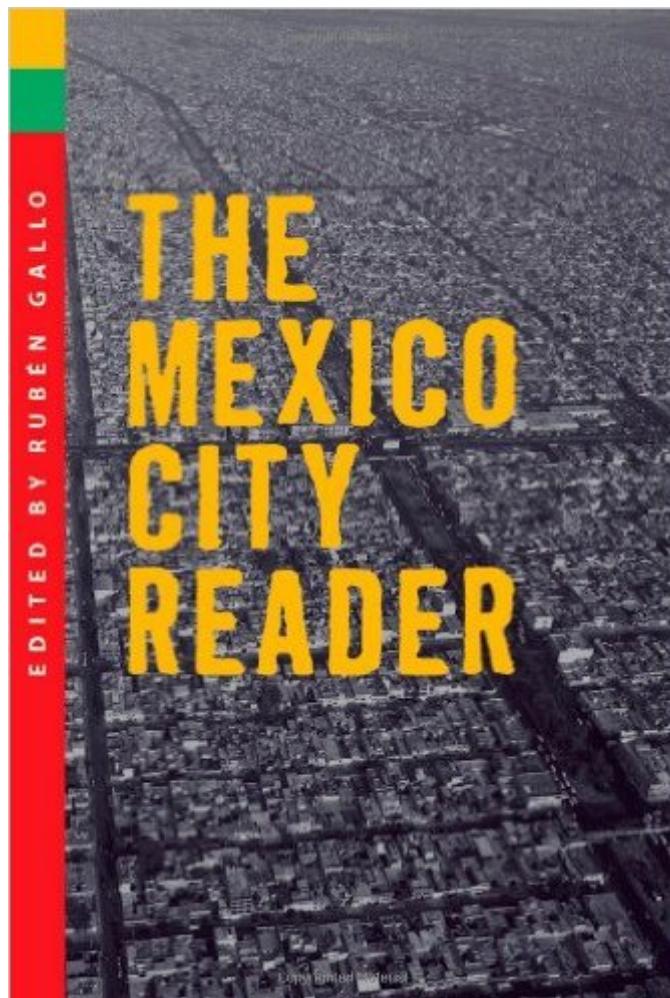


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The Mexico City Reader (The Americas Series)



Synopsis

Mexico City is one of Latin America's cultural capitals, and one of the most vibrant urban spaces in the world. The Mexico City Reader is an anthology of "Cronicas" -short, hybrid texts that are part literary essay, part urban reportage-a

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I'm certainly not a chilango (a native of Mexico City), but over the past 30 years I have made about 10 trips to this extraordinary basket-case of a city, the most recent trip being December of 2011. I thoroughly enjoy visiting there, but I am not blind to its problems and dangers. In my younger days, I'd most often go there alone; but even when accompanying someone who was new to the city, except for the occasional guided tour we'd most often walk or travel by metro or cab (and, as several writers suggest, it is in walking about it that one truly gets the fullest experience of Mexico City). Thus, I like to think that my knowledge of the city's broad center (where most of these essays are set) is fairly thorough. So, reading this fine collection of essays about life in the D.F. was, for me, a rather strange experience. Very often, I found myself saying, "Yes--that indeed once was true, but now . . ." First, the reasons you, as a possible visitor to Mexico City, should consider buying this book: Ruben Gallo's introduction, which sketches out the long history of the city and then critiques the usual theorizing of the D.F.

Overall, a very good anthology of diverse material on Mexico City. The focus on just the one city--the DF--is wise and unique: many readers/books would try to encompass all of Mexico or

Mexican minorities or women in Mexico or whatever have you. But by narrowing the scope via geography and openly showcasing Mexico City as a geographical unit worthy of its own anthology (which it is, certainly) this book opens up many varied aspects of the locale from foodways to politics to history. Indeed, instead of having too-narrow a focus, in fact the book is far too short to come close to cutting into the deep layers of Mexico City, though it's a fine place to start--the best place insofar as social sciences I would say. My only complaints are:1) It's already very dated: we need a new edition of this fine book for it to address today's Mexico City. I am awaiting the day when anthologies will be websites instead of books and constantly updated akin to Wikipedia or Wikitravel. In many cases, the age of this book really shows though that should not discourage anyone from reading it because it does still offer a real wealth of insight.2) The book simply should have been longer. Aside from the cost of printing a slightly larger book, I don't see any real obstacle to making it longer, either, as many course readers number over 600 pages. This one clocks less than 350 pages and there are plenty of worthwhile essays on Mexico City in the public domain--historical documents, even--so copyright isn't a viable problem. The editorial approach taken has been superb: nearly all the included material is great. However, the editor could have sourced even more material to produce a far more robust book.

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