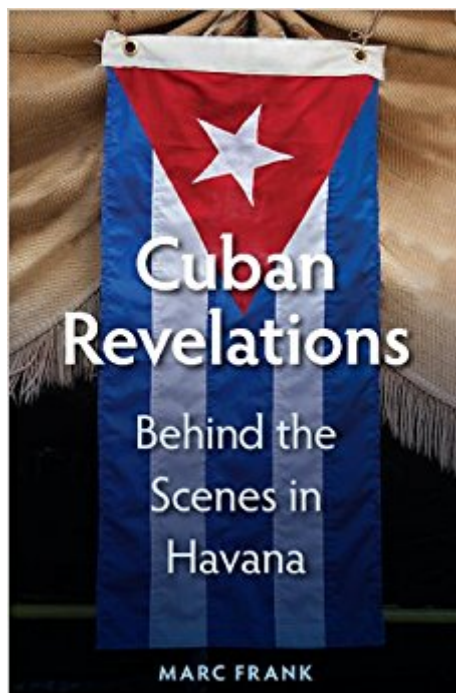




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Cuban Revelations: Behind The Scenes In Havana (Contemporary Cuba)



Synopsis

“A vivid, engaging exploration of Cuban politics, culture and economic life.”
•America “Considerably deeper than much of the work on the subject. It takes on the challenge of describing what’s in a black box with energy and candor.”
•VisitCuba.com “The most informative, accurate, insightful, detailed account available on twenty-first century Cuba.”
•HavanaTimes.org “Marc Frank is the best foreign journalist reporting from Cuba today. We now have a behind-the-scenes look at the changes large and small taking place as the Cuban revolution molts from Fidel to Raúl to the next generation.”
•Julia Sweig, author of *Cuba: What Everyone Needs to Know* “A must-read book to grasp what has been happening in Cuba over the past ten years.”
•Wayne Smith, director of the Cuba Project, Center for International Policy “Frank enriches his fascinating reportage with his unparalleled access to expressive Cubans from all walks of life.”
•Richard Feinberg, University of California, San Diego “With a sharp eye for human detail and a clear understanding of what makes Cuba tick, Frank’s narrative bears eloquent, balanced, and always sensitive witness to the troubled trajectory of Cuba from the dark days of the 1990s economic collapse through to the challenging changes under Raúl. It genuinely gets inside the otherwise confusing system and society, and is all the more welcome for that.”
•Antoni Kapcia, coeditor of *The Changing Dynamic of Cuban Civil Society* “Gripping and insightful. It is rare indeed to find reporting as authoritative and well sourced as this about what remains an impenetrable and opaque regime.”
•Michael Reid, author of *Forgotten Continent: The Battle for Latin America’s Soul* “As a U.S.-born journalist who has called Havana home for almost a quarter century, Mark Frank has observed in person the best days of the revolution, the fall of the Soviet bloc, the great depression of the 1990s, the stepping aside of Fidel Castro, and the reforms now being devised by his brother. In *Cuban Revelations*, Frank offers a first-hand account of daily life in Cuba at the turn of the twenty-first century, the start of a new and dramatic epoch for islanders and the Cuban diaspora. Examining the effects of U.S. policy toward Cuba, Frank analyzes why Cuba has entered an extraordinary, irreversible period of change and considers what the island’s future holds. The enormous social engineering project taking place today under Raúl’s leadership is fraught with many dangers, and *Cuban Revelations* follows the new leader’s efforts to overcome bureaucratic resistance and the fears of a populace that stand in his way. In addition, Frank offers a colorful chronicle of his travels across the island’s many and varied provinces, sharing candid interviews with people from

all walks of life. He takes the reader outside the capital to reveal how ordinary Cubans live and what they are thinking and feeling as fifty-year-old social and economic taboos are broken. He shares his honest and unbiased observations on extraordinary positive developments in social matters, like healthcare and education, as well as on the inefficiencies in the Cuban economy. Ultimately, Cuban Revelations is an objective account by a reporter who has lived with the Cubans for many years as their old world falls apart and they set about trying to build a new one.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Most outside observers sense that Cuba is on the cusp of substantial economic and political changes. The question is how far, how fast, and how violent these changes will be. Frank, a Financial Times correspondent, is based in Havana, and he has covered Cuba and Latin America for more than two decades. While he remains sympathetic to the broad social goals of the Cuban Revolution, Frank makes clear that the current economic and political system is unsustainable. It is top heavy with bureaucrats, hostile to innovation, and repressive to those brave enough to challenge it. The so-called special period of the 1990s, after the collapse of Soviet economic support, has led to the emergence of haves and have-nots, mocking the facade of egalitarianism. The general population is locked in a "gray zone," indifferent to politics yet waiting for something to happen. Meanwhile, post-Fidel leaders hope to tinker with the system while avoiding the dramatic changes seen in Communist regimes in Eastern Europe. An incisive,

revealing portrait of a nation on the brink of transformation. --Jay Freeman --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

