 lb of fruit. Bring the water and sugar to a boil. Add the guavas and simmer for approx 40 minutes until the fruit is soft and the syrup has thickened. Allow to cool. If the syrup is too liquid, set aside the cooked guavas and boil the syrup until it reaches the desired consistency.

For the ice cream, mix all the ingredients in a blender and chill.

Serve the ice cream with the guavas and garnish with crushed mint leaves.



Photos by Y. del Monte

Bon Appetite a lo cubano

by Margaret Atkins

Some say that Cubans live to eat. As with most generalizations this is an exaggeration and somewhat imprecise but it doesn't mean that it doesn't contain some truth to it. Cubans love food and they spend a large part of their time and resources to acquire and process it. I've always had the impression that the average Cuban suffers from the anxiety to ensure enough food and that this has ended up making him or her eat more than what they really need. Economic difficulties and product shortages in the markets may have conditioned that worry and it is quite common to hear the following phrase, especially among women who are almost always the ones in charge of the cooking: "Let me see what I'm going to invent tonight for supper." That phrase encapsulates the entire process of buying, preparing and serving the evening meal that brings together the family around the table at about seven every evening.

The most basic Cuban menu includes rice along with either red or black beans. On occasion, they are prepared together in a recipe that possibly originated in Haiti known as "conгри" or "moros y cristianos," depending on the type of beans used. This combination, acknowledged by food experts to have superb nutritional value, has sustained many Cubans through difficult times. A square meal must include a main course, which can take the form of a meat dish, like pork or

poultry, eggs, croquettes, meat patties, or some processed foods like sausages or smoked pork. This gets accompanied by root vegetables such as sweet potatoes, yam, cassava, potatoes, squash, or green plantains, which can be boiled or fried. And of course, a salad is a must, which may include avocado, tomatoes, cabbage, lettuce, green beans, carrots or beets. There should always be something for dessert given the sugar industry heritage of the country which still exerts a considerable influence on the Island's customs. People eat a lot of those home-made concoctions that may include fruits in their own syrup, cakes, flans and puddings.

Other possible menus include composite rice dishes (very common for family get-togethers and on Sundays); the most important of these include Cuban paella (mixture of rice, meats and seafood), "arroz con pollo a la chorrera" (a moist rice dish with chicken), Chinese-style fried rice, and rice combined with all sorts of other ingredients, including pork, fish or vegetables. Soups are immensely popular and most of them are made from chicken broth. Another widely popular dish throughout the entire country is the "ajiaco," a traditional Cuban stew that contains large chunks of pork, beef, chorizo and a medley of vegetables. The term "ajiaco" was used by ethnologist Fernando Ortiz to describe the mixture of religions and customs that make up the Cuban identity.



The important holiday celebrations tend to be distinguished by the presence of roast pork, especially in the countryside and this is a symbol of festivities and “cubania,” or genuine Cuban spirit. On December 31, in cities throughout the provinces and in the courtyards and on sidewalks of Havana neighborhoods, you can always see whole pigs on spits over beds of burning coals.

The typical morning for a Cuban begins with a small cup of strong black coffee, usually taken with sugar, followed by a light breakfast that ideally includes café au lait and bread and butter. Many are off to work with just one or two small cups of strong, black coffee. It's the *de rigueur* way to begin the day and it's offered to all visitors as a gesture of hospitality. Watch out though: many housewives don't appreciate the cup of coffee being refused, so when you arrive at a Cuban home, accept and thank your host for the little cup of coffee as it is the Cuban equivalent of Greeks offering bread and salt to their visitors. Lunch is at noon and very much like dinner. Before going to bed, many will have a light snack.

Another Cuban favorite is chocolate, which is grown in the eastern part of the island and can be made into a hot or cold drink sweetened with sugar. Sugar is an important ingredient in many Cuban dishes and it contributes a sweet note. Spicy foods are in the minority.

Sometimes you can hear someone saying that Cuban cooking is monotonous but what is certain is that we have a very unique tradition that is being salvaged and enriched under the impetus of the development of tourism both in the state and private sectors. In Havana, for example, there are now many good restaurants adapting traditional cooking to more sophisticated and international tastes without completely losing their autonomy. Yet another attractive feature of visiting Cuba, for those who would like to learn the truth about Cuban food, is accepting the kind invitation of eating in someone's home. Your hosts will be delighted to put the best they have on the table and the warm hospitality surrounding the occasion will be something you can't get anywhere else, no matter what delicacies might be served.





Havana street food – feeling hungry?

by Ricardo Alberto Pérez

A young girl walking down the street dressed in her school uniform—short mustard or burgundy skirt, and white blouse—braided hair, trainers, backpack and licking a popsicle or an ice-cream cone is an everyday scene in Havana. The same as for a distinguished-looking gentleman, one elbow on a window sill or a small stand sipping his coffee from a thimble-sized cup. Or the *mulata* who walks slowly swaying her hips and biting a pizza pie enclosed in a piece of manila paper.

Havana has a great variety of fast foods which are sold from stands, windows, wheelbarrows and baskets that hang from the vendor's arm to people on the street who are out for a stroll or on their way home. Street traders wander about hawking their merchandise in the same manner as peddlers of yesteryear who sold vegetables and fruits. This is the case of the peanut vendor, whose paper cones filled with peanuts are a common sight at the doors of movie theatres, fairs, festivals, parks, everywhere and anywhere.

Street stalls offer a mixed selection of foods: sweet or salty, solid or liquid. The most common of these foods include 'Cuban' pizzas—a thick piece of dough with a thin layer of well-seasoned tomato sauce

and cheese sprinkled on top; ham sandwiches or *bocadito de jamón*, which is made of cured ham well stuffed with bacon plus a dab of mustard, ketchup or mayonnaise; instant refreshments and natural juices; peanut cones; small guava pastry pies; and ice-cream.

There's a wide assortment of fritters, which Cubans are very fond of: *churros*: dough that is deep-fried and later cut into finger-size strips; *chicharitas de plátano*, paper-thin slices of plantain fried in oil; *frituras de malanga*, grated taro mixed with egg and crushed garlic, also deep-fried; and *tostones*, fried flattened pieces of plantain, crusty on the outside and tender on the inside. But there's no question about it: one of the tastiest tapas is the *pan con lechón*, a roast pork sandwich sprinkled with the juices of the roast. The kiosks in the proximity of the Institute of Technology in the outskirts of Havana serve the best *pan con lechón* I have ever tasted. And the typical *pan con minuta*, a fish fillet coated in a batter of flour and egg and fried, is spiced up with a sauce made of vinegar, garlic and onions which is sprinkled on the bread slices.



Other street foods include *papa rellena*, a ball of mashed potatoes—filled with seasoned and fried ground meat—which is later breaded and fried until golden brown; minced chicken, fish or meat croquettes, also breaded and fried; *pan con frita*, or *frita al plato* is the patty between two slices of bread or plain; fried chicken, sometimes marinated in a sauce of garlic and bitter orange juice; tamales, those small packets wrapped in corn husks containing a paste made of ground or grated tender corn seasoned with garlic, onion, tomato, pimienta, cumin and bits of fried pork, are a favourite for a day at the beach.

Other favourites sold at street stands include *pan con bistec*, an appetizing pork steak fried with garlic and onions between two slices of bread. Also in sandwich style is *pan con chorizo*, a highly seasoned pork sausage with paprika that gives it its characteristic red colour; *pan con tortilla*, a simple omelette on bread; ham and cheese sandwiches; hot dogs; and *pan con queso y guayaba*, thick guava jam and a slice of cheese on bread. *Chicharrones de empella*, the crisp residue after frying the skin of pork are also sold on bread, while *chicharrones de viento*, or puffed cracklings, are sold in paper cones.

The so-called ‘cajitas’ (literally, ‘little box’) also have a large following thanks to its manifold applications: lunch at birthday parties; cold or hot meals to be

eaten at the beach; fast food from street stands; or even part of a wedding banquet. These ‘cajitas’ are brown and approx the size of a thick pocket book, and when bought on the street are usually filled with either a pork steak, a smoked pan fried pork chop, a slice of roast pig, fried chicken, or mutton stew, served with white steamed rice or *congrí* (rice cooked with beans); *vianda** (usually cassava, plantain, sweet potato or taro) fried, or boiled sprinkled with garlic sauce; and sliced tomato or cucumber. If the cajitas are intended for a festive occasion, the contents change to include a piece of cake with a guava or coconut filling and a meringue topping; a cold macaroni salad, small party-size croquettes and pastries.

Among traditional Cuban desserts you have guava pastries; sometimes small tarts with guava marmalade or coconut filling and sometimes small triangles of puff paste filled with guava jam, both which should be eaten warm. These are my personal favourites and the best are the ones sold at the *Horchatería* in Old Havana, right next to the *Torrelavega* cafeteria on *Obrapia* Street between *Mercaderes* and *Oficios*.

Desserts are very well-liked in Cuba—for centuries a leading sugar-producing country— and a wide variety is sold on the streets. The popular *turrón de maní* is sold in small bars in two different forms: a hard nougat-like candy made with roasted



peanuts mixed with honey and caramel, or a fudge-like candy made from ground peanuts and sugar. Other sweets include *turrón de ajonjolí*, or sesame seed nougats; *cremita de leche* made with cooked milk and sugar; *coquitos*, crunchy grated coconut and sugar; *yemitas*, a combination of egg yolks and syrup; *boniatillo*, a paste of mashed sweet potato cooked in syrup and sprinkled with powdered sugar; *capuchino*, a small cone-shaped sponge cake soaked in syrup; *merenguitos*, or baked meringues; *tartaletas*, tartlets filled with grated coconut cooked in syrup, or *melitones*, small tarts filled with coconut cream and butter; *señoritas*, or millefeuille, puff pastry layered with a filling of cream and topped with powdered sugar; *masa real* (literally, 'royal dough'), a no-frills dry type of cake with a thin layer of guava jam filling; *torticas de Morón*, a kind of crumbly cookie made with flour, shortening and sugar; *brazo gitano*, a jelly roll filled with cream or marmalade.

And now we come to the ever-popular ice-cream, which in Cuba is served in cones, cups or between two thin slices of cake and are very creamy; and the *duro frío*, ices and glaces which are made simply of fruit juice, sugar and water. With such suggestive names as *rizado de chocolate* (chocolate curls) and *coco glace*, the best creamy ice-creams in Havana can be found at Coppelía, the famous ice-cream parlour located on the corner of 23rd and L Streets in El Vedado.

And to quench the thirst, there's a huge variety of beverages, from brightly coloured instant refreshments to fruit milk shakes, the most popular being guava, mango, banana, papaya and mamey. Another shake-like beverage—although it does not classify as such—is *champola* which is made by stirring the pulp of soursop with sugar and milk. Natural fruit juices made from oranges, pineapples, mangos, guavas, papayas or tamarinds are both very popular and delicious. A satisfying drink that is also very popular is *guarapo*, which is the juice of the sugar cane squeezed on the spot by means of a specially-made contraption that hasn't changed one bit since colonial days. And of course there's Cuban-style coffee, a strong, black brew served in very small cups which only costs one Cuban peso.

Prices range from one Cuban peso for a glass of instant soft drink or roasted peanuts, for instance, to 15-30 Cuban pesos for a 'cajita' (24 Cuban pesos are approx equivalent to 1 euro). All around the city and during daylight hours you will always find food stands selling in the local currency, especially in the proximity of secondary schools and universities, train stations, hospitals, the Barrio Chino, Calle Obispo in Old Havana, or *agromercados* (markets selling fruits, vegetables, hams, and mutton and pork meat). Street hawkers are also popular around bus stops and movie theatres. An infallible way of knowing the quality of the product is the number of people waiting in line to be served.

* *Vianda* in Cuba has become the collective term for root vegetables, such as potatoes, cassava, sweet potatoes or taro; and other vegetables and fruits, such as squash, plantains and chayote, or *mirliton*, which are normally eaten fried or boiled.



Conner's Ultimate Guide to the Cuban Agro

by Conner Gorry



Photo by Alex Mene

There are several options for where to buy fresh fruits, vegetables and meat in Havana, but grocery stores aren't one of them (see note 1). No matter where you find yourself shopping, my advice is bring your own plastic or other reusable bags for carting away your goods (though at many markets, little old ladies sell plastic bags for a peso apiece). Also, once you've had your produce weighed and have paid, look for the 'Area de Consumidor' – this is where you can have your purchases re-weighed to see how much you've been ripped off (see note 2). When this happens – as it does to everyone, Cuban and foreign – you simply go back to the seller and they'll rectify the error without batting an eyelash.

Where to Shop:

Agropecuarios – There are two types of these markets: those with price caps, heavily subsidized by the state, and those where supply and demand dictate price. You can see side-by-side examples at Tulipán, where the chaotic EJT (price-capped) market has long lines and lots of root vegetables mostly, while a block away, the tidy supply and demand market offers stacks of carrots, mounds of tomatoes and all the fruta bomba, watercress, red peppers, limes and string beans to get mouths watering. Not surprisingly, prices are higher at the latter.

Organopónicos – These organic markets are heavy on the veggies, but light on fruit; prices are reasonable for the (mostly) organic produce – not all of it is grown on site. Much of it is however, and I've bought just-harvested lettuce, bok choy, okra and basil frequently at organopónicos. The area around the Plaza de la Revolución is peppered with these markets. Two farther afield favorites are the one at 5ta Avenida and Calle 44 and the so-called 'organopónico japonés' out on Avenida 25 in the Cubanacán neighborhood. The latter has an awesome orchid selection, as well.



Ferias agropecuarias – There used to be monthly (or more often) neighborhood ‘produce fairs’ where trucks heavily laden with bananas, onions, garlic and anything else in season rolled in for a weekend to sell as much as possible at great prices. Two popular ones occupying blocks and blocks included the one on Avenida 13 in Playa and along Carlos III in Centro Habana/Plaza. Fish, house wares, artesanía, and prepared foods (chicharrones!) were also sold at these fairs, where locals flocked to load up for the week or month. I haven’t seen one of these in at least a year; I’d love to know what happened to them. Anyone?

How to shop for some specific, perhaps unfamiliar, items:

Quimbombó (okra) – A popular vegetable in these parts, to ensure you’re getting fresh okra, snap off the tip of a few (or do like we do and test every single one before committing – don’t worry, sellers won’t mind). Tips should snap off crisply, not bend over.

Melón (watermelon) – Watermelon halves are a no brainer. When you’re after a whole one, however, things get murkier. In this case, bring the melon to your ear and give it a few hard taps with your fingertips. A good one will return a “dry” pok, pok sound, according to my local expert. Most sellers will also offer to cut out a small triangle so you can sample before buying.

Mobile vendors – These are a new phenomenon made possible by the economic reforms initiated in 2010. While convenient, these door-to-door produce sales chap my ass. First, they’re gutting state markets (often the price capped ones), snatching up merchandise to resell at a markup – usually by 100-200% (see note 3). Second, some of these agros-on-wheels sell pre-bagged and weighed goods. Of course, when you open that sack of okra/potatoes/peppers in your kitchen, rotted and otherwise inferior produce lurks.

Limones (limes) – A staple in many Cuban dishes (and mojitos of course!), most cooks have been duped by limes that look luscious but then turn out to be dry and worthless. To avoid this fate, choose limes which have smooth, shiny skin. Most sellers will prove the juiciness of their limes by cutting one open and squeezing out a long stream with a dramatic flourish.

Guayaba (guava) – I remember the first guava I ever ate, off the tree, in the Costa Rican jungle. It was delicious for the first, second and third bite. On the fourth, I bit into a little white worm. I didn’t eat another guava for decades. Cuban advice on how to avoid guava worms? Don’t think about it: the majority has them, even if you don’t know it.

