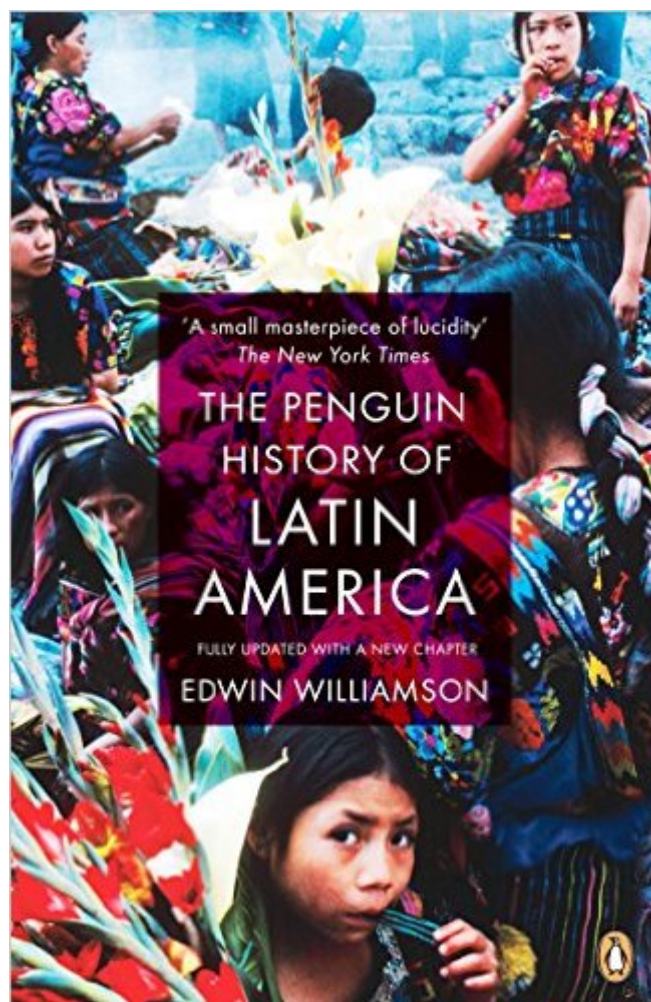


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The Penguin History Of Latin America



Synopsis

Now fully updated to 2009, this acclaimed history of Latin America tells its turbulent story from Columbus to Chavez. Beginning with the Spanish and Portuguese conquests of the New World, it takes in centuries of upheaval, revolution and modernization up to the present day, looking in detail at Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Chile and Cuba, and gives an overview of the cultural developments that have made Latin America a source of fascination for the world. 'A first-rate work of history ... His cool, scholarly gaze and synthesizing intelligence demystify a part of the world peculiarly prone to myth-making ... This book covers an enormous amount of ground, geographically and culturally' Tony Gould, Independent on Sunday

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (31 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

This is a reference primer and would be ideal as a college text for an Intro to Latin America course. It needs some graphics, more tables or maps to break up what is a very long text. This survey covers from 1492, Columbus's voyages and settlement by the Spanish Conquistadors in the 1500s, through about 1990. Not knowing much detail before, this book was ideal for me. As a casual history book, it covers a great deal, almost too much. The detail is staggering, the research exhaustive. If you like Political Economy, then you'll like this history. If you want a quick study, this is the wrong book for you. Williamson covers 1500-1825 (including the Independence movement) in 200+ pages, then inserts the chapter, "Literature and Cultural Identity I," which covers literature as it reflected the societal issues in the 19th century, post-Independence. The next chapter, "Nationalism and Development" lays out the challenges of state building each nation faced post-Independence in the context of political and economic conditions external to Latin America. He explains the social forces

(burgeoning middle class, growing trade unions, urbanization, over-reliance on agricultural exports to volatile markets) that threatened the caudillo-agri oligarchies in almost all the countries. Finally, he covers the largest economies in more detail: Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Chile. The similarities are striking, but key differences are highlighted. He properly covers the Cuban Revolution in its own chapter given its profound impact on the entire Hemisphere. The final chapter covers art/culture in the 20th century. The two literature/art chapters try to cover too much and bog down the book.

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