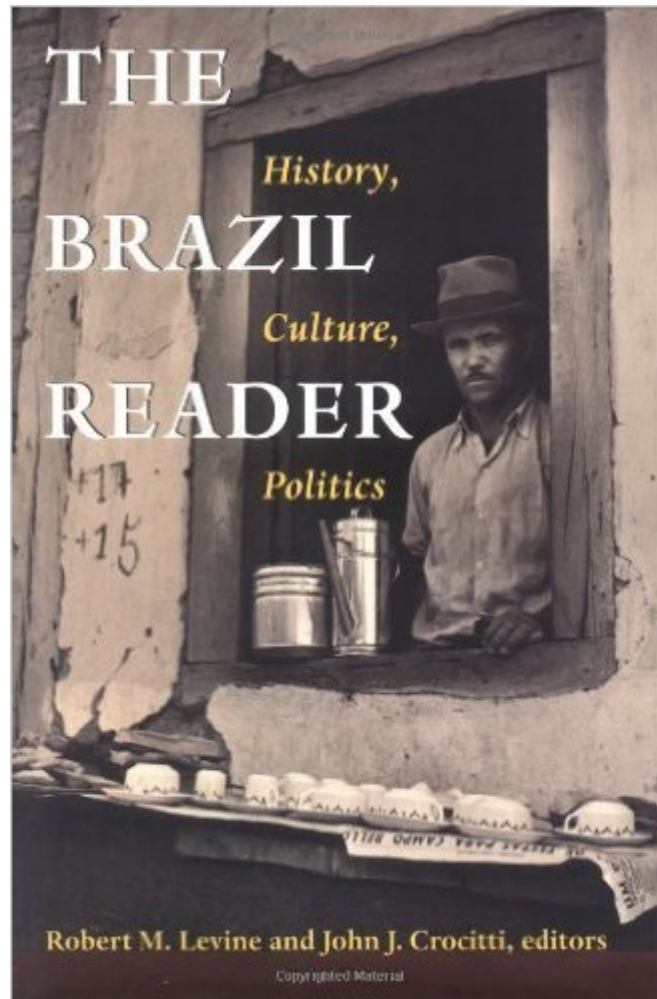


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The Brazil Reader: History, Culture, Politics (The Latin America Readers)



Synopsis

Bordering all but two of South America's other nations and by far Latin America's largest country, Brazil differs linguistically, historically, and culturally from Spanish America. Its indigenous peoples share the country with descendants of Portuguese conquerors and the Africans they imported to work as slaves, along with more recent immigrants from southern Europe, Japan, the Middle East, and elsewhere. Capturing the scope of this country's rich diversity and distinction as no other book has done—with more than a hundred entries from a wealth of perspectives—The Brazil Reader offers a fascinating guide to Brazilian life, culture, and history. Complementing traditional views with fresh ones, The Brazil Reader's historical selections range from early colonization to the present day, with sections on imperial and republican Brazil, the days of slavery, the Vargas years, and the more recent return to democracy. They include letters, photographs, interviews, legal documents, visual art, music, poetry, fiction, reminiscences, and scholarly analyses. They also include observations by ordinary residents, both urban and rural, as well as foreign visitors and experts on Brazil. Probing beneath the surface of Brazilian reality—past and present—The Reader looks at social behavior, women's lives, architecture, literature, sexuality, popular culture, and strategies for coping with the travails of life in a country where the affluent live in walled compounds to separate themselves from the millions of Brazilians hard-pressed to find food and shelter. Contributing to a full geographic account—from the to the Northeast and the Central-South—of this country's singular multiplicity, many pieces have been written expressly for this volume or were translated for it, having never previously been published in English. This second book in The Latin America Readers series will interest students, specialists, travelers for both business and leisure, and those desiring an in-depth introduction to Brazilian life and culture.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is a collection of short essays on Brazil. I found at least half to be quite interesting, though I probably skimmed about a quarter of them. Many of the essays frequently give a first hand account of life as a small farmer, favela resident or fisherman in Brazil. These essays capture and explain to the English reader the hopes, values and experiences of actual Brazilians. Most English readers gain their understanding of Brazil only second hand through academics or journalists. This book offers a fresh, reality based perspective on Brazil for English readers who haven't learned about Brazil outside of academia, the New York Times, or the beaches of Rio.

I brought this book in Los Angeles on the way back from a trip to Disney with my children. I finished it almost when I arrived home. The book has great insight and should be read by Brazilians, because it presents things as they are, not as they are supposed to be. Maybe the book will be published in Brazil some day. I hope so.

This is a great book for learning about Brazil from the earliest days to today. The selections are unusually interesting and varied. As a Brazilian, this book brings me "saudades."

This book is a page-turner. As a Brazilian living in the States, it brings back strong memories. A very nice gift.

From excerpts of historical claims to letters from diplomats, from essays on slavery to descriptions of food, this book gives insights on the spirit and history of Brazil in easy to read snippets. A picture of a people emerges from original sources and non-academic evaluations that adds depth to what you will see when you go there.

I read a dozen essays from the book before our 3-week stay in Brazil and continue to read much more after our return. "Reader" captures a variety of perspectives on the country from the music/arts theme to political history and racism. Published in 1999, it does not include current events. No matter. One of the best essays is "The Vargas Era" which summarizes a period of political status

quo even though Vargas made attempts to change his country before his suicide. This is not a travel guide, not a take-with (it's heavy, 500+ pages), so it's best read at home to prepare for the lively experience of meeting Brazilians and appreciating their culture(s) and history. Some knowledge of the colonial influence in the country's formation goes a long way to help travelers understand current conditions. Slavery was abolished in 1888, and the state of Minas Gerais formulated laws that regulated beggars in 1900. Coincidence? Travelers to the beaches may not need to delve into the culture, but those who want a fuller experience of Brazil will enjoy this book.

So often, anthologies collect obvious articles and essays about their subject. This reader goes far beyond, covering subjects ranging from music to history to sexuality to corruption. This is a terrific book!

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