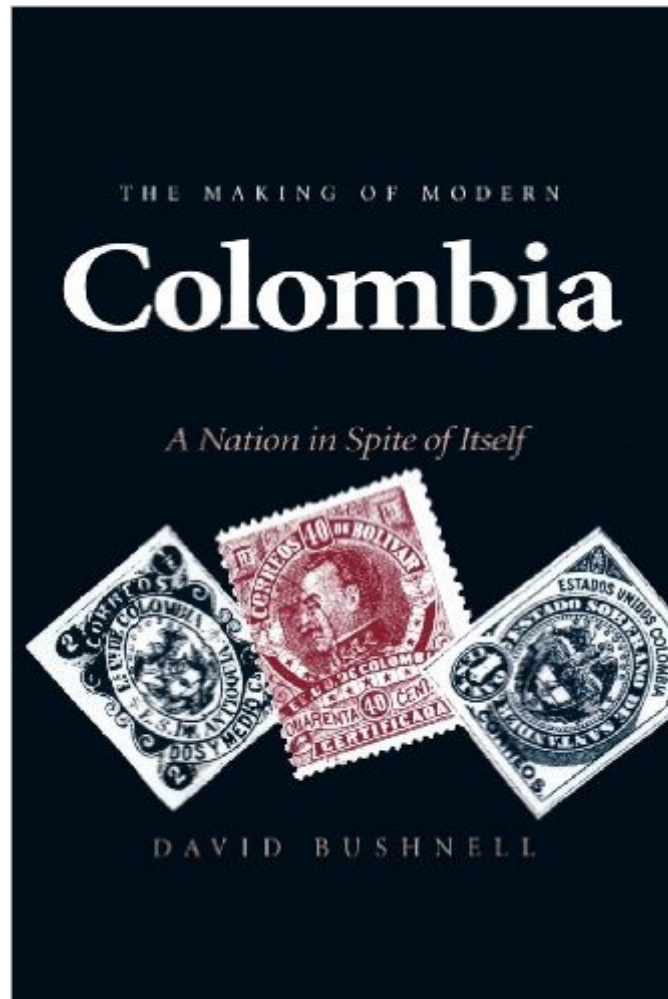


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The Making Of Modern Colombia: A Nation In Spite Of Itself



Synopsis

Colombia's status as the fourth largest nation in Latin America and third most populous "as well as its largest exporter of such disparate commodities as emeralds, books, processed cocaine, and cut flowers" makes this, the first history of Colombia written in English, a much-needed book. It tells the remarkable story of a country that has consistently defied modern Latin American stereotypes "a country where military dictators are virtually unknown, where the political left is congenitally weak, and where urbanization and industrialization have spawned no lasting populist movement. There is more to Colombia than the drug trafficking and violence that have recently gripped the world's attention. In the face of both cocaine wars and guerrilla conflict, the country has maintained steady economic growth as well as a relatively open and democratic government based on a two-party system. It has also produced an impressive body of art and literature. David Bushnell traces the process of state-building in Colombia from the struggle for independence, territorial consolidation, and reform in the nineteenth century to economic development and social and political democratization in the twentieth. He also sheds light on the modern history of Latin America as a whole.

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Customer Reviews

After having lived in Colombia for a year, I thought I would take it upon myself to learn a little more about this country. The Making of Modern Colombia by David Bushnell was a good place to start. It provides a good summary of the history of the country starting from original indigenous people who lived there up until the early 90's (the book was published in 93). It was a straight history book, so there wasn't much color commentary, but overall I was able to get into the book and remain interested. The writing was good enough that it wasn't boring. Also, it was 280 pages which is a decent length for an overview of a history. Not too long, that you are bogged down and give up and not too short that you miss important events. Overall, good starting point and I would recommend it. That being said, as I am sure most history books are like this, it focused a lot on the macro level when it comes to Economics, Politics, Demographics, etc. so with this approach you need to be aware that beneath all of these numbers are stories from people's lives, for good and for bad. After reading this book, I would like to read a few more books that get below the surface of these large issues like la violencia or the different guerrilla groups (before this I had only thought of FARC and not the ELN or the M-19), as well as the stories of the workers whose lives were influenced for better or for worse by the movements of industries and the engineering of the country.

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