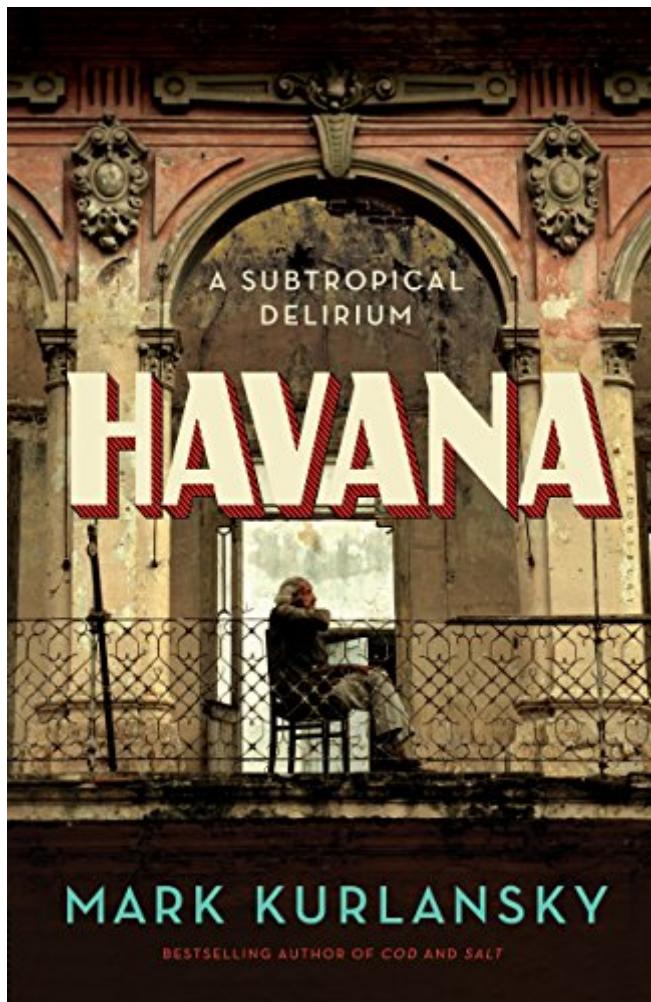


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Havana: A Subtropical Delirium



Synopsis

A city of tropical heat, sweat, ramshackle beauty, and its very own cadence--a city that always surprises--Havana is brought to pulsing life by New York Times bestselling author Mark Kurlansky. Award-winning author Mark Kurlansky presents an insider's view of Havana: the elegant, tattered city he has come to know over more than thirty years. Part cultural history, part travelogue, with recipes, historic engravings, photographs, and Kurlansky's own pen-and-ink drawings throughout, Havana celebrates the city's singular music, literature, baseball, and food; its five centuries of outstanding, neglected architecture; and its extraordinary blend of cultures. Like all great cities, Havana has a rich history that informs the vibrant place it is today--from the native Taino to Columbus's landing, from Cuba's status as a U.S. protectorate to Batista's dictatorship and Castro's revolution, from Soviet presence to the welcoming of capitalist tourism. Havana is a place of extremes: a beautifully restored colonial city whose cobblestone streets pass through areas that have not been painted or repaired since long before the revolution. Kurlansky shows Havana through the eyes of Cuban writers, such as Alejo Carpentier and José Martí, and foreigners, including Graham Greene and Hemingway. He introduces us to Cuban baseball and its highly opinionated fans; the city's music scene, alive with the rhythm of Son; its culinary legacy. Through Mark Kurlansky's multilayered and electrifying portrait, the long-elusive city of Havana comes stirringly to life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you are going to Cuba, this is an excellent read to provide a significant amount of color to the rich tapestry of this wonderfully tragic country. Kurlansky has an easy reading style weaving in history and observations in an entertaining way. It's not a travel guide but a cultural guide. Worth a read.

I have read and enjoyed many books about Cuba, but this one is a real gem! I hated to finish it. I especially appreciated how Kurlansky blended history with references to Cuban literature. His treatment of slavery and race in Cuba was informative and compelling. I have suffered from subtropical delirium for many years, and Kurlansky's book only increased my fever for the elegant, tattered city of Havana. Going back in January!

I was born in Havana in 1950. Lived there until 14 years old. This book brought back many memories, and is quite accurate in its description of the History and customs of Cuba, and Havana in particular. An excellent job by the author.

good read

An ideal book for anyone headed for Cuba. Just a so-so read for the rest of us. Kurlansky has done better.

Interesting and well-written

A fascinating look into the phenomenon that is Havana.

This is a fascinating look at past and present day Havana. The author has made something of a cottage industry of publishing "micro histories" where he sees the world through the perspective of a single subject matter, such as salt, cod or paper. But previous readers of Kurlansky will likely find this book more similar to his The Basque History of the World, where he looks at that region on the

border of Spain and France. The author has served as the Caribbean correspondent (talk about a dream job!) for the Chicago Tribune. As such he may be the perfect guide to Havana, better in some ways than a native, as he has a better sense of Havana's unique. It also helps that Kurlansky is conversant on food, dance, baseball, history and politics. It is a delightful, easily accessible book that I would recommend to anyone with an interest in Havana. FYI : the focus is entirely on the city of Havana, the book almost never strays beyond the city to other parts of Cuba.

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