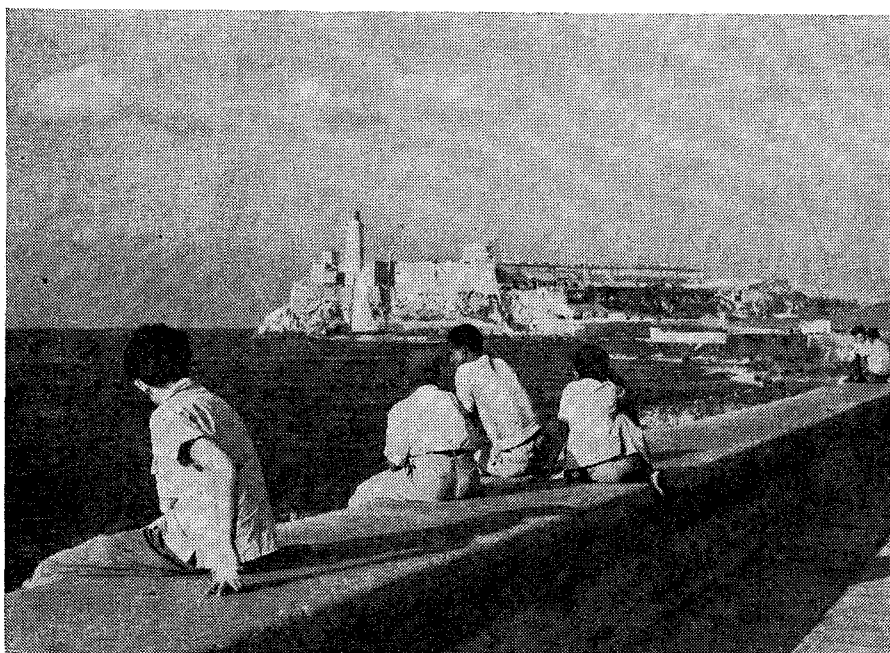




BOOKED FOR TRAVEL

## Chez Papa



—Ewing Galloway.

Along the Malecon, a seawall roadway, with Morro Castle in the distance.

HAVANA. **H**ERE in Cuba five oranges cost five cents (all peeled if you wish), people boil bananas, the lottery is legal, and there is nothing wrong in hissing at a trolley-car conductor, a bus driver, or a waiter should you want to attract their attention. I am not keen about the prospect of eating a boiled banana, or for that matter even looking at one. And it distresses me somewhat to hiss at trolley-car conductors, who, along with Buck Rogers and the Boy Allies, were my personal heroes some decades back. But the idea of hissing at a bus driver or a waiter is tempting indeed, and it is a custom I should like to import to New York.

Strolling through the rambling open market here one finds, besides penny oranges and *platanos*, the big green boilable bananas, such strange edibles as *malanga* and *yuca*, which are roots, and *ñame* (they say *nyamay*), which I suspect is the local version of a yam. Little stalls will keep you from the door of hunger with *enpanadas*, which are like pancakes or Mexican *tacos* and are eaten with meat or sugar. If you eat one without embellishment it becomes a *chivirico*. Also there is the delicacy of *chicharon*, which is the skin of a pig, fried and crisp. And lady-finger bananas, four for a nickel. And *galletas*, a cracker big as a flapjack, at

two cents each. Lottery vendors sporting an assortment of numbers push along the streets interrupting for a passing moment the grizzled Negro veteran who stands in the slime of the market and sings a verse about General Maceo, a colored general who was a hero of the Cuban movement for independence.

These sights and smells are, I like to feel, quite as much a part of Havana as all those things which have been palmed off on the tourists these many years—the nightclubs, the watered perfume, the rum factories that sell banana liqueur, the hotels that charge Miami prices, Morro Castle, and the signs that get confused in their nationality and come out "Pickin' Chicken con papitas fritas."

There is no getting around such bulwarks of Cuban life as, for instance, the cigar. It doesn't matter whether one shines shoes on the steps on the capitol or signs bills inside it, if you are a Cuban you are usually preceded by ten inches of tobacco. Cubans didn't invent cigars, which were an old habit of the Siboney Indians, a tribe that used to inhale tobacco through the nose with the aid of a forked stick of bamboo. Ladies who go around abhorring cigars all the time ought to be thankful that the Siboneys' version didn't last. Housewives the country over would

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be saying things like, "Herman, you take that cigar out of your nose and come here this instant." And heavens knows what it would have meant to Groucho Marx.

Well, the Siboneys and their crazy cigars are all on view in Havana's cigar factory, not to mention a plaster cast of Sir Walter Raleigh and two live gentlemen and one live lady who make cigars before your eyes. The lady unfolds the leaves and the gentlemen roll them into cigars, a process which takes each man three minutes and fifty-six seconds per cigar. Spit, which everyone agreed some years back was a horrid word, is no longer used in cigar making, at least not in those made in the public view. An antiseptic paste has been introduced instead. A full line of cigars is sold at the cigar factory, by the rarest of coincidences, and prices are said to be almost one half of what they are in the U. S. One should be cautioned not to buy the cheroots manufactured for local consumption, which resemble black Roman candles and when lighted give off all the bouquet of a smoke flare. Cubans can smoke these cigars because they take several cups of *cafe negro* each day, or so I have been told by a local authority. *Cafe negro* is a thimbleful of tar-flavored ink sweetened to the consistency of molasses with Cuban sugar. "Clears the throat," my source says, and I believe he means of larynx, epiglottis, trachea, esophagus, and other paraphernalia not absolutely essential to the inhaling of cigars.

Havana's greatest tourist monument is quite likely Sloppy Joe's, a saloon that has stood in great favor

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## The Bargain.

By Ogden Nash

AS I was going to St. Ives  
I met a man with seven  
lives;  
Seven lives,  
In seven sacks,  
Like seven beeves  
On seven racks.  
These seven lives  
He offered to sell,  
But which was best  
He wouldn't tell.  
He swore that any  
Would make me happy  
forever;  
I bought all seven  
And thought I was clever.  
His parting words  
I can't forget:  
Forever  
Isn't over yet.