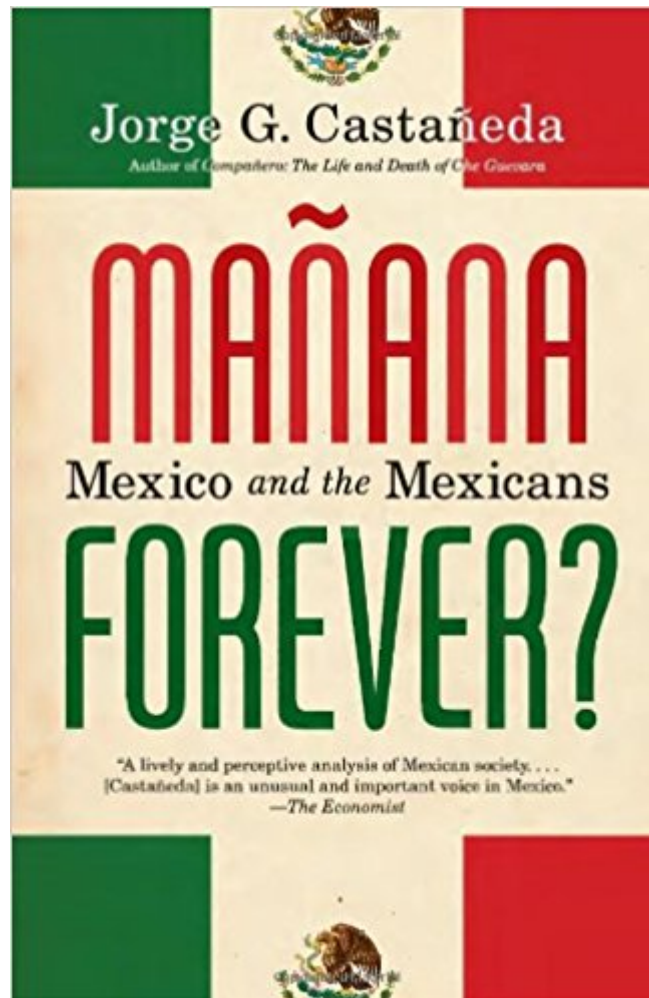




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Manana Forever?: Mexico And The Mexicans



Synopsis

In this shrewd and fascinating book, the renowned scholar and former foreign minister Jorge Castañeda sheds much light on the puzzling paradoxes of politics and culture of modern Mexico. Here is a nation of 110 million that has an ambivalent and complicated relationship with the United States yet is host to more American expatriates than any country in the world. Its people tend to resent foreigners yet have made the nation a hugely popular tourist destination. Mexican individualism and individual ties to the land reflect a desire to conserve the past and slow the route to uncertain modernity. Castañeda examines the future possibilities for Mexico as it becomes more diverse in its regional identities, socially more homogenous, its character and culture the instruments of change rather than sources of stagnation, its political system more open and democratic. *Maya Forever?* is a compelling portrait of a nation at a crossroads.

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Customer Reviews

“This important book, by an exceptionally shrewd, sophisticated and deeply knowledgeable analyst, deserves a place on the short shelf of classics about modern Mexico that includes Alan Riding’s *Distant Neighbors* and Paz’s *The Labyrinth of Solitude*.
• Los Angeles Times “Castañeda presents an impassioned and erudite case for a rethinking of old Mexican habits. His background makes him especially well positioned to explain

his native land to an international audience. • The New York Times Book Review • “A revolutionary book about Mexico. . . . I never thought I would read a book by a Mexican that acknowledges that Mexicans have more to gain in venturing to America than U.S. dollars.” • Richard Rodriguez, The San Francisco Chronicle • “A lively and perceptive analysis of Mexican society. . . . [Castañeda] is an unusual and important voice in Mexico.” • The Economist

Jorge G. Castañeda is Global Distinguished Professor of Politics and Latin American Studies at New York University. He was Mexico's foreign minister from 2000 to 2003. Castañeda has been a professor of political science at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, a senior associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, D.C., and a visiting professor at Princeton University. He received his B.A. from Princeton University and his Ph.D. from the University of Paris. He is a member of the board of Human Rights Watch and lives in New York and Mexico City.