Fruta bomba (papaya; see note 4) – Unlike in other latitudes, there's only one variety of papaya sold in Cuba – bigger than a loaf of bread and orange as a basketball. Choose one that is uniform in color and smells sweet; if it has a few over ripened black spots, don't discount it. Instead, ask the seller to cut out a small triangle to taste.

Mamey – I ascribe the licorice axiom to this odd fruit: either you love it or won't touch it. Mamey look like mini footballs and have brown skin. The flesh is a deep coral color, with a distinctive, slightly perfumed, taste. Mamey diehards scoop it up with a spoon but it's mostly used in fruit shakes and ice cream. Sellers will flick off a piece of skin to show you it's ripe.

Yuca (yuca) – A ubiquitous root vegetable, these long tubers are brown to reddish on the outside, blindingly white on the inside. When cooked, yuca is soft and always served with an addictive garlic sauce/bitter orange sauce called mojo. Fresh

yuca “weeps” from the cut end – you should see little droplets of gathered moisture. Some sellers display a dish of already cooked yuca at their stalls to prove that “se ablanda” – it cooks up soft.

Malanga (taro) and boniato (sweet potato) – While consulting friends for this post, I asked how they distinguished the good malanga and boniato from the bad. Everyone agreed: these root vegetables a caja de sorpresa. Translation: you never really know what you're going to get. The same can be said for zanahoria (carrots), any bunch of which can contain a few that are sweet and toothsome and others that taste like soap.

Miel (honey) – Fresh honey is sold in repurposed Havana Club bottles at many agros and is a real treat. To make sure the honey you're buying hasn't been cut with sugar (an old trick in these parts), invert the bottle; the honey should try your patience it moves so slowly and importantly, have a large air bubble making its way to the top.

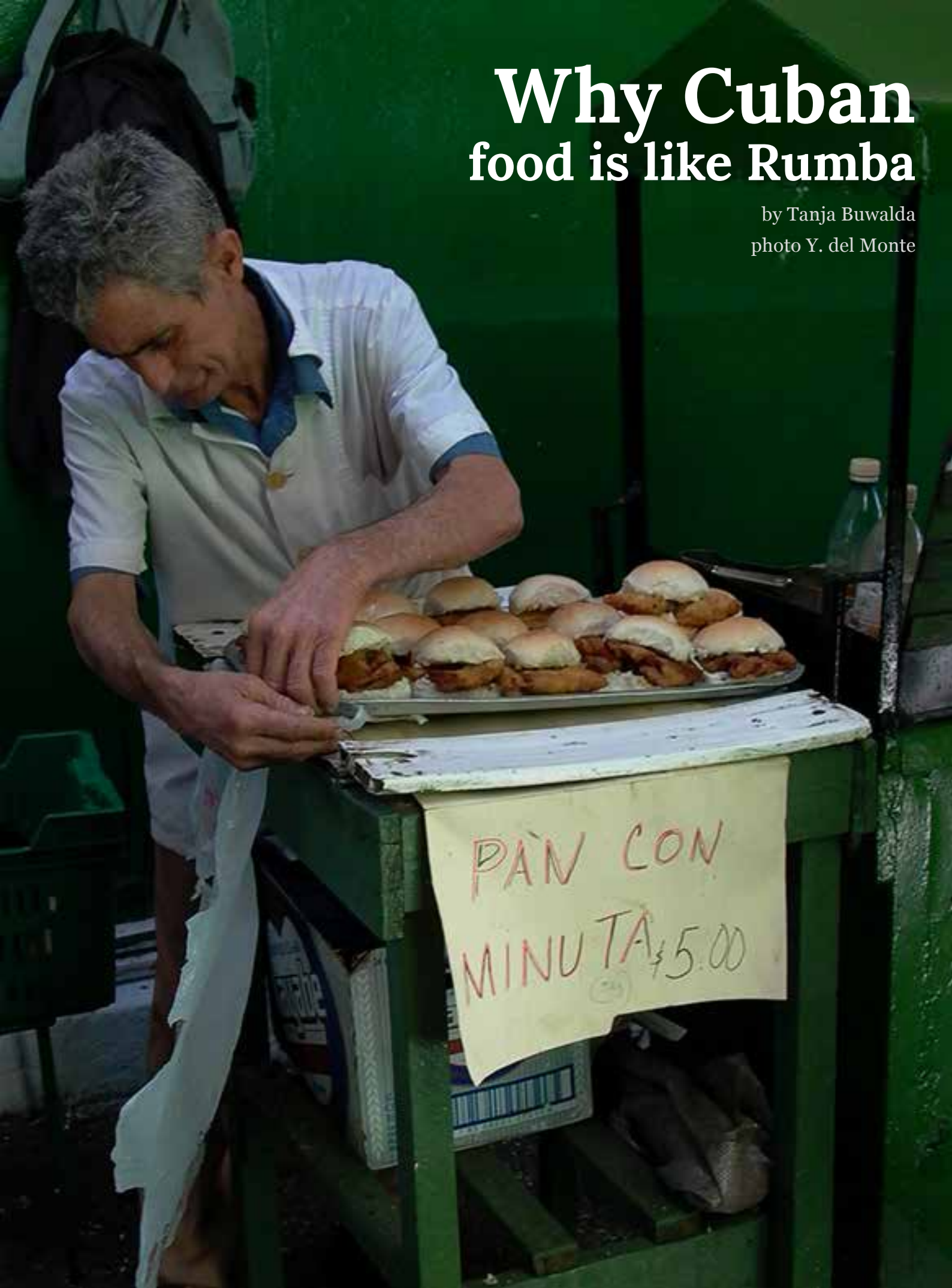


Notes

1. In my experience, many visitors think, logically, that fresh produce and protein can be purchased at grocery stores. Not so here in Havana.
2. So widespread is the practice, each market now has an Area de Consumidor. Old hands come to market with their own hand scale to weigh their purchases in front of the seller, before paying.
3. This is also happening in other sectors, whereby 'cuenta propistas' (freelancers) buy light bulbs, cleaning products and hardware in state stores to re-sell at a steep markup.
4. In Havana and many surrounding areas, 'papaya' is not used to designate this fruit, but is instead reserved for a certain part of the female anatomy. In the Oriente, papaya means the fruit.

Why Cuban food is like Rumba

by Tanja Buwalda
photo Y. del Monte



The best way I know how to describe Cuban food is to liken it to Rumba music. Rumba is a uniquely Cuban fusion of African and Spanish musical traditions, so too is Cuban food. Although Cubans would never admit to being vegetarians in point of fact there are a lot of non-meat days in many a diet here. This suits me and sets me up for my black bean burgers recipe. Of that more later, back to the beginning.



What, no meat?!

In Cuba there is a very strongly held belief that unless you have meat as part of your meal that you are under-nourished somehow. My Cuban friends would be prepared to and have gone without fruits, vegetables and milk products to be able to afford to buy meat. Personally I believe that as omnivores we are designed to eat a variety of foods including vegetable and animal protein. However, I also believe that we eat far too much animal protein aka meat in our diet and that we should be encouraged to eat more vegetable protein. So where is this little healthy-eating rant taking us, you may ask? Unbeknownst to my Cuban family and friends I have subtly been introducing some interesting veggie recipes to mealtimes. Call it meat-free Mondays, Wednesdays and sometimes Fridays!

I'm not a vegetarian!

There are a few reasons why I don't eat lots of meat in Cuba. Firstly I actually like preparing and eating vegetarian food. Secondly, the storage of meat is somewhat suspect here. A general lack of refrigeration, coupled with high temperatures can see meat sitting uncovered in the sun for long periods of time. Now that doesn't really matter as long as you cook the meat to 71 degrees Celsius (160 F) but I'm still adapting to Cuba and can't quite stomach the thought of cooking meat that's been in the sun too long. I guess all those years of health regulations and inspectors in my former life in the restaurant business has left me more aware than most of the importance of food hygiene and storage. Thirdly, being a Yuma (foreigner/outsider) means I haven't got the same connections for acquiring meat on the black market as Cubans.

When I first invited Cuban friends Jose Miguel and his wife Yanesel over for burgers one

Friday, I neglected to say they would be vegetarian. Let's face it their salivating mouths and rumbling stomachs were prepared for juicy beef burgers. Being a foreigner, it is assumed (not always correctly) by most Cubans that I have substantially more means than locals and can therefore afford to buy good quality meat everyday. Imagine then the look of disappointment on Jose's face when I told him the burgers were made from black beans! It was heart breaking. Lesson learned. Now I just invite people for Friday burgers, don't tell them what's in them until they have eaten and liked them. Then I drop the 'vegetarian' bombshell. And even Jose Miguel has been converted. Last time I invited him over he actually requested my *hamburguesas de frijoles* (bean burgers). A little victory.

If you'd like some ideas for tasty meat-free meals why not try my Cuban inspired Black Bean Burgers. They freeze brilliantly so are a great stand-by for an impromptu burger party!



Cuban Black bean burgers

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups (400g) cooked black beans
- 1 medium onion chopped
- 1 bell pepper chopped
- 4 small aji, (a variety of very small bell peppers) or use a very mild chili
- 4 medium cloves garlic
- 2 tablespoons soya or vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 tablespoon chopped culantro
- 1 egg lightly beaten
- Pinch of salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 1 cup (115g) dried breadcrumbs.

Note: You may need less or more breadcrumbs depending on the wetness of your beans and the freshness of your breadcrumbs.

Aji is a small non spicy capsicum it looks like a Habanero chilli pepper but without the heat. You can leave this out if it's not available. Culantro is also known as Recao, Mexican coriander or Spiritweed. If you can't get hold of any you can use a bunch of Cilantro (coriander) instead.

Method:

1. In a frying pan over a medium heat, fry the onion in the vegetable oil until soft.
2. Add the garlic, large and small peppers, cumin and coriander and continue frying until the bell pepper is softened slightly but not fully cooked or browned. Remove pan from heat and allow mixture to cool.
3. Put the beans, cooled onion mixture, culantro, egg and salt and pepper and lime juice in a food processor. Pulse until the mixture is combined but there is still some texture to the beans. You should be able to still see some whole beans. At this stage the mixture will be moist and too soft to handle.
4. Using a spoon, in the bowl of the food processor (remove the blade first) mix in the breadcrumbs, a few tablespoons at a time until the mixture becomes stiffer and forms a more solid dough-like mass. Depending on the moistness of your beans you may need to add more or less breadcrumbs to form the dough.
5. Using floured hands divide the mixture into 10 equal sized balls and then form the balls into patties with your hands. Refrigerate for at least an hour to firm.
6. Remove the burgers from the fridge and fry in a little oil in a pan or on a griddle. They can also be cooked on the BBQ but they are somewhat delicate so move them with a flat spatula not a tongs.
7. Serve in a lightly toasted bun with whatever fillings you fancy. I use slices of tomato, home-made pickled cucumber and caramelised onions with a large dollop of mustard and tomato ketchup. And a slice of cheese when I can get it.
8. These black bean burgers can be stored covered in the fridge for a day or two or in the freezer for much longer. To freeze lay the burgers flat and not touching each other into a freezer bag on a plastic chopping board and place into the freezer in a flat position. Freezing this way ensures that the burgers do not freeze to each other and can be removed individually.
9. Once frozen which takes about 4-5 hours, remove the plastic chopping board. The burgers will now store for up to 3 months. Assuming you don't have an extended power cut like we do at times in Havana. In which case you might be having an unexpected bean burger party!

Adaptations:

You can also add other vegetables into the burger mixture depending on what is available. I've used cooked and chopped green beans and cooked sweet corn. You can also add extra chili to spicy things up, dried or fresh it doesn't really matter. I hope you enjoy making and eating these burgers, perhaps as a meat-free Monday meal. Or maybe just when friends come over for casual burgers on a Friday.



El Litoral – An inspiration on the Malecón

by Margaret Atkins

Would you like to feel like you owned a little piece of the Havana Malecón, even if only for a little while? Well, that's exactly what I felt this afternoon as I sat under one of El Litoral's umbrellas. The location can't be beat: Malecón Ave. on the corner of K Street, where a solitary piece of the seawall is visible (sitting isn't allowed there for safety reasons given the proximity of the US Interest section). It's just you, the blue sky and the vastness of the sea. The place is unrivaled if you want to watch how the sun, turned into a red rubber ball, is swallowed by the sea at sunset while you dine or sip your favorite cocktail. And in the evening, you might catch the flickering lights of some distant ship. If it rains, as it happens so often in the summer, all you have to do is go up three steps and you're in the terrace, from where you can continue admiring the scenery and sipping your cocktail of preference, or any other drink from their very well-stocked bar.

While I waited for Alain, the Chef, who I was interviewing, I was treated to an espresso. I can't say for sure if it was the charming ambience, the friendly waitress or the coffee itself, but no other cup of coffee has given my taste buds such intense pleasure before. As the chef was busy in his kitchen, I decided I would explore the place. When you cross the glass door, which bears the name of the restaurant, you enter into an air-conditioned area that is much appreciated in the





August heat. To your left, you will find the bar and to your right, a half-lit waiting room. There is lots of black, white and gray. The first impression is of elegance and comfort. “The interior of a luxury boat, that’s what we wanted to achieve,” said Mae, who along with her husband Alejandro, has created this lovely restaurant in what was once her husband’s family home. Remodeling the place took them an entire year, but scarcely eight months after they first opened to the public, El Litoral has a loyal clientele. The central hall leads to the main dining room with six tables, while the private room retains somewhat the spirit of the dining room you would find in a large Cuban home. They have also set up a room for smokers in what was once the garage and lateral courtyard. This air-conditioned room, however, has outlets for the smoke. There’s another bar here, which they call the cafeteria, from where you can also order a complete meal. Today, the space has been reserved for a birthday party. A mural of sea motifs in relief created by Cuban artist Rafael Consuegra graces the sand-colored wall. The decor here is coherent, a feature that is hard to find in the many new restaurants that are gradually populating the city. At last I come to the kitchen and I meet Alain.

Proud of his sanctuary, Alain takes me to where the hors d’oeuvres are prepared. For a fixed price, guests may choose from a number of cold starters: four different kinds of cheese; salads made of truly organic vegetables; fish escabeche, shellfish, sushi, salmon, smoked fish, ham, sausages, olives, dressings, breads from the in-house bakery and so much more. You can serve yourself, but if you find it hard to decide what to choose, there’s always a helpful waiter that can recommend the perfect match according to your taste and temperament.

If you liked the cold starters, then you will simply have to come back another day and choose from the tapas (more like hot entrees) menu: beef and salmon carpaccio; bruschetta topped with tomato, ham and mozzarella; crunchy focaccia topped with octopus; croquettes in cheese fondue (mmm!); chorizo casserole in wine, risottos (which the chef tells me are made with the high-starch, medium- or short-grain white rice that this dish requires, and so much more.

