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Photograph: Flickr / Richard Hurd

Old Havana, Havana

With its primped up plazas, ragged buildings, baroque churches, alfresco cafés, cool bars, shops, galleries and creative barrios, Old Havana is somewhere you're sucked into and will find it hard to leave. In the last ten years, Havana's historic quarter has emerged from a Communism-induced snooze to become the most exciting part of the 500-year-old Cuban capital. The ancient Spanish colonial roads of tutti-frutti mansions and apartments are packed with roadside music bars, fruit and veg sellers and pedicabs, and picturesque corners smell of crushed fruit, freshly brewed coffee, tobacco and diesel. Stroll the narrow streets to take in its beauty, bravura buildings and daily rhythms.

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DRINK The cool spirits of Havana hang at restaurant El del Frente's alfresco rooftop terrace. Order the Piña Coladas in recycled jars, the house gins, or the Raining Geisha: a vodka, ginger, honey, and cucumber mix for a refresher in the tropical heat.

DO In untouristy southern Old Havana, once the haunt of sex workers and famous Cuban pimp Alberto Yarini, the San Isidro District of Art is reviving historic city streets with street murals festivals and galleries.

STAY With a piano, sofas to lounge on, a plant-filled patio and work by well-known Cuban artists on the walls, Spanish-colonial townhouse apartment Gardens is a beautiful, light urban oasis close to the popular Plaza del Cristo. —*Claire Boobyer*

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Stoneybatter, Dublin

There's nothing new about **Stoneybatter** itself: with its red-brick terraced houses and the regular