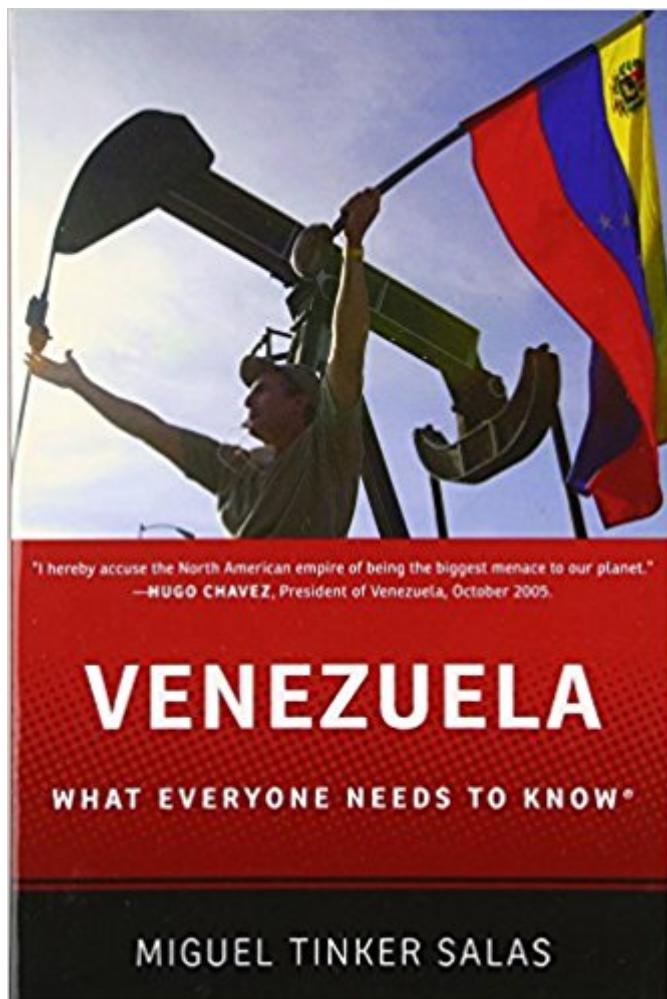


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Venezuela: What Everyone Needs To Know®



Synopsis

Among the top ten oil exporters in the world and a founding member of OPEC, Venezuela currently supplies 11 percent of U.S. crude oil imports. But when the country elected the fiery populist politician Hugo Chavez in 1998, tensions rose with this key trading partner and relations have been strained ever since. In this concise, accessible addition to Oxford's *What Everyone Needs to Know*® series, Miguel Tinker Salas -- a native of Venezuela who has written extensively about the country -- takes a broadly chronological approach that focuses especially on oil and its effects on Venezuela's politics, economy, culture, and international relations. After an introductory section that discusses the legacy of Spanish colonialism, Tinker Salas explores the "The Era of the Gusher," a period which began with the discovery of oil in the early twentieth century, encompassed the mid-century development and nationalization of the industry, and ended with a change of government in 1989 in response to widespread protests. The third section provides a detailed discussion of Hugo Chavez-his rise to power, his domestic political and economic policies, and his high-profile forays into international relations-as well as surveying the current landscape of Venezuela in the wake of Chavez's death in March 2013. Arranged in a question-and-answer format that allows readers to search topics of particular interest, the book covers questions such as, who is Simón Bolívar and why is he called the George Washington of Latin America? How did the discovery of oil change Venezuela's relationship to the U.S.? What forces were behind the coups of 1992? And how does Venezuela interact with China, Russia, and Iran? Informative, engaging, and written by a leading expert on the country, *Venezuela: What Everyone Needs to Know*® offers an authoritative guide to an increasingly important player on the world stage.*What Everyone Needs to Know*® is a registered trademark of Oxford University Press.