And now we come to the main dishes, and this being a sea-themed restaurant, it is only natural that the specialty of the house is fish, like the cava style lobster, stir fry shrimp or fish stew. But if you’re more of a meat person, then you should go for the filet mignon served on a timbale of roasted

Photos Y. Monte



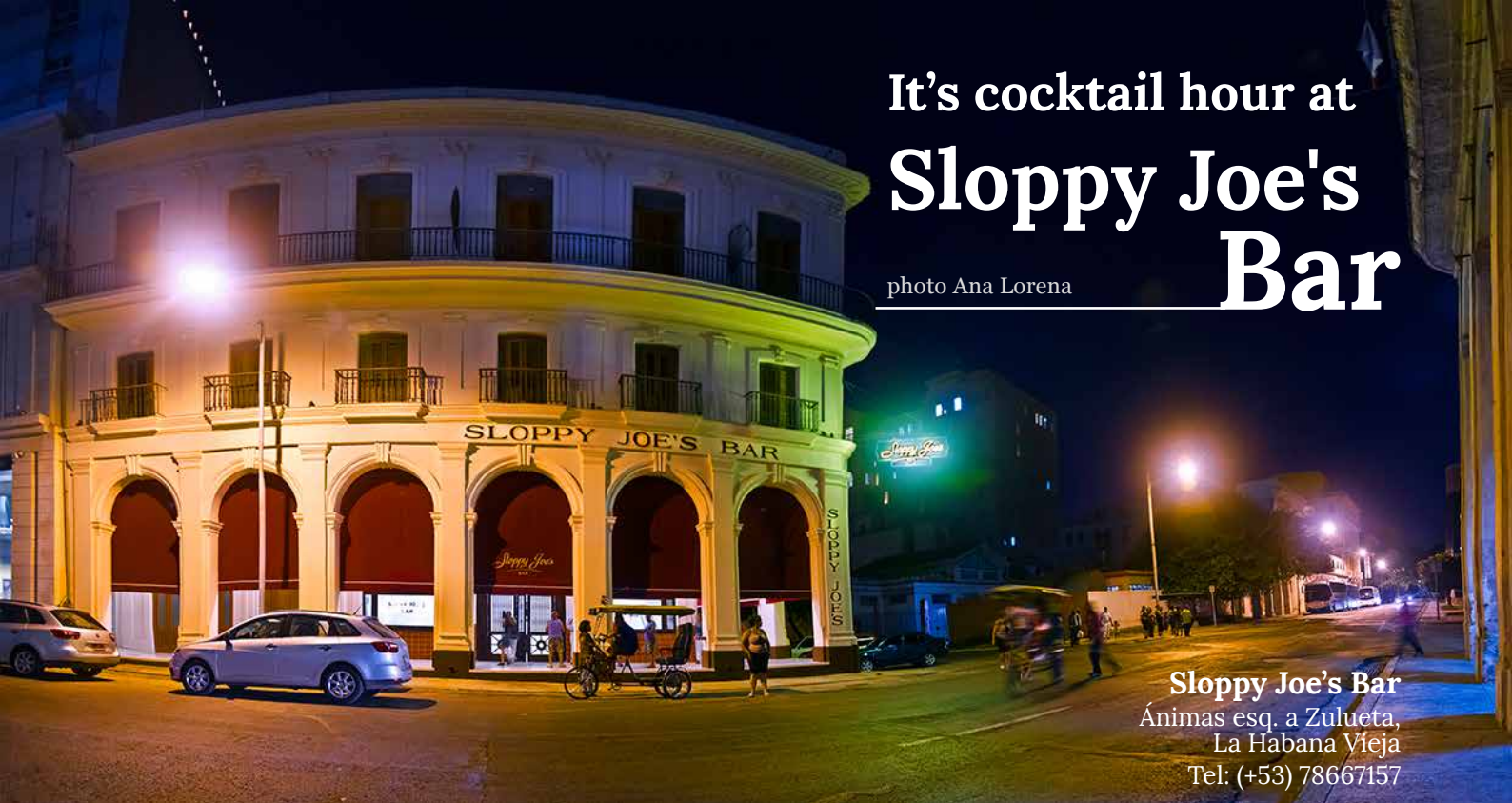
potatoes and onions, which, like almost every dish here, comes with steamed vegetables in a tropical color scheme. But if you are undecided as to what to choose, then close the menu and talk to your waiter. Tell him what you would like to eat and how you would like it to be prepared. Your waiter will then go to the kitchen, he will talk with Alain, and will do everything possible to come back with a dish that will meet your expectations, even if it's not on the menu.

Because El Litoral has been designed to pamper and spoil their guests, making lunch or a special meal an unforgettable event. Therefore, bread and butter are on the house and they do not charge the unpleasant—and even offensive—ten percent that so many other restaurants are charging nowadays. The maitre d' personally chooses and trains all the waiters and bartenders, and the chef takes care that no ingredients are missing, despite the unstable and variable Cuban market. Alain is proud of his menu, which is not only stable, but expanding. Proof of this is a project they have in mind for late this year involving avant-garde cooking techniques, also known as molecular gastronomy. It is really difficult to capture the enthusiasm and commitment of these people that make El Litoral, not only a business, but a source of happiness and personal achievement.



It's cocktail hour at Sloppy Joe's Bar

photo Ana Lorena



Sloppy Joe's Bar
Animas esq. a Zulueta,
La Habana Vieja
Tel: (+53) 78667157

Restoration

Six pm is Sloppy Joe cocktail hour at the original Sloppy Joe's saloon, an iconic Cuban bar that reopened April 12, 2013, after a nearly 50-year break in its original location. The restoration, undertaken by the Office of the City Historian of Havana, began in 2007 and has sought to restore the dilapidated building as faithfully as possible, from the outside façade down to the delicate plaster molding, dark wood paneling and colorful bottles of alcohol displayed behind glass. Parts of the dark mahogany bar, once reputedly the longest in Latin America at about 59 feet (18 meters) have even been preserved and restored to splendor.

“What I am interested in is making every effort to give back my city, our city, a whole series of things that are part of its memory....To restore Sloppy Joe's is to bring back to Havana a place where artists, baseball players, tourists all met...the final objective is not commercial, it's not to exploit a name. The opportunity it brings is to recover an important memory of Havana.”

Eusebio Leal, Head of the Office of the Historian of Havana

So, what's it like?

This is a large bar with plenty of space, which has been lovingly restored. This seems like a flagship place for the City Historian's office and they have done a great job. It is a little bright and chill for us but maybe that is not a bad thing.

Service is great, with waiters in black and orange shirts being attentive and friendly. You should try the Sloppy Joe cocktail, a cool, refreshing blend of brandy, port and Cointreau, with a fruity pineapple finish. The menu looks like pretty standard fare (and not cheap) with ceviche and marinated shrimps being good but not spectacular.

Sloppy Joe's will undoubtedly join La Bodeguita del Medio and El Floridita on the must-see tourist trail. This encourages a rapid turnover of visitors, which is not everyone's cup of tea but does typically engender an upbeat vibe.

History

Sloppy Joe's Bar was a historic bar located in Havana, Cuba. The advent of Prohibition in the United States spurred its original owner, Jose Garcia Abeal, to change the emphasis from food service to liquor service when American tourists would visit Havana for the nightlife, the gambling and the alcohol they could not obtain back home.

Sloppy Joe's welcomed tourists for over four decades, and offered over 80 cocktails in addition to the bar's own brand of 12-year-old rum. During the 1940s and 1950s it became a favorite haunt of American tourists and film stars like John Wayne, Spencer Tracy and Clark Gable as well as tourists wanting to mingle with them. It was for a time one of the most famous bars in the world.



HAVANA CLUB

AÑEJO **7** AÑOS

COLLECTION OF COCKTAILS

1 GOLDEN APPLE

- ◇ 1 teaspoon of CARAMEL SYRUP
- ◇ 50ml of APPLE JUICE
- ◇ 20ml of APPLE LIQUEUR
- ◇ 45ml of HAVANA CLUB Añejo 7 Años.



METHOD

Pour all the ingredients into a SHAKER, add ICE CUBES, shake and serve in a DAIQUIRI GLASS.

1 GOLDEN APPLE | © HAVANA CLUB

2 MOJITO REAL

- ◇ 1 teaspoon of SUGAR
- ◇ 15ml of fresh LIME JUICE
- ◇ one sprig of FRESH MINT
- ◇ 60ml of HAVANA CLUB Añejo 7 Años
- ◇ 60ml of SPARKLING WATER, 60ml of CHAMPAGNE.



METHOD

In a long drinks glass, MUDDLE the MINT SPRIG with SUGAR and LIME JUICE, dilute with SPARKLING WATER, add ICE CUBES, add Havana Club Añejo 7 Años, complete with the CHAMPAGNE, Stir.

2 MOJITO REAL | © HAVANA CLUB



METHOD

In a LONG DRINKS GLASS, dissolve the SUGAR in the LIME JUICE, add ICE cubes, add the CRANBERRY JUICE, add the HAVANA CLUB Añejo 7 Años and stir.

3 CULTO A LA VIDA

- ◇ 1 teaspoon of SUGAR
- ◇ 15ml of LIME juice
- ◇ 120ml of cranberry juice
- ◇ 60ml HAVANA CLUB Añejo 7 Años.

3 CULTO A LA VIDA | COCKTAIL COLLECTION

METHOD

Place some ICE cubes into a long drinks glass, add the APPLE LIQUEUR and the HAVANA CLUB Añejo 7 Años, complete with GINGER ALE and stir.



4 CUBAN GINGER

- ◇ 20ml of APPLE LIQUEUR
- ◇ 120ml of GINGER ALE
- ◇ 60ml of HAVANA CLUB Añejo 7 Años.



4 CUBAN GINGER | COCKTAIL COLLECTION

5 OLD ROSE DAIQUIRI

- ◇ 1 teaspoon of SUGAR
- ◇ 10ml of LIME JUICE
- ◇ 20ml of STRAWBERRY syrup
- ◇ 60ml of HAVANA CLUB Añejo 7 Años
- ◇ 2 STRAWBERRIES.



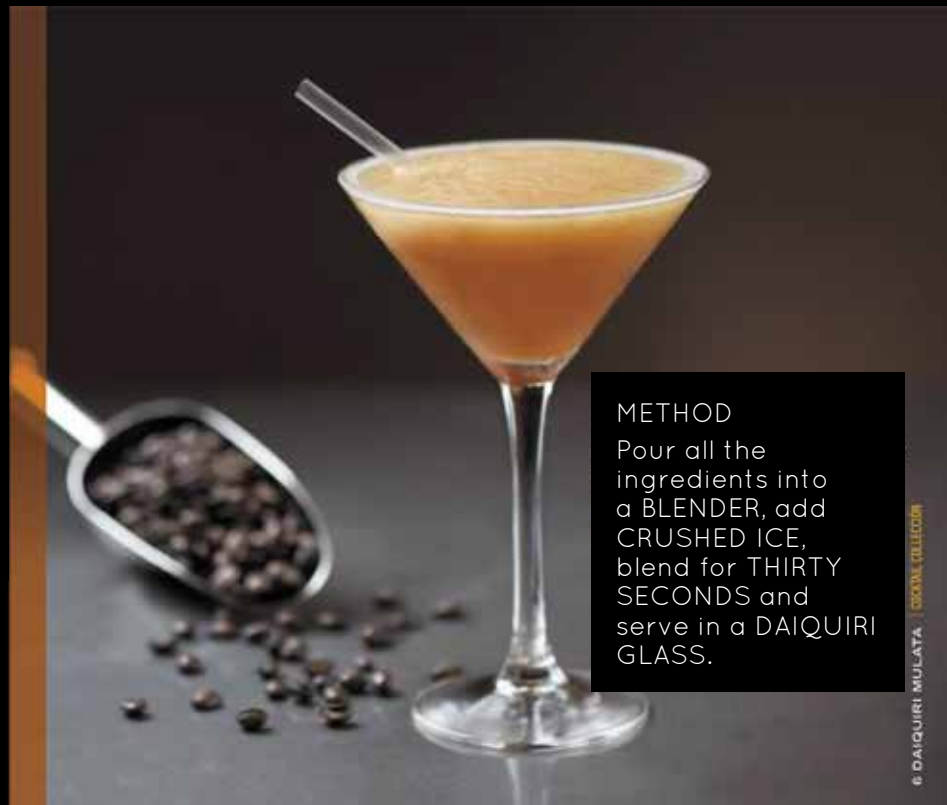
METHOD

Pour all the ingredients into a BLENDER, add crushed ICE, blend for THIRTY SECONDS and serve in a DAIQUIRI GLASS.

4 OLD ROSE DAIQUIRI | © 2015 HAVANA CLUB

6 DAIQUIRI MULATA

- ◇ 1 teaspoon of SUGAR
- ◇ 15ml of LIME JUICE
- ◇ 30ml of COFFEE LIQUEUR
- ◇ 45ml of HAVANA CLUB Añejo 7 Años.



METHOD

Pour all the ingredients into a BLENDER, add CRUSHED ICE, blend for THIRTY SECONDS and serve in a DAIQUIRI GLASS.

6 DAIQUIRI MULATA | © 2015 HAVANA CLUB



METHOD

Pour all the ingredients into a SHAKER, add ICE CUBES, shake for 30 seconds and serve in a DAIQUIRI GLASS.

7 HOT DAIQUIRI

- ◇ 1 teaspoon of SUGAR
- ◇ 15ml of fresh LIME juice
- ◇ 60ml HAVANA CLUB Añejo 7 Años
- ◇ 1 cayenne CHILI.

7 HOT DAIQUIRI | COCKTAIL COLLECTION



PREMIUN

RUM AND COCKTAILS

“Havana Club 7 Años AROMA DOES NOT VANISH IN TIME, nor is altered when mixed with juices, sodas or water. Havana Club 7 Años is always unmistakably there, with an IRRESISTIBLE TASTE.”

Alfonso C.
DON JOSE NAVARRO
PRIMER MAESTRO AÑEJERO





Cocktail, Anyone?

by Margaret Atkins

Early in 1805, Mr. Federico Tudor arrived in the Port of Havana. Known as the King of Ice, he convinced the Spanish authorities to allow him to open an establishment that would sell ice in Cuba. By mixing ice, rum, sugar and lemon, and a sprig of *hierba buena* (a variety of mint), the quintessential Cuban cocktail was born. It is said that soldiers of the Liberation Army would tie a container to the pommel of their saddles that contained two-thirds rum or spirits and one third lemon or sour orange juice. Whenever they could they would sweeten it with sugar or honey.

The 19th century brought us a drink similar to the one we now call Cuba Libre, which was the combination of rum and cola, and the Daiquiri (rum, lemon and sugar poured over crushed ice, often embellished with a dash of maraschino) invented in the Daiquiri Mines in Oriente Province. The miners, but especially the engineers, would frequently drink this cocktail after work and they taught the barmen at the Venus de Santiago Hotel how to prepare it with rum, lemon and ice. From there it spread all over the country until it arrived at the Floridita Bar in Havana, which was already a working establishment since 1819 but didn't attain its world-recognized reputation until after the US intervention of 1902. That's where Hemingway would drink his Hemingway Special: a daiquiri without sugar and with a double measure of rum

over ice. Legend says that the writer would spend long hours in the bar and that he would average 12 drinks per day.

In 1910 other famous cocktails made their debut: Mojito, Jai Lai, Rum Fizz, the Santiago and the Presidente. The 1920s were the heyday for Cuban cocktails since the effects of the US Prohibition Act resulted in many American hotel, bar, casino, cabaret and restaurant owners moving their businesses to Havana. There was a veritable explosion of Cobblers, Daisies and Collins. A long list of drinks bearing the names of actors, singers, countries and capital cities made their appearance: the Cuban Manhattan, the Santiago Special and the Mary Pickford that was a delightful concoction of rum, pineapple juice and grenadine.

These days a virtually endless variety of mixtures are being shaken together in many establishments all over Cuba. Some are typically Cuban and others belong to the repertoire of international cocktails; many more have been born by fusing the two. The drinks have delicious fruit juices, an assortment of colors and any of the many varieties of rum available. The art of the drink in Cuba is alive and well, from the straightforward aged rum-on-the-rocks right up to the complicated 7-ingredient mixes. You can't get away from it: you absolutely have to come and try them.

