

## Journey through Central America: Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Guatemala

### Reading List

#### **The Path Between the Seas: The Creation of the Panama Canal, 1870-1914**

by David McCullough

The National Book Award–winning epic chronicle of the creation of the Panama Canal, a first-rate drama of the bold and brilliant engineering feat that was filled with both tragedy and triumph, told by master historian David McCullough.

From the Pulitzer Prize–winning author of *Truman*, here is the national bestselling epic chronicle of the creation of the Panama Canal. In *The Path Between the Seas*, acclaimed historian David McCullough delivers a first-rate drama of the sweeping human undertaking that led to the creation of this grand enterprise.

*The Path Between the Seas* tells the story of the men and women who fought against all odds to fulfill the 400-year-old dream of constructing an aquatic passageway between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. It is a story of astonishing engineering feats, tremendous medical accomplishments, political power plays, heroic successes, and tragic failures. Applying his remarkable gift for writing lucid, lively exposition, McCullough weaves the many strands of the momentous event into a comprehensive and captivating tale.

Winner of the National Book Award for history, the Francis Parkman Prize, the Samuel Eliot Morison Award, and the Cornelius Ryan Award (for the best book of the year on international affairs), *The Path Between the Seas* is a must-read for anyone interested in American history, the history of technology, international intrigue, and human drama.

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#### **Modern Panama: From Occupation to Crossroads of the Americas**

by Michael L. Conniff and Gene E. Bigler

Few have a complete understanding of the recent history of Panama, markedly since the signing of the Carter-Torrijos Treaties in 1977. Although the Treaty set the stage for the country to finally control all of its territory, little is known about how Panama has fared, both as a manager of a major waterway and as a sovereign nation in a unique region. Authors Michael L. Conniff and Gene E. Bigler seek to fill this major gap in Latin American history with *Modern Panama*, a thorough account

of the recent political and economic developments in Panama. Despite the country's continued struggle with political corruption, Conniff and Bigler argue that changes since the turnover of the Canal have been largely positive, and Panama has emerged into the twenty-first century as a stable, functioning democracy with a growing economy, improved canal management, and a higher standard of living.

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## **Panama History: The Conquest, The Spanish Colony, The War Years, The Society and Its Environment, Ethnic Groups, The Economy, Government**

by Uzo Marvin

Panama history and early settlement, Panama Society and Its Environment, Panama Ethnic Groups, Panama Migration, Panama Education, Panama Health and Welfare, Panama Foreign Economic Relations, Panama Government, Panama tourism, Panama people. Estimates vary greatly of the number of Indians who inhabited the isthmus when the Spanish explorers arrived. By some accounts, the population was considerably greater than that of contemporary Panama. Some Panamanian historians have suggested that there might have been a population of 500,000 Indians from some sixty "tribes," but other researchers have concluded that the Cuna alone numbered some 750,000. Besides the Cuna, which constituted by far the largest group in the area, two other major groups, the Guaymí and the Chocó, have been identified by ethnologists. The Guaymí, of the highlands near the Costa Rican border, are believed to be related to Indians of the Nahuatlán and Mayan nations of Mexico and Central America. The Chocó on the Pacific side of Darién Province appear to be related to the Chibcha of Colombia

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## **The Costa Rica Reader: History, Culture, Politics (The Latin America Readers) The Costa Rica Reader: History, Culture, Politics (The Latin America Readers)**

by Steven Palmer and Iván Molina

Long characterized as an exceptional country within Latin America, Costa Rica has been hailed as a democratic oasis in a continent scorched by dictatorship and revolution; the ecological mecca of a biosphere laid waste by deforestation and urban blight; and an egalitarian, middle-class society blissfully immune to the violent class and racial conflicts that have haunted the region. Arguing that conceptions of Costa Rica as a happy anomaly downplay its rich heritage and diverse population, *The Costa Rica Reader* brings together texts and artwork that reveal the complexity of the country's past and present. It characterizes Costa Rica as a site of alternatives and possibilities that undermine stereotypes about the region's history and challenge the idea that current dilemmas facing Latin America are inevitable or insoluble.

This essential introduction to Costa Rica includes more than fifty texts related to the country's history, culture, politics, and natural environment. Most of these newspaper accounts, histories, petitions, memoirs, poems, and essays are written by Costa Ricans. Many appear here in English for the first time. The authors are men and women, young and old, scholars, farmers, workers, and activists. *The Costa Rica Reader* presents a panoply of voices: eloquent working-class raconteurs from San José's poorest barrios, English-speaking Afro-Antilleans of the Limón province, Nicaraguan immigrants, factory workers, dissident members of the intelligentsia, and indigenous people struggling to preserve their culture. With more than forty images, the collection showcases sculptures, photographs, maps, cartoons, and fliers. From the time before the arrival of the Spanish, through the rise of the coffee plantations and the Civil War of 1948, up to participation in today's globalized world, Costa Rica's remarkable history comes alive. *The Costa Rica Reader* is a necessary resource for scholars, students, and travelers alike.

