



Culture and Customs of Ecuador (Cultures and Customs of the World)

By Michael Handelsman

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Culture and Customs of Ecuador celebrates the extraordinary cultural, geographic, and ethnic diversity that has made this small country one of Latin America's most unique. Through this overview of its history, religious institutions, literature, social customs, cinema, media, and visual and performing arts, Ecuador emerges as a vibrant microcosm of Latin America. Students and other readers will learn how Ecuadorian society blends pre-Colombian, colonial, modern, and postmodern cultural forces. The underlying themes of Ecuador's continuous struggles with multiculturalism and national identity are presented with unprecedented clarity.

Ecuador is a land of drama and paradox with abundant natural resources and a boom and bust economy that has prolonged dependence and instability. Despite many of the economic and social obstacles typical of developing nations, Ecuador has developed a dynamic culture. This multicultural society comes alive through engaging chapters on everything from history to performing arts. A chronology and glossary supplement the text.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Fourth in Greenwood's new series (see, for example, Argentina, LJ 11/15/98), this small volume on Ecuador is a synthesis of both English- and Spanish-language secondary sources covering the nation's rich and varied culture and its social customs. The plurinational (or multicultural) nature of Ecuador's history is reflected in its religion, literature, art, cinema, media, and performing arts, and the often tragic history of Indian, black, and mestizo cultures play an integral role in the book. In eight chapters, Handelsman (languages and literature, Univ. of Tennessee, Knoxville) provides an overview of Ecuador's historical and contemporary culture. A largely agrarian and poor nation, Ecuador has recently had an oil boom that has aided the arts. The chapter on literature is excellent despite the scant attention poetry receives, and the chapter on broadcasting and the print media is quite good, though the lack of a well-developed publishing industry is barely mentioned. Handelsman saves his best for coverage of Ecuadorian film. Recommended for academic and public libraries.

-Boyd Childress, Auburn Univ. Lib., AL

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Review

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About the Author

MICHAEL HANDELSMAN is a Distinguished Professor of the Humanities at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. He is the cofounder of the Asociacion de Ecuatorianistas, an international scholarly organization devoted to promoting Ecuadorian literature and culture outside of Ecuador. His research interests include Spanish-American prose, women writers, Afro-Hispanic literature, literary journals, and issues related to national identity.

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