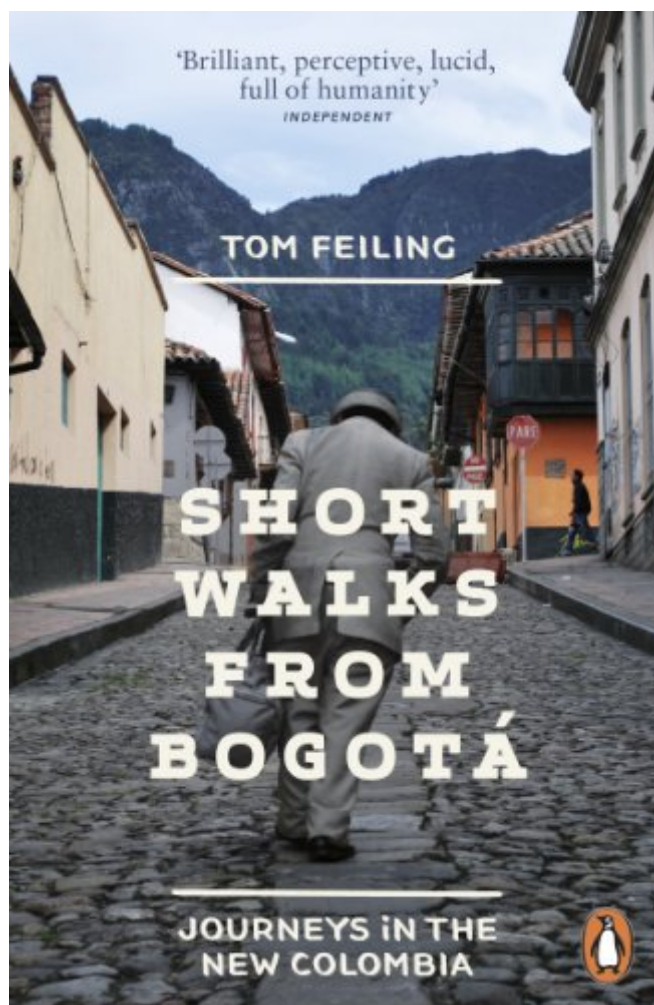


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Short Walks From Bogotá: Journeys In The New Colombia



Synopsis

For decades, Colombia was the 'narcostate'. Now travel to Colombia and South America is on the rise, and it's seen as one of the rising stars of the global economy. Where does the truth lie? Writer and journalist Tom Feiling, author of the acclaimed study of cocaine *The Candy Machine*, has journeyed throughout Colombia, down roads that were until recently too dangerous to travel, to paint a fresh picture of one of the world's most notorious and least-understood countries. He talks to former guerrilla fighters and their ex-captives; women whose sons were 'disappeared' by paramilitaries; the nomadic tribe who once thought they were the only people on earth and now charge \$10 for a photo; the Japanese 'emerald cowboy' who made a fortune from mining; and revels in the stories that countless ordinary Colombians tell. How did a land likened to paradise by the first conquistadores become a byword for hell on earth? Why is one of the world's most unequal nations also one of its happiest? How is it rebuilding itself after decades of violence, and how successful has the process been so far? Vital, shocking, often funny and never simplistic, *Short Walks from Bogota* unpicks the tangled fabric of Colombia, to create a stunning work of reportage, history and travel writing.

Book Information

File Size: 1579 KB

Print Length: 279 pages

Page Numbers Source ISBN: 024195990X

Publisher: Penguin (August 30, 2012)

Publication Date: August 30, 2012

Sold by:Â PEN UK

Language: English

ASIN: B008K0X4NW

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #198,050 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #15

inÂ Books > History > Americas > South America > Colombia #17 inÂ Books > Travel > South

America > Colombia #44 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Americas > Latin America > South America

Customer Reviews

This book has disappointed me and I gave up trying to read it after about 1/3. I found the tone patronising and cynical and this was backed up by the angles taken on various topics, such as simply dismissing the efforts of a Colombian woman (Marta) to talk up her country's culture and positives eg it's literature. He went on to dismiss Colombia's greatest cultural icon, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, whose contribution to journalism and literature are gigantic. Considering this book is meant to step into Colombia's skin to try and understand her current mood, I would have thought listening to her people and respecting the voice of its greatest writer would be a good idea. But no, he seemed more interested in his own opinions, judgements, experiences and journalistic investigations. I thought quite a lot about what was going wrong with this book and ultimately decided the author is stuck in his head in a country that has a deep heart. So I put the book down when it kept annoying me and picked up one by a Colombian - Oblivion by Hector Abad. It is remarkable, loving, tender, tragic and truly beautifully expressed. If you want to delve into the Colombian psyche, be guided by a Colombian.

I read this book after living in Colombia for four months, and found it both enjoyable and some ways enlightening. Colombia is a complex, complicated country, and Feiling's book strikes a good balance between description and analysis. We tend to think of the violence in Colombia as a result of guerrillas vs. the Army, and this book convincingly shows the huge role of paramilitary right wing groups in destabilizing society.

Very worthwhile primer on modern Colombia. Lots to wade through in the chapters about the paramilitaries and the guerrillas, and I would have wished for more discussion of Colombian life and its cities, but clearly those are important issues and I found the book helpful.

Very interesting and informative book that is easy to read and provides very good information about the recent history of Colombia and the current culture and flavor of Bogota and other unique areas around the country. I read it in preparation for my first trip to Colombia and felt very much up to speed on the culture and recent history of Colombia. Highly recommend.

The title may be misleading but Feiling knows his stuff. You may not agree with the politics but as you will soon gather this is no average book on Colombia, cutting away at general travel chaff - and there's a lot out there - Feiling explores the politics through personal interviews, in depth research and what can only be described as a profound understanding of Colombia and a love of its people.

I read this while I was in Bogota. Feiling's writing style keeps an interesting pace while giving you plenty of historical facts and fun anecdotal stories which truly added to the novel. Made my trip more enjoyable and helped me appreciate all of Colombia.

A great read which added to my impressions and understanding of Colombia. Combines stories and anecdotes with very accessible history and politics. A wonderful primer for anyone travelling in Colombia.

A very insightful analysis of the current issues facing Colombia. It was a pleasure to read and gave me a more rounded perspective on the culture and history.

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