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WHAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW About This Series Who it's for: Busy people with diverse interests, ranging from college students to professionals, who wish to inform themselves in a succinct yet authoritative manner about a particular topic. What's inside: An incisive approach to a complex and timely issue, laid out in a straight-forward, question-and-answer format. Meet Our Authors Top experts in their given fields, ranging from an Economist correspondent to a director at the Council on Foreign Relations, you can trust our authors' expertise and guidance. Popular Topics in the "What Everyone Needs to Know" Series International Politics Environmental Policies World History Sciences & Math Religion & Spirituality

"In this broad, accessible overview of the country's political history, Salas finds the roots of most, but not all, of today's problems in the rule of Hugo Chavez, who served as Venezuela's president from 1999 until his death in 2013." --Foreign Affairs "This new entry in Oxford's ongoing series [is] an especially timely and valuable resource...Using a question-and-answer format that aids in scanning and searching, Salas offers an informative overview of his native country's history...Key context on a political hot spot." --Library Journal "This is not just a reference book; it is an easily accessible history of the country of Venezuela. Formatted into questions and answers, Salas has written a fair-minded text for the reader interested in knowing more about the country's history and politics or the researcher looking for an up-to-date reference work. Every popular movement, every coup, and every major economic influence important to the nation of Venezuela is discussed here."

--Counterpunch

This book is great until you learn that it is written with a heavy pro-chavista bias. Anyway a great source of information if you can "clean" the presented information. It doesn't shy away from reporting unfavourable events, so that is why I am giving 4 /5.

good book for history but I was looking for more detail for the present periods

This is written from the Chavista point of view. That would be acceptable if the author said that was what he was presenting, but instead, he pretends that he is offering objective facts. As such, this book is little more than Chavista propaganda.

This work in a mere 240 pages offered a surprisingly balanced and complete introduction to the essential modern history and political, economic, and social dynamics of Venezuela. In addition, very well written and engaging. If you want a non-ideological, serious, but enjoyable to read introduction to this important country, strongly recommend Salas' excellent work.

Although not well referenced, it is surprisingly accurate.

Don't hate without first reading this book. A fresh prospective on Venezuela.

Overall this is a good book, one of the best of a rather good series. The book really has three parts: Venezuela before oil (up to the early 1900s), Venezuela after oil and Venezuela and Hugo Chavez. The earlier history is succinct and extremely informative. The country after oil gets more complex, and I read it as a case study in how increasing reliance on an export commodity can be a mixed blessing. The politics of Hugo Chavez is the most complex part of the book, the most controversial and to be blunt, is a bit of a slog. I don't see the book as particularly for or against Chavez. From my close reading of the book, it seems as if some of the controversy about the man is because he is of mixed race, and has tried to bring people of color into the country's politics. Salas refers a number of times to how the nation's elite disdains people of color and has done so since before independence. I am not Venezuelan, so I'm trusting Salas on this--but it's a common enough pattern. That however does not excuse Chavez of incompetency, and it seems as if his administration was ham-handed about many things. The book deserves more readers, particularly American readers. Venezuela is close (look at a map!) and is possessed of immense oil resources--the book cites estimates of certified oil reserves of 296 billion barrels and recoverable reserves of 513 billion barrels, together with 5.5 trillion cubic meters of certified natural gas reserves. That's huge, and even with the current oil glut, that huge reserve so close to the US will certainly be of much interest to US leadership in the coming decades. That could mean intervention. Part of the history the book describes after oil and before Chavez is the Cold War era, when the US was busy countering anything leftist, particularly in the Americas, and did dabble in Venezuela. Oddly, when the country nationalized the oil industry (1976) the US did not intervene. The Chavez

era is still current, although he died in 2013 and his era seems likely to soon fracture. Venezuela is not well known in the US, although 200,000 plus Venezuelans live in the US, and a good number have invested in property in Florida. Some aspects of the Chavez era interest American liberals: Chavez's new constitution pledged to protect the environment, which is an excellent idea, and proclaimed the country to be multiethnic and pluricultural (those are the author's terms). Excellent ideas, however, also do not excuse incompetency, and may not be achievable. All that oil still in the ground bodes grimly for the environment and look what oil wealth has done for the country in the last century.

I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. I accepted the opportunity to read this, because a friend of mine went to work in Venezuela for the past few years, and I wanted to know more about the country. Honestly, there is only so much information I can get from Wikipedia, BBC Latin America and Caracas Chronicles. A lot of other online publications actually get the news about Venezuela WRONG. I learned to take reports with a grain of salt, because it is nearly impossible to get what is really going on unless you speak to someone who has lived there. So much about Venezuela is misunderstood, and it is important that this book exists. This book is perfect for someone like me, who wanted to know more about the country. Miguel Tinker Salas does a great job of explaining the common misconceptions as well as share past and current issues, as well as the country's progress. I would imagine that it would be useful for people who are planning to visit or work there, someone doing a report for school, or an International Relations major in college. I think it is well written, but I do not believe it is a book that any casual reader can get into. You have to already have some type of motivation to learn more about Venezuela.

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