

Understand Mexico

MEXICO TODAY802

President Peña Nieto is trying to rouse a slumbering economy – but the people are angrier than ever with government.

HISTORY804

A truly epic story – the Maya, the Aztecs and the Spanish conquistadors, plus rebellions, revolution and democracy.

THE MEXICAN WAY OF LIFE 817

A window on what makes Mexicans tick, from the Virgin of Guadalupe to *lucha libre* (Mexican wrestling.)

THE ARTS 821

From Frida Kahlo and New Mexican Cinema to its countless artisans, musicians and street artists, Mexico bubbles with creativity.

THE MEXICAN KITCHEN830

An inside track on Mexico's delectable flavors: know your sopes from your *sopas*, and the best way to drink tequila. Written by expert author Mauricio Velázquez de León.

LANDSCAPES & WILDLIFE836

Jungles and oceans, volcanoes and deserts; whale sharks, howler monkeys and scarlet macaws – Mexico is one of the world's most dramatic and biologically diverse countries.

Mexico Today

The Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), Mexico's longtime ruling party of the 20th century, got a new shot at governing when its candidate Enrique Peña Nieto was elected president in 2012, on hopes he could spark a long-awaited economic takeoff and tackle some of the country's dire social and security problems. But by the midpoint of his term in 2015, Mexico was in the grips of an unprecedented wave of public rage at its entire governmental class, to which no obvious remedy was apparent.

Best on Film

Amores Perros (Love's a Bitch; 2000) Gritty groundbreaker that set director Alejandro González Iñárritu and actor Gael García Bernal on the path to stardom.

Y Tu Mamá También (And Your Mother Too; 2001) Classic 'growing up' road movie about two privileged Mexico City teenagers (Gael García Bernal and Diego Luna).

Heli (2013) Amat Escalante won Cannes' best-director garland for this tale of a young couple caught up in the drug war.

600 Miles (2015) Tim Roth plays a kidnapped US law-enforcement agent in Gabriel Ripstein's arms-smuggling thriller.

Best in Print

God's Middle Finger Richard Grant investigates the narco-riddled Sierra Madre Occidental (called *Bandit Roads* in the UK.)

Pedro Páramo The ultimate Mexican novel, by Juan Rulfo.

El Narco Ioan Grillo spent more than a decade covering the drug war in some of the most dangerous territories.

Sliced Iguana Travel writer Isabella Tree's warm, perceptive account of Mexico and its indigenous cultures.

The 43

On September 26, 2014, three trainee teachers from Ayotzinapa in Guerrero state were killed by municipal police in the city of Iguala, and another 43 disappeared. The event sparked months of protests around the country in an outpouring of Mexicans' anger and grief about the insecurity of their country and the perceived corruption, criminality and impunity of so many in authority. Many believed high levels of government and/or the security forces were somehow behind the students' disappearance. A repeated slogan among the protesters was '*Fue el estado*' (It was the state).

Iguala's mayor and his wife were among over 70 people arrested in the weeks following the disappearance. Six weeks after the disappearance, Mexico's attorney general announced that investigators had determined the 43 had been kidnapped by police on the mayor's orders and then handed over to drug gangsters, who murdered them, burned the bodies at a garbage tip and threw the ashes into a stream.

Why? One theory is that the buses which the students had commandeered to go to Iguala were, unknown to them, being used for drug shipments. Another is that the drug gang to which the students were handed over mistook them for a rival gang. Another is that the mayor and his wife thought they had come to disrupt a rally they were holding.

But many people were unconvinced by the official version of events, and parents of the victims requested a separate investigation by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). In September 2015 the IACHR team reported that it was 'scientifically impossible' for all the bodies to have been incinerated at the tip, and voiced suggestions there may have been a cover-up of some evidence. The government then reopened its