Here's a sample of Cuban cocktails for you to try at home:

BARACOA

Combine in a glass:

- 1 teaspoonful of sugar
- 4 spoonfuls of white rum

Add:

1/2 cup of coconut milk

ice cubes

Stir and serve.

ISLA DE PINOS

Combine in a glass:

- 1 spoonful of grapefruit juice
- 1/2 teaspoonful of sugar
- 4 spoonfuls of white rum

Shake with chipped ice before serving.

CERVEZA ESPECIAL

Combine in a chilled cocktail glass:

- 2 teaspoonfuls of sugar
- 3 spoonfuls of pineapple, orange, tangerine, melon or grapefruit juice
- 1 spoonful of lemon juice
- 4 spoonfuls of rum

Add:

1 ice cube

Stir and add:

1 bottle of beer, chilled

Stir and serve.

HEMINGWAY

Combine in a glass:

- 1 spoonful of grapefruit juice
- 1/2 teaspoonful of sugar
- 4 spoonfuls of white rum

Shake with chipped ice before serving.





Coffee chez Bianchini's

by Ricardo Alberto Pérez

photo Y. del Monte



For some time now, the prospect of going out in Havana for coffee has become a much more noteworthy event. Both Cubans and visitors are catching on to that pause in the day, whether it's from work-related activities or tourism, to sit back and enjoy a cup of coffee. Cuban coffee itself continues to be excellent but now we have new places where we can indulge ourselves to a cup and at the same time accompany the ritual with the delights of patisserie and a wide range of desserts.

Part of the transformations that are springing up in the Island, private businesses have been creating original new venues, places that are ideal for spending a wonderful time and enjoying some great conversation.

We have recently discovered the charms and mysteries of two such coffee shops in the historical center of Havana: Bianchini's. These are the brainchild of an enterprising woman named Katia Bianchini who has been living in Cuba since the age of ten. Her background is a mixture of Italian and Swiss and she is opening our eyes and appetites to the unexpected fantasies of the kingdom of desserts and baked goods. With her talents she also calls on some of our native products such as cacao from Baracoa and some fruits that have been dried in a special process by her and her collaborators.

Katia says that her passion for baking goes far back, to the days of her childhood when her mother taught her how to make desserts. In her home, it was a tradition to make bread, whole-wheat biscuits and croissants and there was a definite ecological tendency in her family. This special gift was honed in the home but inevitably it became more public.

She has some interesting tales to tell, among them anecdotes about her father who is now living in Italy and insists on using solar energy. That summarizes the spirit and the philosophy that reigned in her upbringing, something she transmits to us via the choices she makes in favor of natural products.

The first of her businesses, the one that tends to be the most popular and has more accessible prices, is on Calle Sol No. 12, a few meters from the refurbished Avenida del Puerto; the second establishment is at San Ignacio No. 68, Plaza de La Catedral, very close to the experimental graphic arts studio/workshop. Both attractive shops bear her very personal touches.

In the late afternoon, at Bianchini's on calle Sol, we can enjoy an espresso or cappuccino and witness the rambunctiousness of school kids who have just ended their school day and have stopped by for frozen yoghurt accompanied with cookies, syrup and fruit. Tourists also appreciate this and other refreshing drinks that allow them to catch their breath and give them the energy to continue exploring Havana.



There is an original image of a cat presiding over these shops; its tail is a sprig of wheat and it seems to reaffirm the natural philosophy of the project. Cats have become the messengers of good vibrations and they have been turned into delicious ginger cookies. Katia's son designed that cat, a sweet-toothed creature which is both mischievous and hospitable.

The interior decoration of each shop is contemporary in its simplicity and it succeeds in making customers feel very much at home. The menu is written on the walls which are hung with charcoal sketches. Katia has also puts a lot of thought into her selection of the china being used: she tells us with a chuckle that friends consider her to be more of a designer than a baker and she acknowledges that design has always fascinated her.

Katia Bianchini confesses that the way her products turn out is very much influenced by the way they are made, in a pleasant, congenial atmosphere and in a process that is almost like the creation of works of art. Some of the most outstanding items coming from the hand and imagination of Katia are muffins, quiches, cookies, choux-pastries, Paris-Brest, lemon meringue pie, Torte Kiev, croissants and Torte Katia.

You can also order take-out items and so it becomes possible to enjoy these delightful creations in the comfort of our own homes.





King Coconut in Havana

by Ricardo Alberto Pérez

It could very well be that the number-one refreshing drink for most Cubans is “agua de coco,” or coconut milk. It’s natural, exotic and has unique properties when it comes to quenching your thirst and pleasing the most demanding taste buds. I am one of those privileged people who live in a house whose courtyard has several coconut trees. Some of the trees can be as tall as a Royal Palm and these have bright green fruit. I can remember learning how to climb up along the trunk to collect the coconuts which we would rip off their branches by the dozen.

The ritual then ensued: the fruit was allowed to “rest” until we could open up its armored shell that, to our anxious imaginations, seemed to be equipped with two dark round eyes. We would then administer a hard blow and the liquid would start to flow. Some preferred to spontaneously tip the coconut to their mouths and others would collect the water in jugs or glasses, planning to drink it later on at their leisure.

Nowadays as we stroll around Havana we might be surprised to see how visible “coconut water” has become, and this is a city where drinks and snacks are found everywhere, often in fierce competition with each other. After crossing the street in front of the Inglaterra Hotel and walking through Parque Central, you can take the pedestrian street called

Obispo and immediately run across several street vendors with their coconut milk drinks. Besides offering this well-loved product, the vendors’ carts also provide the appropriate decorations and messages, popular sayings, graffiti and any number of original bits of artwork.

These days, the coconut is not just a spectacle because of its milk or because of the irreverent forms it takes; it has gone to town with in the form of ice cream packed right into the coconut shell. It has become the ideal sweet to accompany you on a walk on some sweltering summer’s day.

There are a number of legends and myths that have grown up around the special combo of coconut milk and rum. They pair up so well together that they inspire all sorts of improvisations. One of these is saoco, a drink made by mixing eleven ounces of white rum and four ounces of coconut milk. Ice is then added and it’s served mixed and in a glass with a straw.

Cuban culinary traditions have coconut desserts in a place of honor: shredding or grinding coconut provides the core of a large number of sweets that get made with either refined or brown sugar. Shredded coconut can also be used as part of other desserts like bread pudding, rice pudding or custards. Many of these can be bought in stores and others are meant to be eaten on indicated dates at family get-togethers.

Lately some new ice-cream parlors have sprung up in Havana. They base their products on using fresh fruits and avoiding chemicals. Coconut has become very much in demand by them since its characteristic taste seems to inspire people to go for a delicious ice cream.

The importance of coconut seems to go on and on. Used for nutritional purposes, medicines and even in beauty products, its shell has inspired remarkable creativity among Cuban artisans who have taken this raw material as the basis for a wide variety of tropical handicrafts.





The Titan Tropic MTB has reached Cuba

by Ricardo Alberto Pérez

A few days ago a real feat of audacity and will concluded in the westernmost part of Cuba. I am referring to the first edition of the Titan Tropic MTB which took place from December 5 to 10. This mountain bike marathon has miraculously moved its usual setting from the sands of Morocco, the site of the Titan Desert, to the fascinating province of Pinar del Río, celebrated the world over for its tobacco plantations.

This biking event welcomed renowned Mountain Bike athletes such as Diego Alejandro Tamayo from Colombia, Luis Leao Pinto from Portugal and Ibón Zugasti from Spain. Also, spectators included fans from all of Cuba and other parts of the world.





There's no doubt that the circuit chosen here in Cuba was spectacular: the diversity of the terrain in Pinar del Rio Province brings together a rich array of landscapes, flora and fauna. We should highlight the points chosen for each stage and the goals at their conclusion. I refer exactly to Las Terrazas, Soroa, El Valle de Viñales, and Cayo Jutía, all veritable paradises for anyone who loves ecology and enjoys the challenge of overcoming the environmental complexities.

The first stage ended at Las Terrazas, a site that follows the banks of the San Juan River in the Sierra del Rosario. The second stage concluded in Soroa, a legendary spot because of its wonderful orchid garden with over 20,000 specimens from 700 different species of orchids, thirty of which are endemic to Cuba. The third stretch led to the Viñales Valley, studded with impressive isolated, steep-sided hills called mogotes and the diversity of its soil that makes it possible for very unique vegetation. The fourth stage took place throughout Viñales and the fifth stage led the participants to Cayo Jutía, a small paradise-like key where endemic bird species and transparent Caribbean waters provide the perfect setting.





We should also point out that the diversity of weather conditions during the competition added yet another complication besides the terrain. It was extremely rainy and the high humidity had the competitors doing their utmost to call on all their skills in order to finish each stage.

December 5 was an unofficial Prologue of sorts for the event, taking 33 kilometers through the various routes in Havana. The next day, the official start took off from Havana, along 88 kilometers of the first stage to Las Terrazas; Diego Alejandro Tamayo from Colombia was the winner. He also won the second stage that stretched along 82 kilometers between Las Terrazas and Soroa.

The third stage covers 118 kilometers and took competitors straight to San Vicente Farm. Spanish athlete José Luis Carrasco dominated this stretch even though Tamayo again came out the winner.

The fourth stage through the Viñales Valley covered 73 kilometers and Carrasco and Diego Alejandro Tamayo again came in together. The fifth and final stage over 68 kilometers between Viñales and Cayo Jutía was won by another Colombian, Roberto Bour with Tamayo coming in second and being crowned the overall champ.





In the separate women's race, from the second stage young Cuban athlete Olga Anabel Echenique dominated and won the third stage and, in spite of suffering a bike breakdown, she rallied and came in second thereby holding on to her number one spot. Olga Anabel won the fifth stage, overwhelmed both by her victory and the extraordinary beauty of Cayo Jutía.

Back in Havana, during the awards ceremony that took place on December 11, some of the participants appeared to be exhausted while others were full of vigor as always. In any case, everyone felt transformed somehow because they had had a very positive experience, one that would remain for a long time in their memories.





Contaminación

Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes. Edificio de Arte Cubano

THROUGH
FEBRUARY 25

Altavoz contra la pared, retrospective of installations and sculptures by Esterio Segura.

THROUGH
FEBRUARY 14

El eco del último disparo, focuses on the changes occurred in the artistic production between the 19th and 20th centuries Curator Delia María López points out classical composition, the representation of historic events and basic elements of academic art.

THROUGH
JANUARY 18

Catedrales, installation by Los Carpinteros.

THROUGH
JANUARY 19

José Antonio Medina Soto: arte y oficio de ilustrar, exhibition of illustrations and sketches for books.

Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Wifredo Lam

THROUGH
JANUARY 29

25 años de Galería Continua, installations by artists Anish Kapoor, Shilpa Gupta, Subodh Gupta, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Daniel Buren, Carlos Garaicoa, Ilya y Emilia Kabakov, Moataz Nasr, Nari Ward, Mona Hatoum, Leandro Erlich, Pascale Martine Tayou, Kader Attia, Jannis Kounellis, Chen ZhenSislej Xhafa, among others

Estudio Galería Los Oficios

THROUGH
JANUARY 17

“¡De que van, van!” Exhibition of works by Zaida del Río, Nelson Domínguez, Roberto Fabelo, Flora Fong, Ever Fonseca, Ernesto Garcíapeña, Isavel Gimeno, Alberto Lescay, Manuel López Oliva, Manuel Mendive, Ileana Mulet, Pedro Pablo Oliva, Rafael Paneca, Cosme Proenza, Eduardo Roca (Choco), Julia Valdés, Luis Miguel Valdés, and José Villa.



Factoría Habana

THROUGH
JANUARY 15

Signos. Arte e industria y viceversa, which has been conceived as an installation that brings together objects, texts, artefacts, photos, ceramics, graphic works, video and printed materials, aims at emphasizing creative experiences in which a balanced fusion between art, design and industry, and elements of the urban and architectural environment takes place through the works of Carlos José Alfonzo, Juan Carlos Alom, Félix Beltrán, Alberto J. Carol, Gonzalo Córdoba, María Victoria Caignet, EMPROVA, Cirenaica Moreira, Miguel Díaz, Felipe Dulzaides, Leandro Feal, Mario Gallardo, Mario García Joya (Mayito), Carmelo González, Roberto Gottardi, Arturo Infante y Renier Quert, Nicolás Guillén Landrián, Roberto Matta, Ernesto Oroza, Amelia Peláez, Manuel Piña, René Portocarrero, Idelfonso Ramos, Leyden Rodríguez, Mariano Rodríguez, Humberto Solás y Héctor Veitía, Lesbia Vent Dumois, as well as the projects Ediciones en Colores, TELARTE, Arte en la Fábrica, Arte en la Carretera and Arte en el Muro.

Arte Continua

THROUGHOUT
JANUARY

Anclados en el territorio is a group show by Alejandro Campins, Elizabet Cerviño, Susana Pilar Delahante, Carlos Garaicoa, Reynier Leyva Novo and José Yaque.

Biblioteca Pública Rubén Martínez Villena

OPENS
JANUARY 8

Estrellas is a group show of posters by artists of various generations who depict the theme of stars.

Castillo de La Punta

THROUGHOUT
JANUARY

Cubo azul. After newly inaugurating the institution, Rachel Valdés' Cubo azul installation forms part of the permanent exhibition; it was a success at the "Detrás del Muro" show during the 12th Biennale of Havana.

Casa Carmen Montilla

OPENS
JANUARY 28

(re)visitaciones, show by Diana Balboa, who uses maps included in paintings, prints and installations to delve into today's Cuba.

Casa Oswaldo Guayasamín

THROUGHOUT
JANUARY

Reencuentro is a show by Irene Sierra Carreño, an artist who has been absent from the exhibition circuit in Cuba for 14 years, will exhibit 21 painting and 3 drawings marked by symbols of the Cuban and Caribbean identities.

Centro Hispano Americano de Cultura

▶ THROUGHOUT JANUARY **La Vasija 2015** is an exhibition of vessels, tiles, panels and murals presented in competition. They praise the origins of ceramics, whose origin lay in vessels, but these contemporary artists give them a whole new twist.

Galería Artis

▶ THROUGH JANUARY 11 **Eco** is a show bringing together work by Ricardo Rafael Villares, one of the most interesting figures of the young Cuban vanguard.

Galería Collage Habana

▶ THROUGH JANUARY 29 **Registros** shows the work of Santiago Rodríguez Olazábal, part of the Elena Velázquez collection. Curator Corina Matamoros has said: "Solely the imaginary Caribbean could spawn something like these. So far from the orthodox, the universal, the pure, the clear-cut. So close to the local, the diverse, mobility, mixture, fluidity. Things that are infinitely and forever reconfigured. Like the African spirit in Cuban art, it is intimate and mysterious."

Galería Galiano

▶ THROUGH JANUARY 4 **Paciencia** is Adislén Reyes' one-man show, prize-winner at Post-it 2. The jury praised the printmaking technique proposed, with the continuous use of iconography and the masterful use of photographic techniques.

Galería Habana

▶ THROUGH JANUARY 15 **Verbum II** Iván Capote's one-man show: Capote is a subtle minimalist who always forces us to use our intellect.

Galería Servando Cabrera Moreno

▶ THROUGHOUT JANUARY **Apología del color**, an exhibition of paintings and sculptures by Michel V. Meulenert.

Galería Taller Gorria

▶ THROUGHOUT JANUARY **Asamblea** is the group show of ten Cuban visual artists; it inaugurates this new gallery belonging to actor/painter Jorge Perugorria.

Galería Víctor Manuel

▶ THROUGHOUT JANUARY **Gramos**, with pieces by metalsmith Raúl Valladares.

