

# \*\* OUR STORY

A Cuban-Miami Legacy Served One Plate at a Time\*\*

Our story begins in **1959**, a year that changed Cuba forever. When Fidel Castro rose to power, my father — a humble poultry business owner — watched everything he built disappear overnight. The new regime seized private businesses, controlled every aspect of life, and stripped families like ours of the freedom they once knew.

But Cubans are resilient. We dream in color — **teal seas, coral sunsets, gold-lit nights** — even when life turns gray.

For **ten long years**, my father fought for a way out. While he worked in a labor camp, our family waited for permission to leave the island we loved. Finally, in **1970**, we were granted the chance to chase a new beginning.

With nothing but hope, we flew from Havana to Mexico City carrying only the clothes on our backs. My aunt in Miami sent us \$200 — a lifeline that didn't last long. Unable to work legally in Mexico, we made a decision that would define our future.

We took a bus to the border. And in the middle of the night, we crossed the **Rio Grande River holding hands**.

We turned ourselves in to U.S. immigration, and after processing our papers, we heard the words that still echo in my heart:

**“Welcome to America.”**

We reunited with family in Miami, worked hard, went to school, and rebuilt our lives from scratch. In **1975**, we moved to Los Angeles, where my parents opened one of the first Cuban restaurants on the Westside — **The Union**, located where Versailles stands today.

The kitchen glowed with the colors of home: **Cuban Gold** from the plantains, **Coral Red** from the mojo, **Havana Teal** from the tiles we dreamed of.

My mom and uncle cooked. My brothers and I served, delivered food, and learned the meaning of hustle. Soon, Hollywood discovered our flavors. We catered for **MGM Studios** and **Paramount Studios**, and actors from *Starsky & Hutch*, *The Mod Squad*, and more became regulars.

People didn't just love the food — they loved the story behind it.

Eventually, my father sold the restaurant, and each of us began our own ventures. But the legacy — the sacrifice, the courage, the flavors of our island — stayed alive.

**Havana Mania is built on that legacy.** A celebration of Cuban culture, Miami energy, and the belief that food can carry history forward.

When you dine with us, you're not just enjoying a meal. You're tasting our family's journey — our colors, our memories, our Cuba.

**Bienvenidos a Havana Mania. Where every dish tells a story.**