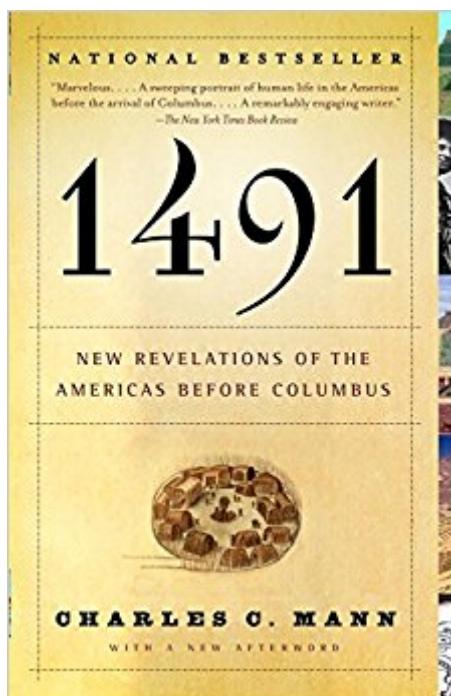


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1491 (Second Edition): New Revelations Of The Americas Before Columbus



Synopsis

In this groundbreaking work of science, history, and archaeology, Charles C. Mann radically alters our understanding of the Americas before the arrival of Columbus in 1492. Contrary to what so many Americans learn in school, the pre-Columbian Indians were not sparsely settled in a pristine wilderness; rather, there were huge numbers of Indians who actively molded and influenced the land around them. The astonishing Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan had running water and immaculately clean streets, and was larger than any contemporary European city. Mexican cultures created corn in a specialized breeding process that it has been called man's first feat of genetic engineering. Indeed, Indians were not living lightly on the land but were landscaping and manipulating their world in ways that we are only now beginning to understand. Challenging and surprising, this a transformative new look at a rich and fascinating world we only thought we knew. From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

bought this a few years back before going to Peru. It greatly enhanced my experience. I have thought about it a lot since then in several aspects- what if they were not conquerors, but the

interaction was more like when Europe met China? How much more the world would now know. How something (the wild) we think is so natural, is in fact not at all natural and that we are not so smart as we think we are and need to value other cultures. Just a great, thought-provoking book. I ordered this issue for a neighbor who is from Peru and was happily surprised to see an updated edition.

Really interesting. I've been to Peru to see Manchu Picchu and wish I read this before going! Highly recommended! Fascinating

Wow ! Who'd think there was so much going on here in the "new world" before the Europeans came over and wiped everyone out with small pox and other diseases. I read this with fascination as Mann carefully walks us through generations of indigenous, industrious and civilized peoples that populated North and South America going back to the ice age. I had never heard that the Aztecs used a strings and knots as a written language. Based on all of this excellent research, I would really like to see High school and college courses and text books updated to look at this time period from the perspective of the Native Americans instead of the current European viewpoint. I know that in my education, I was taught that there were only a few ignorant natives running around in loin cloths eating raw meat and killing virgins until the Europeans showed up to "set them straight". What a prejudice way to view what were civilizations that accomplished so much during their time. I highly recommend this anyone who really wants to know what was going on in America before the Europeans arrived and turned the place upside down !!

I very much enjoyed this book. The author brings up a very interesting and well researched scenario that, although different than Western European civilization, the Indian cultures populating North America were as intricate and as advanced as those who 'discovered them'. The key difference was their lack of immunity which caused wholesale devastation to Indian populations with even the slightest interaction with Western man. It would be interesting to speculate how different history would have been if the Indian population of the Americas had survived their first contact with the 'aliens' who brought this disease.

An excellent introduction into the fundamental question of the demographics of the Americas prior to the Columbian Exchange. Mann seeks to inform readers whose K-12 textbooks presented obsolete information on this topic, as was the case for both him and his son. Examining narratives from the

Andean, Yucatan, and New England regions, the view of the Americas as a "wilderness" is challenged with the most current and widely accepted research. Well written in content with a smooth delivery style, this book is an excellent primer on questions many people find unresolved when they graduate high school.

I have read history books and discussed history for 50 years; I've seen good, bad, indifferent, specious, stupid, uninformed, and, on rare occasions, good and thoughtful histories. I am familiar with the good and the bad. I really like this book; it's well-written and informative without being 'preachy'. The author doesn't try to persuade the reader to adopt a political viewpoint - the book doesn't advance an agenda. This book and its' companion, "1493" are an example of history-writing at its' best. While reading '1493', I read pages that told of matters and thoughts I had never known before. I totally recommend these two books.

This book, a revised edition of the earlier publication by the same name, is the first of two regarding the world as it existed before and following (1493) Columbus's discovery of the Western Hemisphere. The author is meticulous in his research, examines several alternative academic points of view, and then recounts the narrative in a concise, informative perspective. The book flows logically, (as does the sequel) and both provide the reader with a well-balanced perspective on 15th century through the present day human anthropology. It is particularly good at placing current political-anthropological issues in a balanced manner so that the science underlying them can be seen in its proper light - not always easy to do in the charged journalistic atmosphere in which we live today.

So many "history" books lack a true narrative, which can be essentially necessary to understanding such huge swaths of intellectual territory. In other words, correctly true to their discipline. I am a historian by training, and understand the natural tendency of the can't see the forest for the trees approach. This is like a Fodors to the subject; you understand a bit of the territory before studying the cathedrals and going to the museums. Ergo, it satisfies the journalistic impulse of drawing you in and interesting you right off. It is kindling for forest of dead dedicated trees ripe for burning. In this sense, Mann achieves his objective well. I end this book trying to decide what to read next - probably a history of the Mississippi civilizations, who knows where to start. Very well done and mainly, interesting.

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