



# Cuba Diaries: An American Housewife in Havana

*Isadora Tattlin*

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## **Cuba Diaries: An American Housewife in Havana** Isadora Tattlin

Isadora Tattlin was accustomed to relocating often for her husband's work. But when he accepted a post in Cuba in the early 1990s, she resolved to keep a detailed diary of her time there, recording her daily experiences as a wife, mother, and foreigner in a land of contraband. The result is a striking, rare glimpse into a tiny country of enormous splendor and squalor. Though the Tattlins are provided with a well-staffed Havana mansion, the store shelves are bare. On the streets, beggars plead for soap, not coins. A vet with few real medical supplies operates on a carved mahogany coffee table in a Louis XIV-style drawing room. The people adore festivity, but Christmas trees are banned. And when Isadora hosts a dinner party whose guest list includes Fidel Castro himself, she observes the ultimate contradiction at the very heart of Cuba. Vividly capturing Cuba's simultaneously appalling and enchanting essence, *Cuba Diaries* casts an irresistible spell and lifts the enigma of an island that is trapped in time, but not in spirit.

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