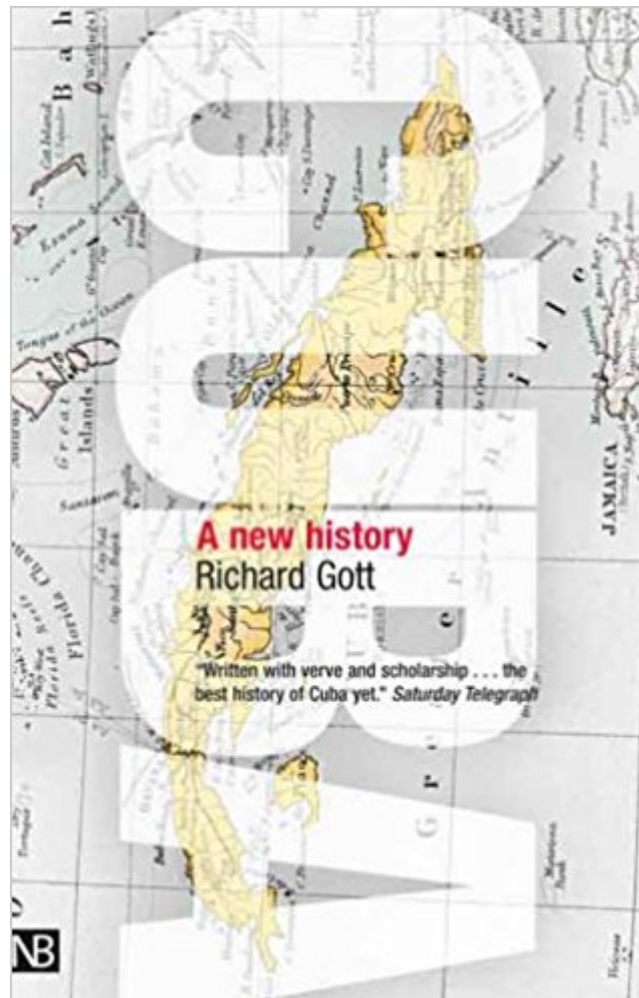




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# Cuba: A New History (Yale Nota Bene)



## Synopsis

Events in Fidel Castro's island nation often command international attention and just as often inspire controversy. Impassioned debate over situations as diverse as the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Elián González affair is characteristic not only of modern times but of centuries of Cuban history. In this concise and up-to-date book, British journalist Richard Gott casts a fresh eye on the history of the Caribbean island from its pre-Columbian origins to the present day. He provides a European perspective on a country that is perhaps too frequently seen solely from the American point of view. The author emphasizes such little-known aspects of Cuba's history as its tradition of racism and violence, its black rebellions, the survival of its Indian peoples, and the lasting influence of Spain. The book also offers an original look at aspects of the Revolution, including Castro's relationship with the Soviet Union, military exploits in Africa, and his attempts to promote revolution in Latin America and among American blacks. In a concluding section, Gott tells the extraordinary story of the Revolution's survival in the post-Soviet years.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This is an accessible and well researched account by Gott."â Richard Lapper, Financial Times

"Written with verve and scholarship, Cuba: A New History is the best history yet of this beautiful

West Indian Island."â Ian Thomson, Saturday Telegraph "Richard Gott's invaluable Cuba: A

New History dispels many convenient myths."â Adam Feinstein, The Guardian "An excellent

addition to Hugh Thomas's classic Cuba and other more recent histories, this book is highly recommended for public and academic libraries." "Library Journal "This delightfully written, nicely illustrated book makes a significant contribution to the burgeoning literature on the Cuban revolution. Eight expertly crafted chapters and a short epilogue trace the fascinating, complex history of Cuba from its settlement by the Spanish in the early 16th century to the present. . . . Highly recommended." "Choice "Gott is always an interesting, well-informed, and engaging writer." "Foreign Affairs "Told with simplicity and a fresh synthesis. . . . A wonderful account combining powerful journalistic skills and insightful scholarship." "Eliseo Cardona, South Florida Sun-Sentinel "The author should be commended for writing a balanced view of the often politically charged history of Cuba. This work will be of interest to those with limited knowledge of the island and its people who desire an introduction to its rich past. . . . Suitable for use in undergraduate courses." "William Van Norman, The Historian

"Gott is always an interesting, well-informed and engaging writer." - Foreign Affairs --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I got this in advance of a trip to Cuba but found it just too long and detailed for my level of interest. It is very comprehensive and thorough, and for a scholar it would be great. But for the casual reader or traveler who just wants an overview it's a bit of a slog.

