



# The Havana Habit

*Gustavo Perez Firmat*

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## **The Havana Habit** Gustavo Perez Firmat

Cuba, an island 750 miles long, with a population of about 11 million, lies less than 100 miles off the U.S. coast. Yet the island's influences on America's cultural imagination are extensive and deeply ingrained.

In the engaging and wide-ranging *Havana Habit*, writer and scholar Gustavo Pérez Firmat probes the importance of Havana, and of greater Cuba, in the cultural history of the United States. Through books, advertisements, travel guides, films, and music, he demonstrates the influence of the island on almost two centuries of American life. From John Quincy Adams's comparison of Cuba to an apple ready to drop into America's lap, to the latest episodes in the lives of the "comic *comandantes* and exotic exiles," and to such notable Cuban exports as the rumba and the mambo, cigars and mojitos, the Cuba that emerges from these pages is a locale that Cubans and Americans have jointly imagined and inhabited. *The Havana Habit* deftly illustrates what makes Cuba, as Pérez Firmat writes, "so near and yet so foreign."

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