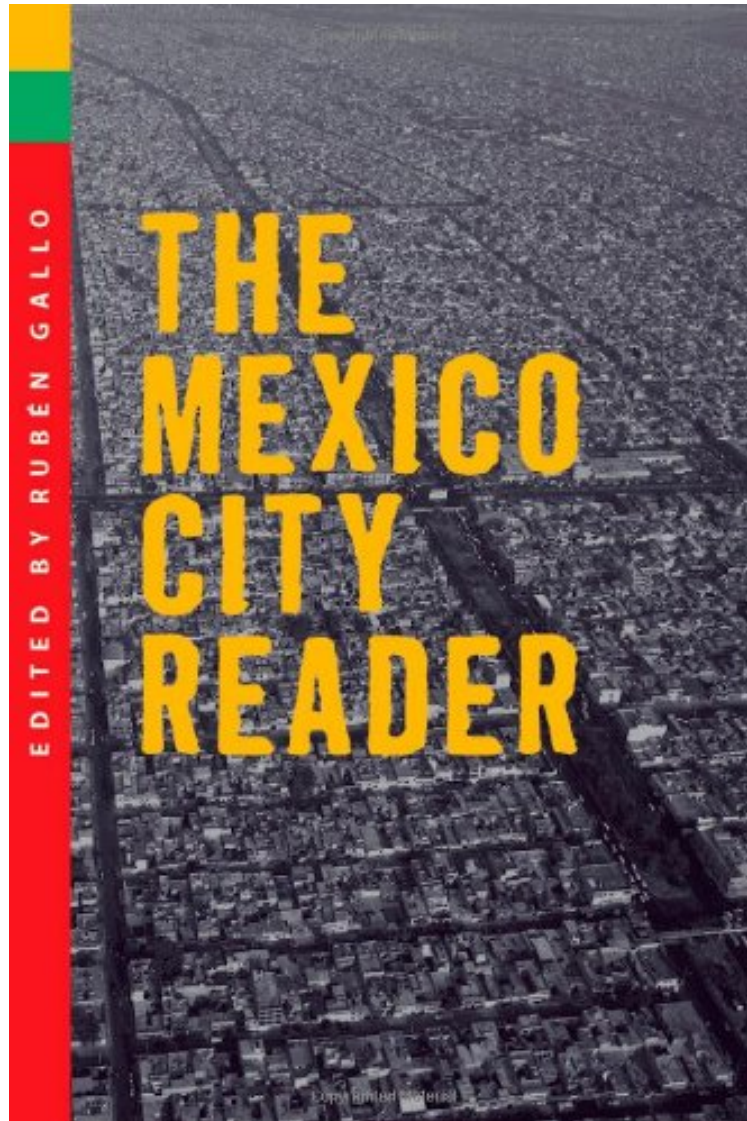


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The Mexico City Reader (The Americas Series)

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#693630 in Books 2004-07-15 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x 1.00 x 6.001, 1.06 #File Name: 029919714X280 pages Ruben Gallo and Lorna Scott Fox 9780299197148 2004 | File size: 25.Mb

From University of Wisconsin Press : The Mexico City Reader (The Americas Series) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Mexico City Reader (The Americas Series):

18 of 19 people found the following review helpful. Read it for its writing, but it could use an updating By John B. 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.--the nostalgic lamenting of the loss of Mexico City's former graceful status of the City of Palaces--in favor of a theory arguing that, especially since the immediate aftermath of the 1521 conquest, the city has constantly been remaking itself; all of the essays in the section called "Places," which still ring true to me; the various photo-essays, in particular Francis Alys' "Ambulantes"; Alma Guillermoprieto's "Garbage" (a subject which, for fairly obvious reasons, is something of an obsession for chilangos); and Elena Poniatowska's beautifully-told "The Earthquake," which focuses solely on the story, told in their own words, of a woman who happened to be rescued from her collapsed building by her nephew, yet which somehow ends up conveying, better than just about anything about the 1985 quake that I've read, the heartbreak of those terrible days (and the years that followed). Also, students and admirers of writing about urban spaces will find much to like and learn from in all these pieces. Now the note of caution: The possible visitor needs to know that some of these pieces have become dated in their details. They do indeed give one an accurate sense of the city as I found it to be from the early-'80s to early-'90s--roughly the period that most of these pieces were written. That time, suffice it to say, was not a happy one in the life of the D.F.: air pollution so bad that the State Department classified our embassy there as a hazardous-duty post; underemployment resulting in beggars, day-laborers, vendors and street performers (and many other, less-savory characters) clogging the sidewalks and delaying traffic on the main streets; trash everywhere; all-but-denuded green spaces--including Chapultepec Park; formerly-elegant and vibrant neighborhoods gone to seed; and clearly overwhelmed city services. However, over the years since this book's publication, the city has dramatically expanded public and alternate transportation (12 Metro lines built or under construction; light-rail lines extending into the suburbs; dedicated bus lanes and, more recently, bike lanes and rent-a bike stands throughout the city's heart); air quality seems to have improved a great deal; the Centro seems to be a desirable place to live now; in general, the broad middle of the city feels much safer than just about any other big city you can think of, including many in the States. None of this is to say that Mexico City is now some sort of urban paradise; and it obviously isn't Gallo's fault that some of these pieces seem less true now than they once were. It's simply to say that the potential buyer needs to know that the city that is these essay's subject has changed fairly substantially since their publication--in some cases, clearly for the better.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By Tanya M
This is a wonderful book, I strongly recommend it.

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Great Way to Understand the Modern DF
By Steve S.
This Reader contains several stories that explain the background of various landmarks in the Distrito Federal. Each chapter makes a great day read and they are well-written and pertinent, even for frequent visitors.

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-

"Gathered under topical headings such as The Metro, Eating and Drinking, Corruption and Bureaucracy, Gallo has chosen some of the most engaging and lively chronicles of [Mexico City]."--Jean Franco, author of "The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City: Latin America and the Cold War"

"In spite of its size, its proximity to the United States, and its extraordinarily vibrant cultural life, Mexico City remains almost invisible as a literary locale to North American readers who do not know Spanish. Ruben Gallo undertakes to fill this gap with his anthology of writings about the city, and he does so with great skill, insight, and verve."--Maarten van Delden, author of "Carlos Fuentes, Mexico, and Modernity"

A must-read for anyone interested in the social and cultural pulse of modern Mexico City.

Clara Ricciardi, "The Bloomsbury"

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The Americas, Ilan Stavans, Series Editor, Irene Vilar, Associate Editor
From the Back Cover
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