

Mojito Magic

By Tracy Donohue

Photo by Brett Mountain

Café Habana, tucked away in the Bastone complex in downtown Royal Oak, is a lively eatery that celebrates the sophisticated and cool vibrance of pre-Castro Cuba. The café's ambience is southern hemisphere rustic chic, with Cuban photographs and retro magazine covers adorning the walls, and funky chandeliers dangling from the open ceilings.

Under the culinary talents of Bastone complex Chef Robert Young, the menu features delicious Cuban and southern hemisphere cuisine. The creative dishes emphasize garlic, mint, plantains and sugar cane. Café Habana also offers a selection of one of Cuba's oldest cocktails. The mojito (pronounced mo-HEE-toe) originates from the African word "mojo," meaning to place a little spell. Try conjuring up a festive pineapple mojito at home, or stop by Café Habana for a taste.

PINEAPPLE MOJITO

3-5 fresh mint leaves

1 chunk or cube of pineapple

1-2 lime wedges

2 tablespoons Stirrings Simple Syrup

5 tablespoons Malibu Coconut Rum

Club soda

Pineapple juice

In a tall 12-ounce glass, add 3-5 fresh mint leaves, a small cube of pineapple, 1-2 lime wedges and 2 tablespoons of Stirrings Simple Syrup. Using a wooden muddler (or the handle of a wooden spoon) muddle or gently crush the ingredients just enough to bruise the mint and release the flavors. Add 5 tablespoons of Malibu Coconut Rum, fill the glass with ice, top with club soda, and add a splash of pineapple juice.

Café Habana, 248.544.6255.

