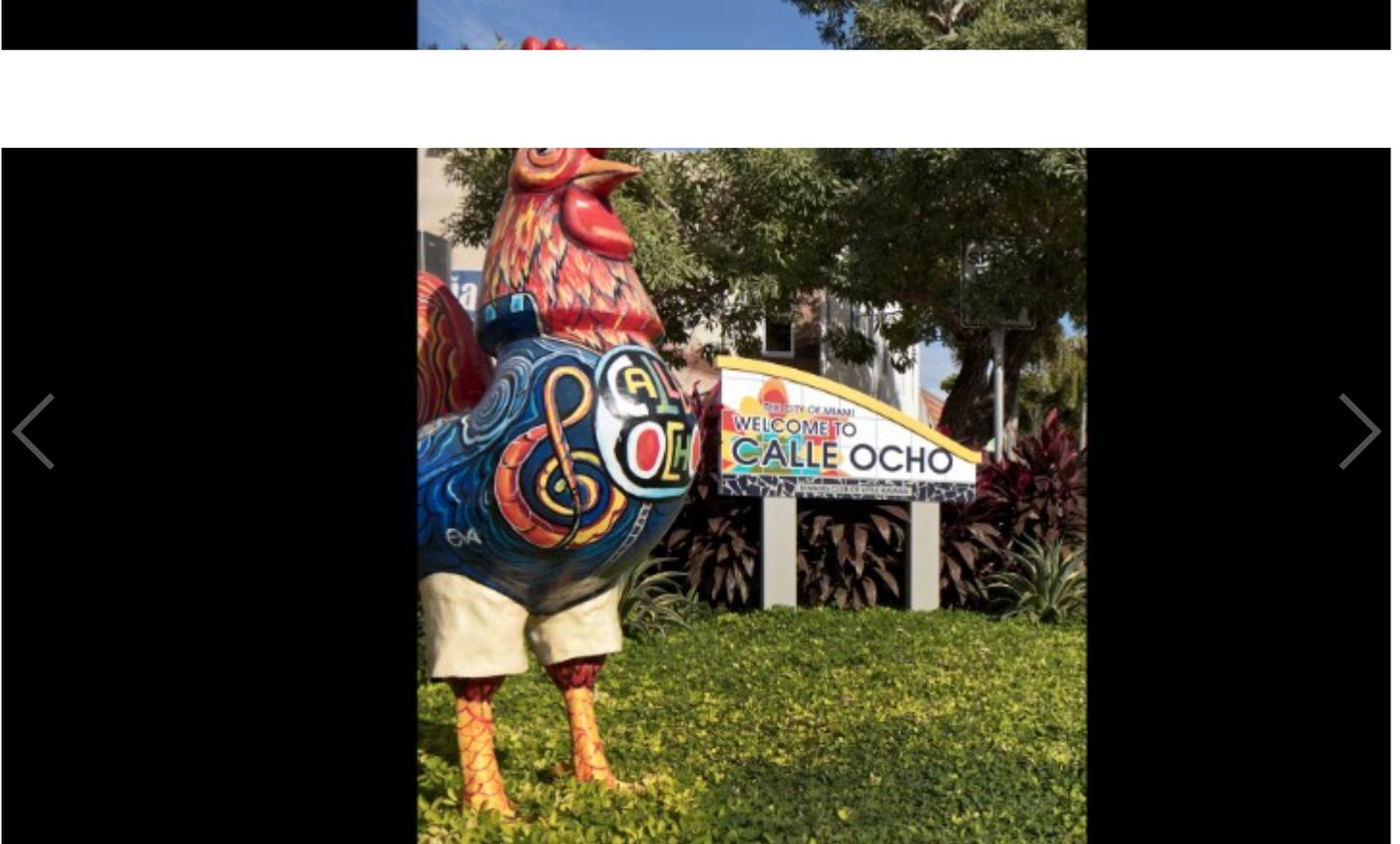


# Miami's Little Havana declared a 'national treasure'

By **Katia Hetter**, CNN

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**Photos:** Little Havana: The heart of Cuban community in exile

The Miami neighborhood of Little Havana has been declared a "national treasure" by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and several local partners. Click through the gallery to see life in the community:

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## Story highlights

Little Havana became the heart of the Cuban community in exile

Cuban restaurants, shops now serve South Florida's larger Latin American community

immigrants from other parts of the Americas.

**(CNN)** — Little Havana: It's the Miami neighborhood whose name conjures up so much.

It's where politicians of every stripe have gone for decades to condemn the Cuban government and secure the Cuban-American vote. [It's where people danced in the street](#) after former [Cuban leader Fidel Castro](#) died on November 25.

When waves of Cubans fled their homeland after the 1959 revolution and in the decades that followed, many headed to the neighborhood that is still the emotional center of Miami's Cuban community. It's also home to a growing number of

Even though many Cubans and their descendants spread out across South Florida and beyond, Little Havana has remained the heart of Cuba in exile, where café con leche and cigars still abound.

Now, it's officially a national treasure.

[The National Trust for Historic Preservation made the declaration](#) Friday in partnership with Dade Heritage Trust, Live Healthy Little Havana and PlusUrbia Design.

"Little Havana is a symbol of the immigrant experience in America and a thriving, entirely unique place that thousands of people currently call home," said Stephanie Meeks, the nonprofit's president and CEO.

"The National Trust welcomes the urban resurgence that is breathing new life into cities across the country, but we also believe that growth should not come at the expense of the vibrant historic neighborhoods like Little Havana that make cities unique and desirable places.

"As we work to preserve and celebrate Little Havana, we want to make sure it remains a healthy, vital and affordable urban neighborhood."

With the declaration, the National Trust is launching a long-term planning process that seeks to work with local residents and partners to protect the community of Little Havana while planning for its future.

"This historic designation enshrines the diverse culture and history of Little Havana," said Miami Mayor Tomas Regalado. "Little Havana has been the destination for hundreds of thousands of Latin American immigrants since the 1960s seeking the promise of a new life in America.

"This national recognition confirms the neighborhood's cultural significance in the immigrant experience."