Geat Book! I was quite impressed and learned a lot, and demystified various cultural, political and economic aspects of Mexico. This jump in my lurning curve, is especially significant as a professional U.S. expatriate having lived in Mexico City for over 21 years and happily married to a Mexican wife for 17 of those years who has also helped me in this understanding. I was turned on to this book by the author of "This is Mexico", Carol Merchasin, also an excellent book, and I feel I have been provided an excellent education on Mexicans in Mexico and the U.S. with Jorge Castañeda's insights. I was concerned it might be outdated as much has happened since its writing in 2011, such as PRI back in power, and liberalization of foreign invesment in energy and electricity and opening of telecommunications but it is still very, if not more, relevant. I also found interesting and helpful, his proposed road map toward modernization and way out of the maze, and see that in spite of the PRI views, probably different than Castaneda's, at least in rhetoric, there is a concerted move to adopt many of his proposals toward that modernization (although not sure whether the chicken or the egg came first). This book gives much insight for both Mexicans and Americans desiring to undertand the culture.

In my own humble opinion, the best book about why we are how we are and the many reasons why. An excellent source of information that is not only great and usable information but also provides the necessary back up data. Now--the challenge--if we (Mexicans as myself) decide to take

it; is to change for the better....and never give up. We know we can--all we have to do is continue learning and work together, as one. Thank you Mr. Castañeda, this is indeed an excellent work--about Mexico, its history, its people and its complexities. I learned a lot from your book. I wish Mexico's education system implements this book in their recommended readings--we will learn from it for sure. And if we still don't have one--we should start with it. I strongly recommend this book to anyone--young and old--that wishes to learn about Mexico and its people. You will definitely enjoy it and learn much from it.

Jorge Castaneda's tome is both incisive and a bit maddening. Despite his academic background, the book reads a good deal like a series of stream of consciousness rants...many sweeping assertions buttressed only by anecdotal examples. There is a paucity of data or research supporting much of Castaneda's work. His writing style also is disjointed and frequently unfocused. Nonetheless, Castaneda is a keen observer of Mexico's political environment and offers a unique perspective, having served as foreign minister under President Fox in addition to his many years as an academic in both Mexico and the U.S. With his liberal and progressive background, Castaneda was an odd appointment for the right-of-center Fox, but his inclusion in the Fox cabinet is clear from *Manana Forever*. Castaneda's passion is democracy, with a small "d," and he views the development of a viable two-party system in Mexico as imperative for Mexico to forever advance beyond "third world" status. Despite its shortcomings, *Manana Forever* is probably the most candid discussion of the current state of Mexican politics from a Mexican perspective, as opposed to observations from political scientists and analysts outside the country. While a number of Castaneda's generalities deserve to be challenged, he succeeds in building a solid case for urgent changes in Mexico's political structure for the nation to finally emerge from its "Manana Forever" mindset.

I had just finished up looking at a video "Insanity and Necessity" on utube, when I got a recommendation for this book as being pertinent to understanding of the cultural shockwaves created in the immigration debate. Written by a Mexican, it says things that only a Mexican can say about Mexico and Mexican viewpoints that explains a lot of things that are odds with each other in the current illegal immigration arena and assimilation conversation.

This is a book which every Mexican, and every American, should read. Castañeda gets almost everything right. I quarrel only with his evaluation of B.H. Obama as an intellectual heavyweight.

As the owner of a Mexican home who enjoys Mexican culture quite a lot this book was recommended to me by a Mexican/American. Recommended profusely I bought w/o even knowing what the book was about. I actually expected a Mexican novel. This is nothing like that and in fact quite a technical book about the psyche of the Mexican population in general. Living in the culture parttime allows me to observe but not at the level demanded by this book. While there is a quite a lot of interesting parts in general this undocumented theory of Mexicans with a complex is lacking. I did enjoy the good discussion on why Mexicans do not obey the law allowing the bribe system to thrive (and I have first hand knowledge owning a home there where not a year goes by w/o a bribe). Overall, I really can't recommend this book unless you are interested in an intellectual discussion of the Mexican psyche without exceptional documentation.

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