Palacio de Lombillo

▶ THROUGH JANUARY 10 **Resurgir**, by artist Roniel Llerena Andrade, gathers 11 oil paintings of various formats, which combine, in one sole image, the female face and Havana architecture.

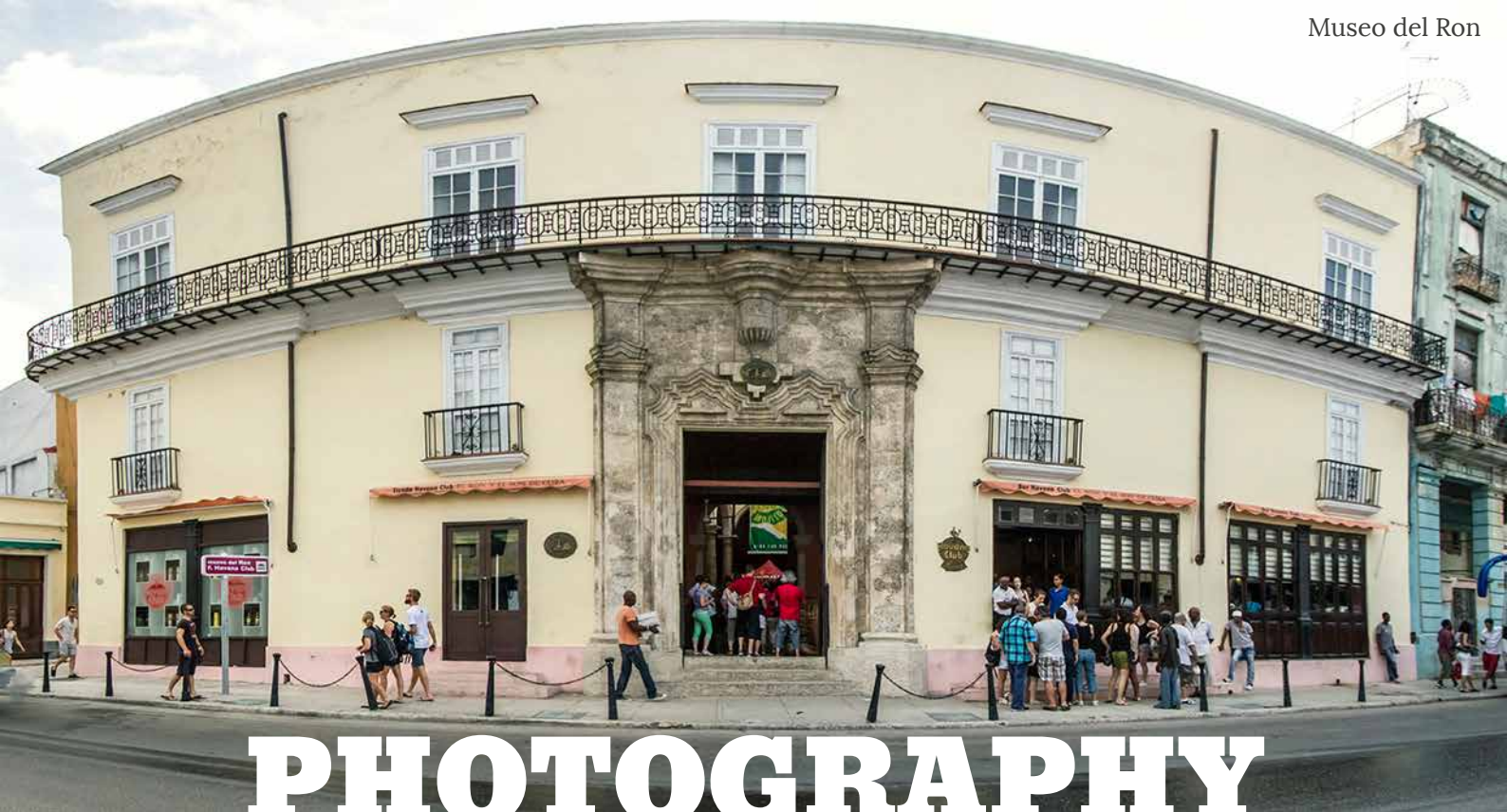
Palacio del Segundo Cabo

▶ THROUGH MARCH 31 **Bocetos de Zanelli para el Capitolio Nacional.** The exhibition includes the 10 original sketches sculpted in plaster by the Italian master Angelo Zanelli in 1929, made especially for the sculptures and main portico of the Capitolio Building.
It includes the great statue of The Republic; the two titans flanking the steps, Work and Virtue; and the seven friezes of the central portico, allegorical to the march of the Cuban people for freedom and democracy.

Galería Orígenes.

Gran Teatro de La Habana Alicia Alonso

▶ THROUGHOUT JANUARY **Plus**, group show by 23 prize-winning Cuban artists, who will exhibit paintings, collages, sculptures...using various techniques, mediums and aesthetics which characterize contemporary Cuban art.



PHOTOGRAPHY

Museo del Ron

THROUGH JANUARY 10

The Elliott Erwin Havana Club 7 Fellowship, photographs depicting the first years of the Cuban Revolution as well as its legacy down to the present from an anthropological and cultural perspective.

Centro Cultural Bertolt Brecht

THROUGH
JANUARY 24

Acento en el ojo gives us memorable scenes from Cuban theater, captured by the lens of Ernst Rudin.

Edificio de Arte Cubano.
Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes

THROUGH
FEBRUARY 15

Moments of the Human Condition by the well-known US photographer Peter Turnley: his photos have appeared 43 times on the cover of Newsweek and he has published seven books. The show is organized in four sections: Heart of America, A Love Letter to Paris, In Times of War and Peace, and Cuba ~ A Grace of Spirit.

Galería Carmen Montilla

THROUGH
JANUARY 17

Testimonios habaneros, by Colombian photographer Eliana Aponte, exhibits around thirty photographs in different formats depicting Cuban life today.

Museo Casa Natal de José Martí

OPENS
JANUARY 28

De Martí a Fidel, de Dos Ríos al Moncada, Hasta la Victoria Siempre. Julio Larramendi exhibits photographs of monuments and sites from all over Cuba related to José Martí.

Palacio de Lombillo

OPENS
JANUARY 8

Habana clásica sensual is an exhibition by Gabriel Dávalos, one of Cuba's most interesting photographers today. He combines images of the city with the beauty and grace of ballet dancers.



Coming Home

Zenon Dance Company

January 15-16, 8:30pm; January 17, 5:30pm
Teatro Martí

One of the most important contemporary dance groups in the United States, the Zenon Dance Company, will perform for the first time in Cuba. The company is recognized for its stylistic diversity and the emotional intelligence of its dancers.



Centro Prodanza

December 5, 8:30pm; Dec. 6, 5:30pm
Teatro Martí

A selection of the music and dances of previous performances by the Ecos flamenco company.



Giselle

Ballet Nacional de Cuba

January 8-9, 8:30pm; January 10, 5:30pm
Gran Teatro de La Habana Alicia Alonso

The splendidly refurbished Gran Teatro de La Habana Alicia Alonso reopens with Giselle in the adaptation by the Ballet Nacional de Cuba.

MUSIC

CONTEMPORARY FUSION



Los Ángeles
Photo Alex Mene

The contemporary fusion and electronic music scene has expanded recently as new bars and clubs have opened party promoters have organized events in parks and public spaces. Good live music venues include Bertolt Brecht (Wed: Interactivo, Sunday: Déjà-vu) and El Sauce (check out the Sunday afternoon Máquina de la Melancolía) as well as the newly opened Fábrica de Arte Cubano which has concerts most nights Thursday through Sunday as well as impromptu smaller performances inside.

In Havana's burgeoning entertainment district along First Avenue from the Karl Marx theatre to the aquarium you are spoilt for choice with the always popular Don Cangreco featuring good live music (Kelvis Ochoas and David Torrens alternate Fridays), Las Piedras (insanely busy from 3am) and El Palio and Melem bar—both featuring different singers and acts in smaller more intimate venues.



José María Vitier en concierto

January 30, 8:30pm
Teatro Martí

Concert by pianist and composer José María Vitier, whose style often combines the classical and Cuban folk music styles. Some of his most remarkable works are his compositions for the Cuban film *Fresa y Chocolate*, and his Cuban mass.

Balneario Universitario El Coral

FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS 1pm-1am	Electronic music with rapping, DJing, Vjing, Dj-producers, breakdancing and graffiti writing, among other urban art expressions.
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Café Concert El Sauce / 5 pm

SUNDAYS	La Máquina de la Melancolía, with Frank Delgado and Luis Alberto García
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Tercera y 8

MONDAYS 11 pm	Baby Lores
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Barbaram Pepito's Bar / 5 pm

TUESDAYS	Los Francos
SUNDAYS	Discoteca Onda Retro

Centro Cultural Bertolt Brecht / 11 pm

WEDNESDAYS	Interactivo
SATURDAYS	David Blanco

Gato Tuerto

SATURDAYS 10 pm	Tenor Bernardo Lichilín and DJ Eddy Sánchez
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Submarino Amarillo

MONDAYS 9pm	Miel con Limón
SATURDAYS 2pm	Vieja Escuela

Havana Hard Rock / 6 pm

EVERY OTHER FRIDAY	Soul Train, a show of soul music
SAT & SUN	Rock cover bands

Diablo Tun Tun

FRIDAYS 5 pm	Proyecto Lizzy
SATURDAYS 11 pm	Gens

Salón Rosado de La Tropical

FRIDAYS 9 pm	Electronic music with Sarao,
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Photo Alex Mene

SALSA / TIMBA

Casa de la Música de Miramar

MONDAYS	5 pm Will Campa 11 pm Sur Caribe
FRIDAYS	11 pm NG La Banda
SUNDAYS	5 pm Bamboleo

Salón Rojo del Hotel Capri

SUNDAYS	11 pm Juan Guillermo
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Café Cantante. Teatro Nacional

MONDAYS	11 pm Manana Club
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Salón Rosado de la Tropical

SUNDAYS	4 pm Manana Club
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Casa de la Música Habana

WEDNESDAYS	5 pm NG La Banda
SUNDAYS	5 pm Yaser & Nueve Milímetros

Jardines del 1830

FRIDAYS 10 pm	Azúcar Negra
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Tercera y 8

WEDNESDAYS 11 pm	Alain Daniel
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MUSIC

JAZZ



Jazz Café

Mellow, sophisticated and freezing due to extreme air conditioning, the Jazz Café is not only an excellent place to hear some of Cuba's top jazz musicians, but the open-plan design also provides for a good bar atmosphere if you want to chat. Less intimate than La Zorra y el Cuervo – located opposite Melia Cohiba Hotel.

DECEMBER 9 | 7pm / Luz de La Habana



Café Jazz Miramar

Shows: 11 pm - 2am

This new jazz club has quickly established itself as one of the very best places to hear some of Cuba's best musicians jamming. Forget about smoke filled lounges, this is clean, bright – take the fags outside. While it is difficult to get the exact schedule and in any case expect a high level of improvisation when it is good it is very good. A full house is something of a mixed house since on occasion you will feel like holding up your own silence please sign! Nonetheless it gets the thumbs up from us.

Asociación Cubana de Derechos de Autor Musical

JANUARY 21
6 pm

Alexis Bosch (pianist) and Proyecto Jazz Cubano.

UNEAC

JANUARY 21
5 pm

Peña La Esquina del Jazz hosted by showman Bobby Carcassés.

Jardines del Teatro Mella / 8pm

WEDNESDAY

Zule Guerra (singer) & Blues D' La Habana

MUSIC BOLERO, FOLKLORE, SON & TROVA

Asociación Yoruba de Cuba

FRIDAYS 8:30 pm	Obbiní Batá(folkloric group)
SATURDAYS 4 pm	Los Ibellis (folkloric group)

Café Cantante, Teatro Nacional

SATURDAYS 5pm	Waldo Mendoza
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Café Teatro Bertolt Brecht / 4 pm

JANUARY 30	Rafael Espín and guests
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Casa de África

JANUARY 16 3pm	Cheketé, with the folkloric group Obini Batá
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Casona de Línea

SUNDAYS 8 pm	Trova
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Casa del Alba

JANUARY 14	8pm / Eduardo Sosa
JANUARY 15	4pm / Annie Garcés

Delirio Habanero / 10 pm

SATURDAYS	Sonyku
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Museo de Artes Decorativas / 5pm

JANUARY 6	Argelia Fragoso
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Teatro Mella

JANUARY 23	8:30pm / Concert by Vocalité
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Diablo Tun Tun

THURSDAYS	5 pm / Trova
SUNDAYS	5 pm / Orly Núñez 11 pm / Soneros de la Juventud

El Jelengue de Areíto / 5 pm

TUESDAYS	Conjunto Chappottín
WEDNESDAYS	Trova
THURSDAYS	Conjunto Arsenio Rodríguez
FRIDAYS	Rumberos de Cuba
SUNDAYS	Rumba

Hotel Telégrafo

FRIDAYS 9:30 pm	Ivette Cepeda.
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Hurón Azul, UNEAC

SATURDAYS 9 pm	Bolero Night
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Pabellón Cuba / 4pm

FRIDAYS	Tres Tazas with trovador Silvio Alejandro
SATURDAYS	Participo with trovador Juan Carlos Pérez

Fresa y Chocolate

SATURDAYS	9pm / Leo Vera
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Centro Iberoamericano de la Décima

JANUARY 2	3pm / Duo Ad Libitum
JANUARY 31	5pm / El Jardín de la Gorda with trovadors from every generation.



Tradicionals of the 50's

A Cuban Music Project Introducing the Show

"A 1950's Cuban Evening"

GUESTS: BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB AND AFROCUBAN ALL STARS MEMBERS & CUBA'S SHOW WOMAN JUANA BACALLAO

Traditionals of the 50's, a project created over 10 years ago, pays tribute to the Golden Era of Cuban music: the 1950s.

If you come to Havana, share this experience with us. Visit us. Visit Cuba

Venue: Sociedad Rosalía de Castro, Egido 504 e/ Monte y Dragones, Old Havana. Daily from 9:30pm.

You can write to us at:

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or our Facebook inbox for a reservation or further information.

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rumba ★ guaguancó ★ guaracha ★ son ★ bolero ★ cha-cha-chá ★ conga

CLASSICAL MUSIC



Basílica Menor de San Francisco de Asís

JANUARY 9 6 pm	Saxophonist Javier Zalba, pianist María del Hénar Navarro and flutist José E. Zalba-Smith will play works by O. Taktakishvili, Javier Zalba, Paul Creston, Paul Boneau and Astor Piazzolla.
JANUARY 16 6 pm	Concert by Trío Lecuona
DECEMBER 19 6 pm	Concert by countertenor Frank Sánchez Ledesma, winner of the Les Voix Humaines competition, and guests

Biblioteca Nacional José Martí

SATURDAYS 4 pm	Concerts by chamber soloists and ensembles.
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Sala Covarrubias. Teatro Nacional

SUNDAYS 11 am	Concerts by the National Symphony Orchestra.
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Centro Hispano-Americano de Cultura

JANUARY 16 5 pm	The ENA Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Marisol Cao Milán, will play several themes from musicals and films, Cuban songs, and pop and rock songs
JANUARY 30 5 pm	The Ébanos de La Habana wind quartet announces a program of works by Mozart and Villa-Lobos, among other

Iglesia de Paula / 7 pm

JANUARY 8	Violinist Gersia Sánchez will play works by Cuban virtuoso Claudio José Domingo Brindis de Salas, known as the Black Paganini.
JANUARY 22	Concert by the ENA Baroque Orchestra conducted by Laura Valdés and Yulnara Vega.

