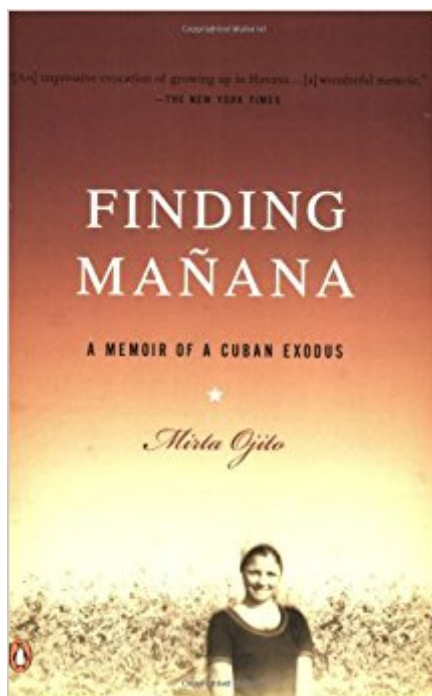


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Finding Manana: A Memoir Of A Cuban Exodus



Synopsis

Finding María Ana is a vibrant, moving memoir of one family's life in Cuba and their wrenching departure. Mirta Ojito was born in Havana and raised there until the unprecedented events of the Mariel boatlift brought her to Miami, one teenager among more than a hundred thousand fellow refugees. Now a reporter for The New York Times, Ojito goes back to reckon with her past and to find the people who set this exodus in motion and brought her to her new home. She tells their stories and hers in superb and poignant detail—chronicling both individual lives and a major historical event. Growing up, Ojito was eager to excel and fit in, but her parents'—and eventually her own— incomplete devotion to the revolution held her back. As a schoolgirl, she yearned to join Castro's Young Pioneers, but as a teenager in the 1970s, when she understood the darker side of the Cuban revolution and learned more about life in el norte from relatives living abroad, she began to wonder if she and her parents would be safer and happier elsewhere. By the time Castro announced that he was opening Cuba's borders for those who wanted to leave, she was ready to go; her parents were more than ready: They had been waiting for this opportunity since they married, twenty years before. Finding María Ana gives us Ojito's own story, with all of the determination and intelligence—and the will to confront darkness—that carried her through the boatlift and made her a prizewinning journalist. Putting her reporting skills to work on the events closest to her heart, she finds the boatlift's key players twenty-five years later, from the exiles who negotiated with Castro to the Vietnam vet on whose boat, María Ana, she finally crossed the treacherous Florida Strait. Finding María Ana is the engrossing and enduring story of a family caught in the midst of the tumultuous politics of the twentieth century.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It's impossible not to admire the boldness, the candor, the moral toughness of Ms. Ojito's writing. In this wonderful memoir, she ransoms herself from the seductions of nostalgia, and reclaims instead the beleaguered Cuba of her childhood—a Cuba that is all the more interesting for not being looked at through the prism of longing and desire.

The New York Times: "In *Finding María Ana*, Mirta Ojito goes a long way in righting the Mariel story and bestowing some belated dignity on this ragged stepchild of exile history.

The Los Angeles Times: "Ms. Ojito's book is filled with the anguish of separation and the tragedy of living under a merciless regime. But it also celebrates familial bonds and undying love—not to mention freedom itself, a gift too often taken for granted by those of us who have never had to live without it.

The Wall Street Journal: "The insight Ojito brings to bear, coupled with the crispness of her prose, make this memoir required reading for anyone interested in the history of post-Batista Cuba or Cuban-American relations.

The Washington Post: "New York Times reporter Mirta Ojito melds the personal with the political in a moving account of her family's departure from Cuba. She also provides a solid historical context for those five months in 1980 when 125,000 Cubans arrived in Florida, a mass exodus that came to be known as the Mariel boat lift.

People: "Ojito's historical reconstruction is fascinating... (She) has created a poignant and poetic memoir of an important moment in Cuban and US history.

The Washington Times: "This is much more than one Cuban exile's bittersweet tale; it's the memoir of an entire era.

Times-Picayune: "Ojito's book is unlike most entries in the genre of the modern memoir. More than a novelistic exercise in creative recollection, it's a skillful blend of reportage and family history about a pivotal international event.

Sun-Sentinel: "Like many Cuban exiles, Ojito says she left part of her soul in Cuba. The good news is the rest of it came over with her intact. Plenty of it went into this book.

St. Petersburg Times: "A political drama bound to be a page-turner.

Palm Beach Post: "A thorough and exciting account—a suspenseful story—a skillful melding of individual personalities with the grand currents of history.

Kirkus

Reviews – “...fast-paced and riveting” | Ojito uses her formidable research, eye for detail and interviewing skills to lay bare the behind-the-scenes machinations through her writing, she has opened a window for others, and offers a fine introduction to the human face of history. – Bookpage – a rich, but nuanced picture of life in Cuba under Castro and the intimately personal nature of politics. – Library Journal – “Until I read this book, the Mariel refugees were headlines in a newspaper, stereotypes fed by political rhetoric. In *Finding María Ana*, Mirta Ojito has given me a peek behind the headlines, and a sense of how history affects the individual.” – Esmeralda Santiago, author of *When I Was Puerto Rican* – “*Finding María Ana* is a strongly written, straight-shooting and affecting memoir about one family’s experiences leading up to the Mariel boatlift out of Cuba. Rich in detail and concise in its capturing of that chapter of Cuban history, the book is also a touching tale of a young woman’s coming of age during a time of great political turmoil and personal travails. – Oscar Hijuelos, author of *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*

“In this wonderful memoir, Ojito ransoms herself from the seductions of nostalgia and reclaims instead the beleaguered Cuba of her childhood.” – The New York Times

I enjoyed this book. We read it for our last book club meeting. It gave me insight into the politics of Cuba in the 1980’s, that is even more relevant today with all the talk about immigration and our current changing relationship, than it was in 2005 when it was written. It also made real the suffering and risks people are willing to endure to get to America. Anyone planning a trip to Cuba should read this book.

Ms. Ojito researched this book well, and her own personal experience is told in beautiful prose. It is a moving account of the reality of the Cuban experience, poignant, yet written without maudlin sentimentality. I highly recommend this book.

This is a great read. I learned so much about the US and Cuba without realizing I was learning:)

This wonderful memoir should be made into a movie. The final scene wherein the author finds the boat that years ago had taken her out of Cuba to freedom in the USA is truly cinematic. Are you reading this, Andy Garcia?

This book is a perfect example of how the Cuban boat lifts were. It describes the struggle and hardships it was in Cuba during revolutionary time. It also describes what the author had to do to get to the US and the sacrifices she had to make during that time. If you are interested on finding out what was the mariel boat lifts were like in a first person view, then I recommend this book to you.

Very clear picture of the tragedy of communist Cuba. Well written. Inspiring.

I loved this book and I felt for the author as she recounted her experience of leaving Cuba with her family. Even though I bought this book some time ago there are parts of the book that did leave a deep impression on me to the extent that every now and then I remember certain passages and feel soblessed I was not born under such a regime.

One of the few books that I will read again

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