



THE MOB MUSEUM AND THE CUBAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION PRESENT

Hot

HAVANA NIGHTS

“The music is everywhere. Time is an endless round of dark rum and rhumba, light rum and marimbas, for Havana is the mistress of pleasure, the lush and opulent goddess of delights.” – CABARET QUARTERLY, 1956



'THE MISTRESS OF PLEASURE'



Dancers entertain patrons at Havana's Sans Souci nightclub in 1958. (Associated Press)

HAVANA WAS a nightlife powerhouse in the 1950s

The nightlife in pre-Castro Cuba was legendary. As described in a 1956 issue of *Cabaret Quarterly*: "The tourist is caught in a heady torrent of rich laughter and swept along in swirling freshets of gaiety. The music is everywhere. Time is an endless round of dark rum and rhumba, light rum and marimbas, for Havana is the mistress of pleasure, the lush and opulent goddess of delights."

The mix of nightclubs, casinos, cabarets, golf courses, and restau-

rants brought throngs of U.S. tourists to the island. Flights from Miami were less than an hour, and special Cuban flights served drinks and had floor shows on the plane to get the tourists in the mood. Gamblers flocked to the numerous casinos and the massive clubs like the Tropicana, which held more than 8,000 people.

There also was the seedier side, complete with burlesque shows, shag film houses, and brothels. Mixing with the regular tourists were movie stars and celebrities, from Ava Gardner and Frank Sinatra to Mari-

lyn Monroe and George Raft.

Music and dancing were the glue that held the nightlife together. Cuban music stars introduced the rhumba, cha-cha, and salsa to a wider audience. Performers such as Dorothy Dandridge, Cab Calloway, Desi Arnaz, Eartha Kitt, and Nat King Cole were regular fixtures in the nightclubs during the 1950s.

— *Scott Deitch*

CUBAN COCKTAILS

Cuba Libre



IN ESSENCE, the Cuba Libre (Free Cuba) is a rum and Coke with lime juice. But its ties with Cuban history make it one of the most iconic Cuban cocktails. As one story goes, a U.S. Army Signal Corps captain was celebrating the United States' Cuban victory over Spain. He ordered rum with Coke and lime. He toasted "Por Cuba libre!" and a new drink was born.

Some recipes call for a few dashes of Angostura bitters, some have darker rum instead of white rum. However you decide to make this popular Cuban libation, it's a refreshing drink for the dog days of summer.

2 oz. white rum
1 lime
Coca-Cola

Squeeze and drop the lime into a high-ball glass with ice. Add in the rum. Top with Coke and stir briefly. Garnish with a lime wedge or slice. (Photo: nikililtov@123RF.com)

Classic daiquiri



WHEN PEOPLE think of the daiquiri, they often think of premixed icy drinks, super sweet, and served in big glasses with huge straws. But the original daiquiri was much more simple and elegant. It's a mix of rum, lime juice, and simple syrup (sugar and water). The drink was named for a beach and town in Cuba.

The frozen daiquiri was made popular in Havana's El Floridita Bar when bartender Constantino Ribalaigua blended shaved ice into the cocktail. Over the years the term daiquiri has expanded to include a variety of rum-based drinks, but the classic daiquiri is still the best.

2 oz. white rum
1 oz. lime juice
½ oz. simple syrup

Combine rum, lime juice, syrup and ice in a cocktail shaker. Stir vigorously for thirty seconds. Strain into chilled cocktail glass. (Photo: yasuihiroamano@123RF.com)

HEMINGWAY IN CUBA

THE LEGENDARY American writer Ernest Hemingway first visited Cuba in the late 1920s when he was living in nearby Key West, Florida. He moved to Cuba with his third wife, Martha Gellhorn, in 1939 and lived there until 1960.

Hemingway lived in a house in a small town east of Havana called San Francisco de Paula.

His favorite Havana watering holes were the Bodeguita del Medio, where he helped make the mojito famous, and La Floridita bar, home of the daiquiri. He kept his fishing boat, El Pilar, in a village called Cojimar.

Two of Hemingway's best-known novels, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *The Old Man and the Sea*, as well as the memoir *A Moveable Feast*, were written in Cuba.

Today, Hemingway's house, called Finca Vigia (Lookout Farm), is a museum that contains Hemingway's 9,000 books, stuffed animal heads from his

African hunting expeditions and one of his typewriters.

Hemingway did not have much to do with the organized crime figures who dominated Havana's casinos and nightclubs in the 1950s, but his circle of friends during his years in Key West were known as "The Mob," and they all had nicknames when they went on fishing expeditions.

— Geoff Schumacher



Hemingway at Finca Vigia. (Ernest Hemingway Collection, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum)



Papa Doble

(Hemingway Daiquiri)

Hemingway was known for his love of Cuban cocktails. He was a regular at the famed El Floridita bar in Havana, where his favorite drink was this variation on a daiquiri.

2 oz. rum
½ oz. grapefruit juice
½ oz. lime juice
¼ oz. maraschino liqueur

Add ingredients to cocktail shaker with ice. Shake vigorously for thirty seconds. Strain into chilled cocktail glass. Another variation (pictured) can be made by combining the ingredients in a blender with ice and blended until smooth.

(Photo: ivanmateev@123RF.com)

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