Casa del ALBA Cultural

JANUARY 3	5pm Concert with Ensamble de Vientos Nueva Camerata
JANUARY 10	5pm En Confluencia, conducted by guitarists Eduardo and Galy Martín.

Oratorio San Felipe Neri

JANUARY 9	4pm Chamber music concert by students of the Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA).
JANUARY 14	7pm Violinist and composer Jenny Peña with members of the ISA Symphony Orchestra with play works by Brahms and Schubert, as well as contemporary Cuban music
JANUARY 16	4pm Pianists Víctor Díaz and Harold Merino, accompanied by the ISA Symphony Orchestra, will perform Mozart's concerto No. 21 and 23 for piano and orchestra
JANUARY 21	4pm Concert by pianist Lianne Vega, who will play works by young Cuban composer Ernesto Oliva
JANUARY 28	7pm ISA Symphony Orchestra
JANUARY 30	4pm Concert by Gabriel Chorens (piano), Elio Hernández Rojas (French horn), Indira Hechavarría (soprano) and Luis Javier (tenor), who will perform works by Franz Schubert.

Sala Gonzalo Roig. Palacio del Teatro Lírico Nacional

JANUARY 27	5pm Cuerda Dominical, with guitarist Luis Manuel Molina.
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Sala Ignacio Cervantes / 6 pm

JANUARY 17	Panorama pianístico de compositores cubanos, a concert by pianist Yanner Rascón.
JANUARY 31	Performance of arias, duos, trios and quartets from Rigoletto and La Bohème by soloists from the Daejeon Opera, from South Korea, and the Teatro Lírico Nacional.

Casa Victor Hugo

JANUARY 29	5pm Duo Cáliz, made up by Luis Manuel Molina (guitar) and Vicente Monterrey (clarinet).
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Teatro Musical / Anfiteatro de La Habana

SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS	9pm Musical Aladino, based on Broadway's hit. Choreography by Casey Nicholaw, music by Alan Menken and lyrics by Howard Ashman, Tim Rice and Chad Beguelin.
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Decamerón

Teatro El Público / Production: Carlos Díaz
Fridays & Saturdays 8:30pm; Sundays 5pm
Teatro Trianón

Several stories from Giovanni Boccaccio's The Decameron are put onstage with more than a hint at Cuba today. Those who expect nudity galore from Carlos Díaz are in for a surprise.

El maestro y la ninfa

Teatro del Silencio / Production: Rubén Sicilia
Opens January 8, Fridays and Saturdays,
8:30pm; Sunday, 5pm
Sala Tito Junco. Centro Cultural Bertolt Brecht

According to producer and playwright Rubén Sicilia, this play depicts a “primordial, mythical situation.”

Volvió una noche

Compañía Teatral Rita Montaner / Production:
Fernando Quiñones
Fridays and Saturdays, 8:30pm; Sundays, 5pm
Sala El Sótano

A musical comedy by Argentinian playwright Eduardo Rovner, who won the Casa de las Américas Award in 1991.

Jura decir la verdad

January 8-9, 8:30pm; January 10, 5pm
Teatro Karl Marx

Comedy show with Ulises Toirac.

Protocolo

Argos Teatro / Production: Gema R. Lirola
January 9, 8:30pm; January 10, 5pm; January
15-16, 8:30pm; January 17, 5pm
Sala Argos Teatro

Set in a Mediterranean Spanish city, Petra, the Mayor, and her husband, the doctor, see life through a rose-colored glass, but suddenly Africa bursts in placid Europe—a disease triggers panic, and with it past mistakes are disinterred.

El deseo

Compañía Hubert de Blanck / Production:
Orietta Medina
Fridays and Saturdays 8:30pm; Sundays 5pm
Sala Hubert de Blanck

A play by Mexican playwright Víctor Hugo Rascón Banda about the conflicts of the relationship between a middle-aged woman and a young man, in which cultural differences overpower sex and passion.

Night Club

Ludwig Teatro
Friday and Saturday, 8:30pm; Sunday, 5pm
Café Teatro. Centro Cultural Bertolt Brecht



La cucarachita Martina

Teatro El Arca

Opens January 8, Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, 3pm

Teatro de Títeres El Arca

Magic and illusionism, aerial cloth, lassos and whips, jugglers, balancing with spades and knives, and the always faithful clowns Tico and Giobi, will delight both kids and adults.



Circo Nacional de Cuba

Saturdays and Sundays, 4pm and 7pm

Carpa Trompoloco

Jugglers, contortionists, Strongman Trio, balancing objects, fire-eaters, magic and illusionism, and clowns are just some of the attractions of the National Circus.

EVENTS IN HAVANA



Taller Práctico Internacional de la Danza Moderna Cubana, Cubadanza

January 4–15
Teatro Nacional de Cuba

The two-week long International Workshop on Cuban Modern Dance, Cubadanza, aimed at professional dancers and students, teaches different Cuban popular rhythms and dances from which Cuban modern dance draws on and shows how the pelvic region and the undulation of the torso, among other characteristics, are the fundamental basis of the Cuban technique of modern dance. According to the availability of the company for the period in which the workshop will take place, it will be possible to attend rehearsals and demonstrative lessons with first dancers of Danza Contemporánea de Cuba.



FolkCuba

January 18–31
Teatro Nacional de Cuba

Sponsored by the Conjunto Folklórico Nacional de Cuba, the two-week long FolkCuba, International Folklore Laboratories is held with experts in Cuban folklore dances teach Cuban dances and music of African and Spanish origin, as well as the principal Cuban percussion instruments. The “secrets” of mambo, cha-cha-cha, rumba, mozambique, pilón, conga, and dances and drum beating related to African religious rites are revealed by outstanding figures of the Conjunto Folklórico Nacional de Cuba.



II Conferencia Internacional Con Todos y para el Bien de Todos

January 25–28
Palacio de Convenciones

The conference will seek to encourage and systematize a pluralistic debate and put José Martí's staunchly ethical thinking at the service of a dialogue for building understanding about the need for policies to eradicate poverty and promote social inclusion, promote the capacities of education and culture to develop human beings that can fulfill themselves as individuals in their supportive relationship with their peers, foster a balance in the relations of societies with each other and with ecosystems, and assert the ethical importance of the principle of unity.

XX Taller Científico de Antropología Social y Cultural Afroamericana

January 5–8
Historic Center of Old Havana

The opening of the cultural year at Havana's Historical Center will be marked by the 20th Workshop on Afro-American Social and Cultural Anthropology with the presence of academicians and researchers.

Casa de África

JANUARY 5	9:30am Opening of the 20th Workshop on Afro-American Social and Cultural Anthropology. Opening of Los ojos de la esperanza, an exhibition by photographer Alfredo Cannatello. Opening of Memoranza, an exhibition by photographer Elio Delgado.
	11am Lecture on inter-religion in Cuba. Opening of Iconografía del legado africano en la cultura del coleccionismo, an exhibition by philatelist Roberto Arango.
JANUARY 6	10am Speech by Eusebio leal on the 30th anniversary of the opening of the Casa de África Museum. Performance by Daysi Brown and vocal group Obaaranle. Opening of La travesía más larga, an exhibition by artist Ramón Vargas.
	11am Lecture on spelling difficulties of Spanish words of African origin by Gema Valdés. Screening of the documentary Acere Crúcoro.
	6pm Ecos de dioses, a performance by Espacio Abierto.

Plaza de San Francisco

JANUARY 6	2:30pm Epiphany: Recalling an old tradition, the Afro-Cuban Council will tour the principal plazas of the Historic Center. Performances by children and youth ensemble under the Quisicuba Sociocultural Project, comparsa El Alacrán, comparsa Compondores de Batea, the Piquete de Santiago de las Vegas, and African students in Cuba.
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Plaza Vieja

JANUARY 6	4:30pm Cultural gala with the performance of Síntesis and the JJ Dance Company.
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Casa de África

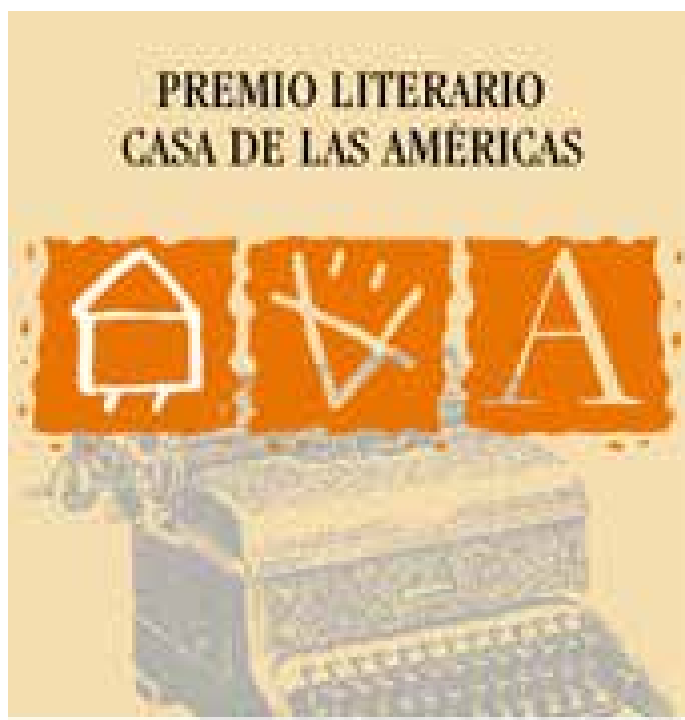
JANUARY 7	9am Lecture on Africa, its peoples and its interpretational complexities by Jesús Guanche.
JANUARY 8	9:30am Opening of Almas de mis talleres, an exhibition by Italian photographer María Giulia Alemanno. Opening of Ancestros, an exhibition by artist Alexis Cardona.
	6pm Closing ceremony of the 20th Workshop on Afro-American Social and Cultural Anthropology



EVENTS IN HAVANA

LVII Premio Casa de las Américas

January 18–28
Havana and Cienfuegos



Initiated in Havana in 1960 to draw attention to the most significant literary production in Latin America—and at a later date, the Caribbean, too—in the genres of poetry, novel, short story, essay, theatre and testimony, as well as works in other languages spoken in the region, the Casa de las Américas Literary Award has gathered outstanding figures of contemporary writing. Throughout the years, many of the prize-winning works have become classics of the continent's literature; thus, each year's announcement creates great expectations among the public, who also have the opportunity to attend collateral activities programmed during the event. Prizes will go to short stories, theater, artistic-literary essays, studies about native American cultures, Brazilian literature (with non-fiction works written and published in Portuguese from 2014 to 2015), and Caribbean literature in French or Creole (with books published from 2012 to 2015). Once more, Casa de las Américas will give out three honorary prizes—the José Lezama Lima Prize for Poetry; the José María Arguedas Prize for Narrative; and the Ezequiel Martínez Estrada Prize for Essay. 2015 prize-winning books will be launched during the event. The books are:

<http://www.casadelasamericas.org>

Poetry

Bajo el brillo de la luna
Nelson Romero Guzmán (Colombia)

Novel

La hoguera lame mi piel con cariño de perro
Adelayda Fernández Ochoa (Colombia)

Essay on a social and historical theme

Cuba, año 2025
Juan M. Ferrán (Cuba)

Children's literature

El niño congelado
Mildre Hernández (Cuba)

Brazilian literature

Minha vida sem banho
Bernardo Ajzenberg

Latino literature in the United States

Un kilómetro de mar
José Acosta (Dominican Republic)

José Lezama Lima Prize for Poetry

La novela de la poesía
Tamara Kamenszain (Argentina)

José María Arguedas Prize for Narrative

El libro uruguayo de los muertos
Mario Bellatin

Ezequiel Martínez Estrada Prize for Essay

Intelectuales indígenas en Ecuador, Bolivia y Chile.
Diferencia, colonialismo y anticolonialismo
Claudia Zapata Silva (Chile).



XX Encuentro Nacional de Trovadores Longina

January 6–10

Santa Clara

In remembrance of one of the greats of traditional Cuban trova, Manuel Corona, and his immortal song “Longina,” trovadores of different generations and from all over Cuba have shared the stage for several years during the Festival de la Trova Longina. The program includes concerts, the usual pilgrimage to the grave of Corona and impromptu performances characteristic of bohemian environment. Approximately 30 trovadores, most of them young, will participate in this year’s festival with around 20 performances and concerts. A new space dedicated to music production will be inaugurated during this edition. It will be running from January 7 to 9 and will offer workshops on various topics related to this field, focusing on the figure of the trovador.

EL CONFORT DE LA BUENA FORMA, LA EXCLUSIVIDAD DE LO PURO, LA DIFERENCIA EN LO ÚTIL, LA RAREZA EN LO SIMPLE ...



VENTA EN EXCLUSIVA DE ARTISTAS Y DISEÑADORES CUBANOS



CONGA ARTE & DISEÑO

3ra. No.1604 e/16 y 18. Miramar. La Habana

LUNES-SABADO
9:30AM-1:00PM
2:00PM-6:00PM

 conga arte y diseño
Telf.: 72042117

Havana's best places to eat

La Guarida

El Atelier

★5

EXPERIMENTAL FUSION

Interesting décor, interesting menu.

Calle 5 e/ Paseo y 2, Vedado
☎(+53) 7-836-2025

La California

★5

CUBAN-CREOLE/INTERNATIONAL

Beautiful C19 colonial building. Great fresh pastas.

Calle Crespo #55 e/ San Lázaro y Refugio, Centro Habana
☎(+53) 7-863 7510

El Cocinero

★5

INTERNATIONAL

Industrial chic alfresco rooftop with a buzzing atmosphere

Calle 26, e/ 11 y 13, Vedado.
☎(+53) 7-832-2355

La Fontana

★4

INTERNATIONAL

Consistently good food, attentive service. Old school.

Calle 46 #305 esq. a 3ra, Miramar
☎(+53) 7-202-8337

Nautilus

★5

FRENCH/MEDITERRANEAN

Imaginative, tasty and innovative menu.

Calle 84 #1116 e/ 11 y 13. Playa
☎(+53) 5-237-3894

Otra Manera

★5

INTERNATIONAL

Beautiful modern decor. Interesting menu and good service.

Calle #35 e/ 20 y 41, Playa.
☎(+53) 7-203-8315

Santy

★5+

SUSHI/ORIENTAL

Authentic fisherman's shack servicing world-class sushi.

Calle 240A #3023 esq. a 3ra C, Jaimanitas
☎(+53) 5-286-7039

Bella Ciao

★5

HOMELY ITALIAN

Great service, good prices. A real home from home.

Calle 19 y 72, Playa
☎(+53) 7-206-1406

La Casa

★5

CONTEMPORARY FUSION

VIP service. The Robaina family place. Thurs Sushi night.

Calle 30 #865 e/ 26 y 41, Nuevo Vedado
☎(+53) 7-881-7000

Corte Príncipe

★5+

ITALIAN

Sergio's place. Simple décor, spectacular food.

Calle 9na esq. a 74, Miramar
☎(+53) 5-255-9091

Habana Mia 7

★5

INTERNATIONAL GOURMET

Endless summer nights. Excellent food and service.

Paseo #7 altos e/ 1ra y 3ra. Vedado
☎(+53) 7-830-2287

Nazdarovie

★5+

SOVIET

Well designed Soviet décor, excellent food & good service.

Malecon #25, 3rd floor e Prado y Carcel, Centro Habana
☎(+53) 7-860-2947

Río Mar

★5

INTERNATIONAL

Contemporary décor. Great sea-view. Good food.

