



Havana Before Castro: When Cuba was a Tropical Playground

Peter Moruzzi

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Through vintage and contemporary photographs, brochures, postcards, and artifacts evocative of time and place, Havana Before Castro tells the story of the city that was the most popular exotic destination for Americans during the forty years between World War I and Castro's revolution.

See how Havana evolved from America's Prohibition haven and rich man's playground to a heady blend of glittering nightclubs, outrageous cabarets, all-night bars, and backstreet brothels.

Visit Havana's seamy Shanghai Theatre as well as its glamorous Tropicana, Montmartre, and Sans Souci nightclubs.

Linger at La Floridita -- the cradle of the daiquiri cocktail (one of Hemingway's favorite watering holes) -- rub elbows with Frank Sinatra at Sloppy Joe's Bar, and learn why Cuban cigars remain the world's most highly prized.

Follow the parade of corrupt presidents who, along with American mobsters such as Meyer Lansky, welcomed the mass tourism that led to Havana becoming a tropical Vegas swirling in a haze of rum and cigars, backed by a conga beat.

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