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## **Costa Rica: Folk Culture, Traditions, and Cuisine**

by Jack Donnelly

Traveling and living abroad can be an enriching experience—opening your eyes to different cultures and worldviews. But it can be difficult to access the local culture of a foreign country, especially if you aren't fluent in its language.

Jack Donnelly's unique guide introduces English-speaking travelers and expats to Costa Rica's rich folk culture, traditions, and cuisine, which are often missed by nonlocals. Written as a series of articles so you can selectively read what most interests you, *Costa Rica* covers local legends, folk beliefs, and traditional festivals, wrapping up with a food reference and glossary.

Anyone can take a surfing vacation to Costa Rica; but with the cultural insight of Jack Donnelly, you can go on a true Costa Rican adventure. Discover a local festival happening during your trip, and read up on its history so you can join in. Learn Costa Rican Spanish vocabulary and surprise the locals with your understanding. Test your sour tolerance with a *cas* drink. "Come back to life" with the seafood cocktail *vuelve a la vida*, reputed to cure hangovers and illness.

Offering an inside view from an outsider's perspective, Jack Donnelly's guide gives you the key to enter the full "Tico" experience.

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## **History of the Discovery and Conquest of Costa Rica**

by Fernández Guardia, Ricardo

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### **Cultural Traditions in Honduras (Cultural Traditions in My World)**

by Rebecca Sjonger

Describes the holidays and festivals celebrated throughout the year in Honduras, including the food, traditions, and costumes.

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### **The Long Honduran Night: Resistance , Terror, and the United States in the Aftermath of the Coup**

by Dana Frank

This powerful narrative recounts the dramatic years in Honduras following the June 2009 military coup that deposed President Manuel Zelaya, told in part through first-person experiences, layered into deeper political analysis. It weaves together two broad pictures: first, the repressive regime that was launched with the coup, and the ways in which U.S. policy has continued to support that regime; and second, the brave and evolving Honduran resistance movement, with aid from a new solidarity movement in the United States.

Although it is full of terrible things, this is not a horror story: the book directly counters mainstream media coverage that portrays Honduras as a pit of unrelenting awfulness, in which powerless people sob in the face of unexplained violence. Rather, it's about sobering challenges with roots in political processes, and the inspiring collective strength with which people face them

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**Honduras (Discovering Central America: History, Politics, and Culture)**

by Charles J. Shields

Introduces Honduras, describing its history, politics, culture, and geography.

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**Paper Cadavers: The Archives of Dictatorship in Guatemala (American Encounters/Global Interactions)**

by Kirsten Weld

In *Paper Cadavers*, an inside account of the astonishing discovery and rescue of Guatemala's secret police archives, Kirsten Weld probes the politics of memory, the wages of the Cold War, and the stakes of historical knowledge production. After Guatemala's bloody thirty-six years of civil war (1960–1996), silence and impunity reigned. That is, until 2005, when human rights investigators stumbled on the archives of the country's National Police, which, at 75 million pages, proved to be the largest trove of secret state records ever found in Latin America.

The unearthing of the archives renewed fierce debates about history, memory, and justice. In *Paper Cadavers*, Weld explores Guatemala's struggles to manage this avalanche of evidence of past war crimes, providing a firsthand look at how postwar justice activists worked to reconfigure terror archives into implements of social change. Tracing the history of the police files as they were transformed from weapons of counterinsurgency into tools for post-conflict reckoning, Weld sheds light on the country's fraught transition from war to an uneasy peace, reflecting on how societies forget and remember political violence.

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**Mayan Folktales: Folklore from Lake Atitlán, Guatemala**

by James D. Sexton

This collection of folklore offers a rich and lively panorama of Mayan mythic heritage. Here are everyday tales of village life; legends of witches, shamans, spiritualists, tricksters, and devils; fables of *naguales*, or persons who can change into animal forms; ribald stories of love and life; cautionary tales of strange and menacing neighbors and of the danger lurking within the human heart. These legends narrate origin and creation stories, explain the natural world, and reinforce cultural beliefs and values such as honesty, industriousness, sharing, fairness, and cleverness. Whether tragic or comic, fantastic or earthy, whimsical or profound, these tales capture the mystery, fragility, and power of the Mayan world.

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