“The most useful accounts, hands down, of contemporary Cuba.”
•CubaNews “Despite Cuba’s controlled media environment, Frank managed to open doors to information not readily available to others, a testament to his intrepid reporting.”
•Americas Quarterly “Excellent.”
•Tim Cole, British Ambassador to Cuba “[A] detailed investigation of Raul Castro’s reforms since his unexpected appointment to power in the summer of 2006.”
•New York Review of Books “A remarkably rich, gritty account of daily life today in the twilight of Caribbean socialism.”
•Foreign Affairs “Fascinating.”
•Katrina vanden Heuvel, Washington Post “Our top non-fiction pick. Cuban Revelations is a well-documented and insightful view of the last twenty-years in Cuban history.”
•Cuba Counterpoints “A must-read. . . . Essential for a sharper grasp of Cuban-American relations and the role American politics plays in the sovereignty of this independent state.”
•Library Journal “An incisive, revealing portrait of a nation on the brink of transformation.”
•Booklist

One of the most startling changes in international politics in recent years has been President Obama’s moves to open relations with the island of Cuba, even loosen the embargo against that island. This has not been done in isolation though. Since Fidel Castro stepped down from power in 2006 and his younger brother, Raul, stepped up to take his place, Cuba has been undergoing some slow, but startling, changes in its economy and politics. This book, written by a Reuters journalist who lives on the island with his Cuban wife and has a wealth of contacts inside the island, charts Cuba’s reforms from the end of the Soviet Union in 1991 to 2013. It shows how Fidel tried one last time to save his Soviet-style socialist state before ill-health forced him out of power and how Raul’s turn to more market-oriented solutions is slowly changing Cuban society. Though there have been some political reforms to, it is still very much a one-party system, but one that seems to want to emulate China’s Communist Party rather than the Soviet Union’s. Of course, because this was written prior to Pres. Obama’s surprise announcement in December 2014 about the U.S. and Cuba opening relations and respective embassies and Obama and Raul Castro’s recent meeting at the Summit of the Americas in Panama City, so when the author mentions U.S.-Cuba relations, it is usually because the U.S. is inflexible in the face of the changes going on inside the country. Indeed,

the author seems rather biased against the U.S. and Cuban-Americans efforts to counter the Castro regime, describing them as rather foolish and impotent in the face of the Castro brothers. The author also seems to have a rather favorable opinion of Raul Castro and is rather sympathetic to his attempts at reform. Though somewhat unbalanced, I would not necessarily characterize this book as unfair. In fact, this is probably the best book you will find if you want to know about the changes that have been going on inside Cuba for the past two decades.

I frequently travel to Cuba for work and read just about everything I can about the country--newspaper articles, magazine essays, novels, academic works, and non-fiction books. This is the best book I have read about contemporary Cuba in a long time. In fact, colleagues heading to Cuba soon just asked me to compile a reading list for them and Marc Frank's book was at the top of my list. Frank is a seasoned journalist, nimble writer and long-time resident of Cuba. What I like most about the book is its blend of straight-ahead reporting and personal stories. Frank has the requisite detachment a journalist needs to tell a real, credible and street-level account of what's been going in Cuba over the last 20 years or more. He also has excellent sources, which make the book come alive with insights and opinions that do not often appear on the front page. The fact that Frank lives in Cuba and has an extended Cuban family give it a rich and intimate tone that makes it especially rewarding to read.

If you read only one book about Cuba, make it this one. I've read many history and recent events books about Cuba, but this one covers almost up to President Obama's announcement on Dec. 17, 2014, and this book makes you see it coming. Most Americans know so very little about Cuba and don't realize how much has changed in the past three to five years. I was there in December 2014 (when Obama and Raul Castro made their announcements), and I just wish I'd read this book before I went. It's a fast, excellent read, written so clearly (though he does skip around on dates quite a bit over a period of the last five years - I jot the year in the margin to keep up with it). This book is a MUST for anyone who wants the truth about Cuba. (I'm going back for a longer trip next December.)

I bought this for a friend traveling to Cuba. It met her desire to read about the history, development, & culture of the country she'd be visiting. According to her, it was very informative & an excellent read.

For information on Cuba it's easier to trust someone like journalist Marc Frank who has actually lived there for a number of years. He covered all the subjects about contemporary Cuba that I had questions about. The only drawback is that change is moving very fast inside Cuba and also between the U.S. and Cuba and the copyright date is 2013. But then authors can't put out a new edition of their books every year. That is what the internet is for. If you plan to visit Cuba, this book should be on your must read list.

My recent trip to Cuba prompted this purchase. My only regret is not having read it before the trip. Marc Frank does a superb job of taking you behind the scenes and explaining the reasons for the what is happening now and how Cuba's reactions to US foreign policy shapes their thinking. Our family had a shipping business which necessitated our traveling to Cuba frequently prior to the revolution. My visits to Old Habana in the 50's are deeply etched in memory and to see many magnificent buildings and homes now in shambles speaks volumes to the failure of communism. Regardless, the Cuban people survive and hope for better days to come.

I met the author in person in Havana and bought the book when I returned home. A great piece and a great journalist. Recommend for those visiting or interested in Cuba.

I visited Cuba and was immediately captured by the culture and history of this once glamorous and wealthy Caribbean island. Great book, honest perspective and objective. Based on true and hard facts of what Cuba was before and after the revolution. It is very easy to judge their story and history, this book made me rethink what I knew about Cuba, their communist government, and especially the Castro Brothers. I truly believe prosperity is on its way, and it will not be an easy process, but hopefully Fidel's brother whom seems to be more of a hands-on guy, will make change possible, in their own Cuban way.

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