



Mexico: What Everyone Needs to Know®

Roderic Ai Camp

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Today all would agree that Mexico and the United States have never been closer--that the fates of the two republics are inextricably intertwined. It has become an intimate part of life in almost every community in the United States, through immigration, imported produce, business ties, or illegal drugs. It is less a neighbor than a sibling; no matter what our differences, it is intricately a part of our existence.

In this outstanding contribution to Oxford's acclaimed series, *What Everyone Needs to Know®*, Roderic Ai Camp gives readers the most essential information about our sister republic to the south. Camp organizes chapters around major themes--security and violence, economic development, foreign relations, the colonial heritage, and more. He asks questions that take us beyond the headlines: Why does Mexico have so much drug violence? What was the impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement? How democratic is Mexico? Who were Benito Juárez and Pancho Villa? What is the PRI (the Institutional Revolutionary Party)? The answers are sometimes surprising. Despite ratification of NAFTA, for example, Mexico has fallen behind Brazil and Chile in economic growth and rates of poverty. Camp explains that lack of labor flexibility, along with low levels of transparency and high levels of corruption, make Mexico less competitive than some other Latin American countries. The drug trade, of course, enhances corruption and feeds on poverty; approximately 450,000 Mexicans now work in this sector. But Camp reveals that President Calderón's recent assault on narcotics smugglers--and the violence resulting from it--may have actually lessened the government's control of parts of the country and national institutions.

Brisk, clear, and informed, *Mexico: What Everyone Needs To Know*® offers a valuable primer for anyone interested in the past, present, and future of our neighbor to the South.

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