Ave. 3raA y Final #11, La Puntilla, Miramar
☎(+53) 7-209-4838

Starbien

★5+

SPANISH/MEDITERRANEAN

Fabulous food and great service in the heart of Vedado.

Calle 29 #205 e/ B y C, Vedado
☎(+53) 7-830-0711

Café Bohemia

★5

CAFÉ

Bohemian feel. Great sandwiches, salads & juices

Calle San Ignacio #364, Habana Vieja

Casa Miglis

★5

SWEDISH-CUBAN FUSION

Oasis of good food & taste in Centro Habana

Lealtad #120 e/ Ánimas y Lagunas, Centro Habana
☎(+53) 7-864-1486

Il Divino

★4+

INTERNATIONAL

Set in huge gardens outside town. Great for the kids.

Calle Raquel, #50 e/ Esperanza y Lindero, Arroyo Naranjo
☎(+53) 7-643-7734

Iván Chef

★5+

SPANISH

Brilliantly creative and rich food.

Aguacate #9 esq. a Chacón, Habana Vieja
☎(+53) 7-863-9697

Nero Di Seppia

★5

ITALIAN

The new location for Havana's best pizza chef, Walter. Same food, great locale.

Calle 6 #122 e/ 1ra y 3ra, Miramar
☎(+53) 5-478-7871

San Cristóbal

★5

CUBAN/CREOLE

Deservedly popular. Consistently great food. Kitsch décor.

San Rafael #469 e/ Lealtad y Campanario, Centro Habana
(+53) 7-860-9109

VIP Havana

★5

SPANISH

Jordi's place. Fabulous modern open-plan space.

Calle 9na #454 e/ E y F, Vedado
☎(+53) 7-832-0178

Café Laurent

★4+

SPANISH/MEDITERRANEAN

Attractive penthouse restaurant with breezy terrace.

Calle M #257, e/ 19 y 21, Vedado
☎(+53) 7-831-2090

El Chanchullero

★5

SPANISH/MEDITERRANEAN

Fabulous value hole in the wall tapas. Trendy.

Teniente Rey #457 bajos, Plaza del Cristo, Habana Vieja
☎(+53) 7-872-8227

D. Eutimia

★5+

CUBAN/CREOLE

Absolutely charming. Excellent Cuban/creole food.

Callejón del Chorro #60C, Plaza de la Catedral, Habana Vieja
☎(+53) 7 861 1332

El Litoral

★5+

INTERNATIONAL

Watch the world go by at the Malecón's best restaurant.

Malecón #161 e/ K y L, Vedado
☎(+53) 7-830-2201

Opera

★5

INTERNATIONAL

Homely & intimate environment. Quality food. By reservation.

Calle 5ta #204 e/ E y F, Vedado
☎(+53) 5-263-1632
(+53) 8-31-2255

304 O'Reilly

★5

INTERNATIONAL

Chic, stylish. Superb gin & tonic. Best in Old Havana.

O'Reilly #304 e/ Habana y Aguiar, La Habana Vieja
☎(+53) 5-264-4725

El Templete

★5-

SPANISH/MEDITERRANEAN

Overlooking harbor. Good quality but expensive.

Ave. del Puerto #12 esq. a Narciso López, Habana Vieja
☎(+53) 7-866-8807

La Guarida

www.laguarida.com

★ 5+

TOP PICK ★

Style of food Contemporary fusion

Cost Expensive

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ambience ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Service ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Value ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for Authentic, charming and intimate atmosphere in Cuba's best known restaurant. Great food, professional. Classy.

Don't Miss Uma Thurman, Beyoncé or the Queen of Spain if they happen to be dining next to you.

Concordia #418 e/ Gervasio y Escobar, Centro Habana.

☎ (+53) 7-866-9047

El Litoral

★ 5+

TOP PICK ★

Style of food International

Cost Expensive

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ambience ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Service ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Value ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for Quality décor, good service and great food. Best new place recently opened.

Don't Miss Drinking a cocktail at sunset watching the world go by on the Malecón

Malecón #161 e/ K y L, Vedado.

☎ (+53) 7-830-2201

Nazdarovie

★ 5+

TOP PICK ★

Style of food Soviet

Cost Moderate

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ambience ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Service ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Value ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for Getting a flavor of Cuban-Soviet history along with babuska's traditional dishes in a classy locale.

Don't miss Vodka sundowners on the gorgeous terrace overlooking the malecon.

Malecon #25 3rd floor e/ Prado y Carcel, Centro Habana

☎ (+53) 7-860-2947

Santy

★ 5+

TOP PICK ★

Style of food Sushi

Cost Moderate

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ambience ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Service ★ ★ ★ ★

Value ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for Fabulous sushi, wonderful ambience overlooking fishing boats heading out to sea. World class.

Don't miss Getting a reservation here.

Calle 240A #3023 esq. 3raC, Jaimanitas

☎ (+53) 5-286-7039

Café Bohemia

★ 5+

TOP PICK



Style of food Traditional

Cost Moderate

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ambience ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Service ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Value ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for perfect for taking a break from long walks and seeking shelter from the stifling Cuban.

Don't miss location in the cool inner courtyard of the colonial building.

Ground floor of the Palacio de la Casa del Conde de Lombillo, Calle San Ignacio #364
(+53) 5- 403-1568, (+53) 7-836-6567
www.havanaboheemia.com

Iván Chef Justo

★ 5+

TOP PICK



Style of food Spanish

Cost Expensive

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ambience ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Service ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Value ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for Spectacular innovative food. Light and airy place where it always seems to feel like Springtime.

Don't Miss The lightly spiced grilled mahi-mahi served with organic tomato relish. Try the suckling pig and stay for the cuatro leches.

Aguacate #9, Esq. Chacón, Habana Vieja.
☎ (+53) 7-863-9697 / (+53) 5-343-8540

Casa Miglis

★ 5

TOP PICK



Style of food Swedish-Cuban fusion

Cost Expensive

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ambience ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Service ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Value ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for The beautifully designed interior, warm ambience and Miglis's personality create the feeling of an oasis in Central Havana.

Don't Miss Chatting with Mr Miglis. The Skaargan prawns, beef Chilli and lingonberries.

Lealtad #120 e/ Ánimas y Lagunas, Centro Habana
☎ (+53) 7-864-1486

Habana Mía 7

★ 5

TOP PICK



Style of food International gourmet

Cost Moderate

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ambience ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Service ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Value ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for Stylish and fresh décor give a Mediterranean feel for long endless summer nights. Excellent food and service.

Don't miss Watching the world go by on the lovely terrace overlooking the ocean.

Paseo #7 altos e/ 1ra y 3ra, Vedado
☎ (+53) 7-830-2287
www.habanamia7.com

La California

★5

TOP PICK ★



Style of food Cuban-Creole/International

Cost Moderate

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★★★★★

Ambience ★★★★★

Service ★★★★★

Value ★★★★★

Best for Beautiful C19 colonial building. Popular place with quality food and great service. Love the fresh pastas.

Don't Miss The interesting history of the neighbourhood, where Chano Pozo (legendary Afro-Cuban jazz percussionist) hung out.

Calle Crespo #55 e/ San Lázaro y Refugio, Centro Habana

☎ (+53) 7-863-7510

Atelier

★5

TOP PICK ★



Style of food Experimental fusion

Cost Expensive

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★★★★★

Ambience ★★★★★

Service ★★★★★

Value ★★★★★

Best for Interesting menu, beautiful building with great décor and service.

Don't miss Dinner on the breezy terrace during summer.

Calle 5ta e/ Paseo y 2, Vedado

☎ (+53) 7-836-2025

atelierdedecuba@yahoo.es

La Casa

★5

TOP PICK ★



Style of food International/sushi

Cost Expensive

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★★★★★

Ambience ★★★★★

Service ★★★★★

Value ★★★★★

Best for Warm hospitality and openness from the four generations of the Robaina family. Quality food.

Don't miss Thursday night sushi night. The Piña Colada.

Calle 30 #865 e/ 26 y 41, Nuevo Vedado.

☎ (+53) 7-881-7000

alerobaina@restaurantelacasacuba.com

Otramanera

★5

TOP PICK ★



Style of food International

Cost Moderate

Type of place Private (Paladar)

Food ★★★★★

Ambience ★★★★★

Service ★★★★★

Value ★★★★★

Best for Beautiful modern décor and good food.

Don't miss Pork rack of ribs in honey. Sweet & sour sauce and grilled pineapple

Calle 35 #1810 e/ 20 y 41, Playa

☎ (+53) 7-203-8315

otramaneralahabana@gmail.com

reservas@otramaneralahabana.com



NAZDAROVIE



Authentic Soviet restaurant overlooking the Malecón

Pelmeni, goluptsi, solianka, borscht, blini, stroganoff and vareiniki

Staffed by the Soviet women who stayed in Cuba & their sons & daughters



★ Authentic Soviet style

★ Beautiful sea view

★ Superb Soviet food

Malecón #25, 3rd floor
e/ Prado y Cárcel, Centro Habana

(+53) 7-860-2947

www.nazdarovie-havana.com

Havana's best Bars & Clubs

Traditional Bars

El Floridita ★4+

Hemingway's daiquiri bar. Touristy but always full of life. Great cocktails.

Obispo #557 esq. a Monserrate, Habana Vieja

☎(+53) 7-867-1299

1950s Traditionals ★5

GUEST PERFORMERS INCLUDE BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB MEMBERS

Sociedad Rosalía de Castro, Egido 504 e/ Monte y Dragones, Old Havana

☎(+53) 5-270-5271

Sloppy Joe's Bar ★4+

Recently (beautifully) renovated. Full of history. Popular. Lacks a little 'grime'.

Ánimas esq. a Zulueta, Habana Vieja

☎(+53) 7-866-7157

Cervecería ★5+

ANTIGUO ALMACÉN DE LA MADERA Y EL TABACO

Microbrewery located overlooking the restored docks. Simply brilliant.

Avenida del Puerto y San Ignacio, La Habana Vieja

Contemporary Bars

El Cocinero ★5+

Fabulous rooftop setting, great service, cool vibe.

Calle 26 e/ 11 y 13, Vedado

☎(+53) 7-832-2355

Espacios ★5-

Laid back contemporary bar with a real buzz in the back beer-garden.

Calle 10 #510, e/ 5ta y 31, Miramar

☎(+53) 7-836-3031

TaBARish ★5

A comfortable place to chat / hang out with your friends. Great service.

Calle 20 #503, e/ 5ta y 7ma.

☎(+53) 7-202-9188

Fábrica de Arte ★5+

X Alfonso's new cultural center. Great concerts, funky young scene.

Calle 26 e/ 11 y 13, Vedado (next to the Puente de Hierro)

☎(+53) 5-329-6325
www.facebook.com/fabrica.deartecubano

Contemporary bars/clubs

Don Cangrejo ★4+

Love it/hate it—this is the oldest Friday night party place and is still going strong. Outdoor by the sea.

Ave. 1ra e/ 16 & 18, Miramar

☎(+53) 7-204-3837

Bolabana ★5

Packed night after night with a young dressed-up clientele wanting to party. Don't go looking for Buena Vista Social Club!

Calle 39 esq. 50, Playa

☎(+53) 5-294-3572

Up & Down ★5

From the team that brought you Sangri-La. Attracting a young party crowd, very popular. Take a coat.

Calle 3ra y B, Vedado

Sangri-La ★5

For the cool kids. Basement bar/club which gets packed at weekends.

Ave. 21 e/ 36 y 42, Miramar

☎(+53) 7-264-8343

Other

Sarao's Bar ★4

Bohemian attracting a hip Cuban crowd. Excellent DJ's keep the place jumping.

Calle 17 e/ E y F, Vedado, La Habana

☎(+53) 7-832-0433

El Gato Tuerto ★4+

Late night place to hear fabulous bolero singers. Can get smoky.

Calle O e/ 17 y 19, Vedado

☎(+53) 7-833-2224

El Tocatoro ★4+

Expat favorite hangout. Small indoor bar with live music and eclectic clientele.

Calle 18 e/ 3ra y 5ta, Miramar

Bertolt Brecht ★5

Think MTV Unplugged. Hip, funky and unique with an artsy Cuban crowd.

Calle 13 e/ I y J, Vedado

☎(+53) 7-830-1354

Gay-friendly

Cabaret Las Vegas ★4

Can get dark and smoky but great drag show (11pm) from Divino—one of Cuba's most accomplished drag acts.

Infanta #104 e/ 25 y 27, Vedado.

☎(+53) 7-870-7939

El Sauce ★5-

Mellow outdoor club.

Avenida 9na #12015, e/ Calles 120 y 130, Miramar.

(07) 204-6428

Fashion Bar Havana ★5

A superb example of queer class meets camp, accompanied by a fantastic floor show.

San Juan de Dios, esq. a Aguacate, Habana Vieja

☎(+53) 7-867-1676

Café Bar MádriGal ★4

Pop décor, fancy cocktails, and the staff's supercilious attitude, this is a gathering spot for all types of folks.

Calle 17 #809 e/ 2 y 4, Vedado

☎(+53) 7-831-2433

Bertolt Brecht

★ 5

TOP PICK ★



CONTEMPORARY BAR/CLUBS

Ambience ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Popularity ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Entertainment ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Service & drinks ★ ★ ★

Best for Hanging out with hip & funky Cubans who like their live music.

Don't Miss Interactivo playing on a Wednesday evening.

Calle 13 e/ I y J, Vedado

☎ (+53) 7-830-1354

Espacios

★ 5-

TOP PICK ★



CONTEMPORARY BAR

Ambience ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Popularity ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Entertainment ★ ★ ★
Service & drinks ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for Laid back lounge atmosphere in the garden area which often has live music. Good turnover of people.

Don't Miss Ray Fernandez, Tony Avila, Yasek Mazano playing live sets in the garden.

Calle 10 #510 e/ 5ta y 31, Miramar

☎ (+53) 7-202-2921

Sangri-La

★ 5+

TOP PICK ★



CONTEMPORARY BAR/CLUB

Ambience ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Popularity ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Entertainment ★ ★ ★ ★
Service & drinks ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for Hanging out with the cool kids on the Havana Farundula in the most popular bar/club.

Don't Miss The best gin and tonic in Havana.

Ave. 21 e/ 36 y 42, Miramar

☎ (+53) 5-264-8343

Bolabana

★ 5

TOP PICK ★



CONTEMPORARY

Ambience ★ ★ ★ ★
Popularity ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Entertainment ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Service & drinks ★ ★ ★ ★

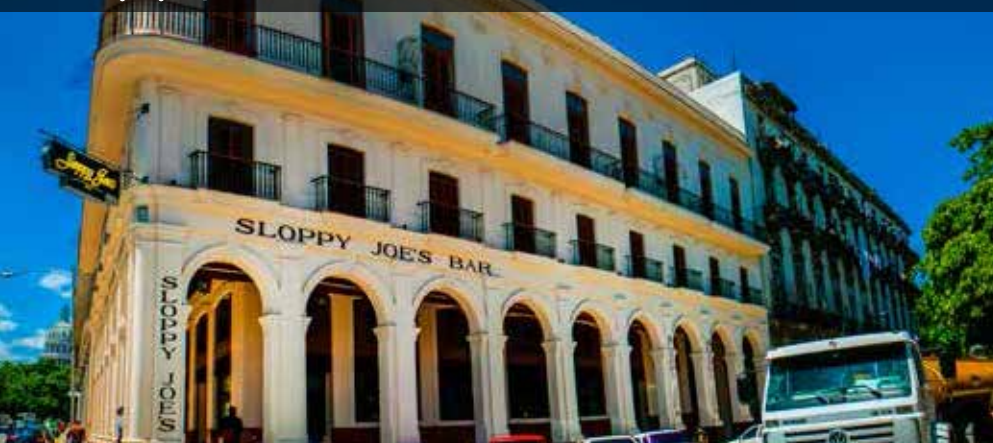
Best for Trendy new location near Sal6n Rosado de la Tropical

Don't Miss Hipsters meet the Havana Far4ndula

Calle 39 esq. 50, Playa

Sloppy Joe's Bar

★ 4+ CA TOP PICK ★



Style Bar / Traditional

Ambience	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Popularity	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Entertainment	★ ★ ★
Service & drinks	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for Immense original bar lovingly restored. Good service, History.