I read this to prepare for my February trip to Cuba. What amazed me, as an American, were just how many times the United States has involved itself in the life of Cubans. I did not realize--as a child of the 1980s--just how connected our two countries are. Once I was in Cuba, I witness the profound connections. This history gave a good taste of what to expect. For someone interested in preparing before a trip to this challenging country, this is a great book to get an in-depth history, that tells the country's story, beyond the events since Castro took power.

An absolutely solid history of Cuba that contextualized the complexity of Cuban history without either romanticizing or dismissing the Revolution and its aims. Extra points for its ongoing discussion of race and its impact on Cuban history. One star missing for almost complete silence on the role of women in Cuba.

Since visiting Cuba in 1997, I've always been fascinated by the place. Havana is a beautiful city, the

weather is great and the people are warm and engaging. The trouble is; the economy simply doesn't work. Richard Gott has written of the island from its first visits by the Spanish until the present day where it rests within its own time warp. Gott has done an admirable job. However, as with so many books on the subject of Cuba, it's as though its real history doesn't begin until 1959. This is the time of Castro's rise to power and it is where "Cuba: A New History" really comes to life. It is clear that Gott is very familiar with Cuba. It is clear that he has travelled there extensively and interviewed a wide cast of people. He is mildly sympathetic to Cuba treading its own path. But, by the same token, he doesn't fall for left wing jingoism. It is a very good read. I have little doubt that many will challenge my view. To cover Cuba and not point out its many failings will be seen as a weakness. Yet, the story of Cuba is more nuanced. It has been dominated by three empires and is only now beginning a path of relative independence. This will bring change. Gott clearly understands this point. It is a point missed by his critics who all too often only focus on the many failings of Castro and little else. I recommend this book to all those general readers seeking an understanding of this island nation and its place in the world. Richard Gott deserves credit. He has added to our knowledge of a small country that has risen above its otherwise backwater place in history.

Great seller, great book. Very interesting introspection into Cuban history. Despite going light on the colonial era the book is very interesting. I might not agree with the opinion at every corner about the facts but well worth the read.

Very good and accurate view of Cuba. Sent several to relatives as gifts. Found it to have information that we hadn't known about the country's history.

The author covers the history of Cuba from the 15th century to the present. I had to skip about a hundred pages to get to the 20th century, but plan to go back to the earlier years. Gott is from UK, a bit of a socialist, and never misses a chance to dis the US, but the US hasn't been a good neighbor to Cuba, for sure. The writing is smooth and readable. A good popular history. Footnotes are collected in the back of the book. Not too easy, not too densely written.

'Cuba: A New History' is an excellent account of Cuban history up until this book's publication in 2004. Gott manages to write in a completely engaging way and draws you in to the rich and diverse history of this amazing Caribbean island. This is in no way a dry and uninspiring read, but one that helps you immerse yourself in the history and developments over the years. From Spanish colonial

rule, US intervention and soviet support, Cuba has managed to retain some remnant of it's own identity and this book shows this side perfectly. The first 100 pages (looking at Spanish Colonial rule and the slave trades to Cuba) were the hardest to engage with for me, but as soon as the revolution occurred and the book focused on the Castro government and all that it entails, I became hooked to this masterly text. The author doesn't seem overly biased one way or the other, although you can tell he has respect for this tiny island nation. He doesn't seem to be too sensationalist either, for example when Che Guevara dies it is noted in quite an understated way and not overly hyped to have a greater impact. Two minor flaws with this book are the tiny font which by the end had given me serious eye strain, why academic texts insist on using this size font I'll never know. And the other flaw is a distinct lack of decent photography to add to the package. There are a few pages of grey photos in the middle, but not on good quality paper, or especially relevant to the overall text, i've come to expect better from history books these days. These are minor flaws in what is a brilliant account of Cuban history which leaves you with some indication of what the future may hold as well. If Cuba interests you in the slightest, I'd seriously recommend you take a look at this book. Feel free to check out my blog which can be found on my profile page.

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