Worst for Not quite grimy. Too clean.

Ánimas, esq. Zulueta La Habana Vieja,

☎ (07) 866-7157

Fábrica de Arte

★ 5+ TOP PICK ★



CONTEMPORARY BAR

Ambience	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Popularity	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Entertainment	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Service & drinks	★ ★ ★ ★

Best for X Alfonso's superb new cultural center has something for everyone

Don't Miss Artists who exhibit work should demonstrate ongoing creativity and a commitment for social transformation.

Calle 26 e/ 11 y 13, Vedado
(next to the Puente de Hierro)

Fashion Bar Havana

★ 5 TOP PICK ★



GAY-FRIENDLY

Ambience	★ ★ ★ ★
Popularity	★ ★ ★ ★
Entertainment	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Service & drinks	★ ★ ★ ★

Best for A superb example of queer class meets camp, accompanied by a fantastic floor show.

Don't Miss The staff performing after 11pm

San Juan de Dios, esq. a Aguacate, Habana Vieja

☎ (+53) 7-867-1676

TaBARish

★ 5 TOP PICK ★



CONTEMPORARY BAR/CLUB

Ambience	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Popularity	★ ★ ★ ★
Entertainment	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Service & drinks	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for A comfortable place to chat / hang out with your friends. Great service.

Don't Miss The homemade Russian soup - just like Matushka makes it.

Calle 20 #503, e/ 5ta y 7ma.

☎ (+53) 7-202-9188



Havana's best live music venues

Concert venues

Karl Marx Theatre ★5

World class musicians perform prestigious concerts in Cuba's best equipped venue.

Calle 1ra esq. a 10, Miramar
☎(+53) 7-203-0801

Basílica San Francisco de Asís ★5

A truly beautiful church, which regularly hosts fabulous classical music concerts.

Oficios y Amargura, Plaza de San Francisco de Asís, Habana Vieja

Fábrica de Arte ★5

X Alfonso's new cultural center. Great concerts inside (small and funky) and outside (large and popular!).

Calle 26 e/ 11 y 13, Vedado (next to the Puente de Hierro)

Sala Covarrubias ★5

TEATRO NACIONAL

Recently renovated, one of Cuba's most prestigious venues for a multitude of events.

Paseo y 39, Plaza de la Revolución.

Jazz

Café Jazz Miramar ★4+

Clean, modern and atmospheric. Where Cuba's best musicians jam and improvise.

Cine Teatro Miramar
10:30pm - 2am
Ave. 5ta esq. a 94, Miramar

Jazz Café ★4

A staple of Havana's jazz scene, the best jazz players perform here. Somewhat cold atmosphere-wise.

Galerías de Paseo
Ave. 1ra e/ Paseo y A, Vedado

La Zorra y el Cuervo ★5

Intimate and atmospheric, this basement jazz club, which you enter through a red telephone box, is Cuba's most famous.

Calle 23 e/ N y O, Vedado
☎(+53) 7-833-2402

Privé Lounge ★5+

Small and intimate lounge club with great acoustics and beautiful decor. Jazz groups play Sunday night.

Calle 88A #306 e/ 3ra y 3raA, Miramar
☎(+53) 7-209-2719

Salsa/Timba

Café Cantante Mi Habana ★4

Attracts the best Cuban musicians. Recently renovated with an excellent new sound system.

Ave. Paseo esq. a 39, Plaza de la Revolución
☎(+53) 7-878-4273

Casa de la Música ★4

CENTRO HABANA

A little rough around the edges but spacious. For better or worse, this is ground zero for the best in Cuban salsa.

Galiano e/ Neptuno y Concordia, Centro Habana
☎(+53) 7-860-8296/4165

Casa de la Música ★4

MIRAMAR

Smaller and more up-market than its newer twin in Centro Habana. An institution in the Havana salsa scene.

Calle 20 esq. a 35, Miramar
☎(+53) 7-204-0447

Salón Rosado de la Tropical ★5

The legendary beer garden where Arsenio tore it up. Look for a salsa/timba gig on a Sat night and a Sun matinee.

Ave. 41 esq. a 46, Playa Times: varies wildly
☎(+53) 7-203-5322

Contemporary

Café Teatro Bertolt Brecht ★5

Think MTV Unplugged when musicians play. Hip, funky and unique with an artsy Cuban crowd.

Calle 13 e/ I y J, Vedado
☎(+53) 7-830-1354

Don Cangrejo ★4+

Love it/hate it—this is the oldest Friday night party place and is still going strong. Outdoor by the sea.

Ave. 1ra e/ 16 y 18, Miramar
☎(+53) 7-204-3837

El Sauce ★5-

Great outdoor concert venue to hear the best in contemporary & Nueva Trova live in concert.

Ave. 9na #12015 e/ 120 y 130, Playa
☎(+53) 7-204-6428

Teatro de Bellas Artes ★4+

Small intimate venue inside Cuba's most prestigious arts museum. Modern.

Trocadero e/ Zulueta y Monserrate, Habana Vieja.

Trova & traditional

Barbaram Pepito's Bar ★4+

Some of the best Cuban Nueva Trova musicians perform in this small and intimate environment.

Calle 26 esq. a Ave. del Zoológico. Nuevo Vedado
☎(+53) 7-881-1808

Gato Tuerto ★4+

Late night place to hear fabulous bolero singers. Can get smoky.

Calle O entre 17 y 19, Vedado
☎(+53) 7-833-2224

Tradicionales de los 50 ★5

The 1950s traditionals, a project created over 10 years ago, pays tribute to the Golden Era of Cuban music: the 1950s.

Sociedad Rosalia de Castro, Egido #504 e/ Monte y Dragones, Habana Vieja
☎(+53) 7-861-7761

Salón 1930 'Compay Segundo' ★4+

Buena Vista Social Club style set in the grand Hotel Nacional.

Hotel Nacional
Calle O esq. a 21, Vedado
☎(+53) 7-835-3896

Havana's Best Hotels



Hotel Nacional de Cuba

Simply the best...

Iberostar Parque Central

★5+

Luxury hotel overlooking Parque Central

Neptuno e/ Prado y Zulueta, Habana Vieja

☎(+53) 7-860-6627

Santa Isabel

★5+

Luxurious historic mansion facing Plaza de Armas

Narciso López, Habana Vieja

☎(+53) 7-860-8201

Saratoga

★5+

Stunning view from roof-top pool. Beautiful décor.

Paseo del Prado #603 esq. a Dragones, Habana Vieja

☎(+53) 7-860-8201

Terral

★5

Wonderful ocean front location. Newly renovated.

Malecón esq. a Ledtad, Centro Habana

☎(+53) 7-862-8061

Boutique Hotels in Old Havana

Florida

★5

Beautifully restored colonial house.

Obispo #252, esq. a Cuba, Habana Vieja

☎(+53) 7-862-4127

Palacio del Marqués...

★5

Cuban baroque meets modern minimalist

Oficios #152 esq. a Amargura, Habana Vieja

Hostal Valencia

★5+

Immensely charming, great value.

Oficios #53 esq. a Obrapia, Habana Vieja

☎(+53) 7-867-1037

Conde de Villanueva

★5

Delightfully small and intimate. For cigar lovers.

Mercaderes #202, esq. a Lamparilla

☎(+53) 7-862-9293

Business Hotels

Meliá Cohíba

★5

Oasis of polished marble and professional calm.

Ave Paseo e/ 1ra y 3ra, Vedado

☎(+53) 7-833-3636

Meliá Habana

★5

Attractive design & extensive facilities.

Ave. 3ra y 70, Miramar

☎(+53) 5-204-8500

Occidental Miramar

★4+

Good value, large spacious modern rooms.

Ave. 5ta. e/ 70 y 72, Miramar

☎(+53) 7-204-3583

H10 Habana Panorama

★4+

Cascades of glass. Good wi-fi. Modern.

Ave. 3ra. y 70, Miramar

☎(+53) 7 204-0100

For a sense of history

Ambos Mundos

★4

A must for Hemingway aficionados

Calle Obispo #153 esq. a Mercaderes, Habana Vieja

☎(+53) 7-860-9529

Mercure Sevilla

★4

Stunning views from the roof garden restaurant.

Trocadero #55 entre Prado y Zulueta, Habana Vieja

☎(+53) 7-860-8560

Hotel Nacional

★5

Eclectic art-deco architecture. Gorgeous gardens.

Calle O esq. a 21, Vedado

☎(+53) 7-835 3896

Riviera

★3

Spectacular views over wave-lashed Malecón

Paseo y Malecón, Vedado

☎(+53) 7-836-4051

Economical/Budget Hotels

Bosque

★3

On the banks of the Río Almendares.

Calle 28-A e/ 49-A y 49-B, Reparto Kohly, Playa

☎(+53) 7-204-9232

Deauville

★3

Lack of pretension, great location.

Galiano e/ San Lázaro y Malecón, Centro Habana

☎(+53) 7-866-8812

Saint John's

★3

Lively disco, tiny quirky pool. Popular.

Calle O e/ 23 y 25, Vedado

☎(+53) 7-833-3740

Vedado

★3

Good budget option with a bit of a buzz

Calle O e/ 23 y 25, Vedado

☎(+53) 7-836-4072

Havana's best private places to stay

Casa Escorial



For Help reserving any Private Accommodation (Casas Particulares) in Cuba please contact sales.cu@cubatravelnetwork.com

Mid range - Casa Particular (B&B)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1932 ★4
Visually stunning, historically fascinating. Welcoming.
Campanario #63 e/ San Lázaro y Laguna, Centro Habana
☎(+53) 7-863-6203 | Miramar 301 ★5
LUXURY HOUSE
4 bedrooms private luxury villa with swimming pool | Habana ★5
Beautiful colonial townhouse with great location.
Calle Habana #209, e/ Empedrado, y Tejadillo, Habana Vieja.
☎(+53) 7-861-0253 | Julio y Elsa ★5
Cluttered bohemian feel. Hospitable.
Consulado #162 e/ Colón y Trocadero, Centro Habana
☎(+53) 7-861-8027 |
|--|---|---|---|

Up-scale B&Bs (Boutique hostals)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Cañaveral House ★5
But undoubtedly the most beautiful about private homes in Cuba
39A street, #4402, between 44 y 46, Playa, La Habana Cuba
☎(+53) 295-5700
http://www.cubaguesthouse.com/canaveral.home.html?lang=en | Vitrales ★5
Hospitable, attractive and reliable boutique B&B with 9 bedrooms.
Habana #106 e/ Cuarteles y Chacón, Habana Vieja
☎(+53) 7-866-2607 | Casa Escorial ★5+
Attractive accommodations with a panoramic view of Plaza Vieja
Mercaderes # 315 apt 3 e/ Muralla y Teniente Rey, Plaza Vieja, Habana Vieja
☎(+53) 5-268 6881; 5-278 6148
maylu21@hotmail.com | Hostal Guanabo ★5
Beautiful 4 bedroom sea-front villa in sleepy Guanabo. Excellent food.
Calle 480 #1A04 e/ 1ra y 3ra, Guanabo
☎(+53) 7-799-0004 |
|--|---|---|--|

Apartment rentals

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| Bohemia Boutique Apartments ★5+
Gorgeous 1-bedroom apartment beautifully decorated overlooking Plaza Vieja.
San Ignacio #364 e/ Muralla y Teniente Rey, Plaza Vieja Habana Vieja
☎(+53) 5- 403-1568
(+53) 7-836-6567
www.havanabohemia.com | Casa Concordia ★5+
Beautifully designed and spacious 3 bedroom apartment. Spanish colonial interiors with cheerful, arty accents.
Concordia #151 apto. 8 esq. a San Nicolás, Centro Habana
☎(+53) 5-254-5240
www.casaconcordia.net | Tropicana Penthouse ★5
A luxurious penthouse with huge roof terrace and breathtaking 360 degree views of Havana and the ocean.
Galiano #60 Penthouse Apt.10 e/ San Lázaro y Trocadero
☎(+53) 5-254-5240
www.tropicanapenthouse.com | Suite Havana ★5
Elegant 2-bedroom apartment in restored colonial building. Quality loft style décor.
Lamparilla #62 altos e/ Mercaderes y San Ignacio, Habana Vieja
☎(+53) 5-829-6524 |
|---|--|---|---|

Luxury Houses

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Villasol ★5
Rent Room elegant and well-equipped. Beautiful wild garden and great pool.
Calle 17 #1101 e/ 14 y 16, Vedado
☎(+34) 677525361
(+53) 7-832-1927
(+53) 5-360-0456 | Casablanca ★5
Elegant well-equipped villa formerly owned by Fulgencio Batista. Beautiful wild garden.
Morro-Cabaña Park. House #29
☎(+53) 5-294-5397
www.havanacasablanca.com | Michael and María Elena ★5
This leafy oasis in western Havana has an attractive mosaic tiled pool and three modern bedrooms.
Calle 66 #4507 e/ 45 y Final, Playa
☎(+53) 7-209-0084 | Residencia Mariby ★5
A sprawling vanilla-hued mansion with 6 rooms decorated with colonial-era lamps, tiles and Louis XV furniture
Vedado.
☎(+53) 5-370-5559 |
|---|--|--|--|

Casa Escorial

★ 5+

TOP PICK



Facilities	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Rooms	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ambience	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Value	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for Attractive accomodations with a panoramic view of Plaza Vieja

Don't Miss The smell of fresh made coffee from the café below.

Mercaderes # 315 apt 3 e/ Muralla y Teniente Rey, Plaza Vieja, Habana Vieja

☎ (+53) 5-268 6881; 5-278-6148
maylu21@hotmail.com

Bohemia Boutique Apartments Blue

★ 5+

TOP PICK



Facilities	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Rooms	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ambience	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Value	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for il internal balcony, 1 spacious bedroom on the mezzanine with air conditioning.

Don't Miss The apartment is fully furnished, plenty of light and very well ventilated.

San Ignacio #364 e/ Muralla y Teniente Rey, Plaza Vieja, Habana Vieja

bohemia.plazavieja@gmail.com

☎ (+53) 5 4031 568; (53) 7 8366 567
www.havanabohemia.com

Bohemia Boutique Apartments Red

★ 5+

TOP PICK



Facilities	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Rooms	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ambience	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Value	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for 3 small balconies (facing the Patio of the Palace), 1 spacious bedroom with air conditioning

Don't Miss The apartment is fully furnished, plenty of light and very well ventilated.

San Ignacio #364 e/ Muralla y Teniente Rey, Plaza Vieja, Habana Vieja

bohemia.plazavieja@gmail.com

☎ (+53) 5 4031 568; (53) 7 8366 567
www.havanabohemia.com

Cañaveral House

★ 5+

TOP PICK



Facilities	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Rooms	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Ambience	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Value	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Best for Large elegant villa away from downtown Havana. Great for families or groups of friends.

Don't Miss Basking in the sun as you stretch out on the lawn of the beautifully kept garden.

39A street, #4402, between 44 y 46, Playa, La Habana Cuba

☎ (+53) 295-5700
<http://www.cubaguesthouse.com/canaveral.home.html?lang=en>