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# Traditional Weavers Of Guatemala: Their Stories, Their Lives



## Synopsis

Against the backdrop of Guatemala, this book presents portraits of artisans working in the ancient traditions of the Maya paired with insights into the creation of the textiles and the events that have affected their work. Weaving, spinning, and basket making have sustained the Maya economically and culturally against the pressures of change and a 36-year civil war that decimated their population. Their persistence in continuing traditional art has created some of the loveliest, most colorful textiles the world has ever known. Artisans share their personal histories, hopes, and dreams along with the products of their hands and looms. Their stories show determination in the face of unimaginable loss and hardship which instill an appreciation for the textiles themselves and for the strong people who create them.

## Book Information

Paperback: 152 pages

Publisher: Thrums Books (September 1, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0983886075

ISBN-13: 978-0983886075

Product Dimensions: 10 x 0.5 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 22 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #318,389 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #22 in [Books > History > Americas > Central America > Guatemala](#) #51 in [Books > History > Ancient Civilizations > Mayan](#) #114 in [Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Crafts & Hobbies > Needlecrafts & Textile Crafts > Weaving](#)

## Customer Reviews

“In *Traditional Weavers of Guatemala*, the authors present a sensitive, detailed, and much-needed holistic interpretation of how textiles and life inseparably intertwine.” —Mary A. Littrell, co-author, *Artisans and Fair Trade* [Deborah Chandler and Teresa Cordón] have expertly woven knowledge of artisan crafts with the enduring beauty of the Guatemalan landscape and the grisly history of ethnic cleansing by the country’s army and police during the recent civil war. —Kathleen Vitale, CEO, *Endangered Threads Documentaries* “Authors Deborah Chandler and Teresa Cordón and photographer Joe Coca carry us to a new level of appreciation for the achievement of Guatemala’s artists.

The authors' deep knowledge and love of their subjects shine on every page. Marilyn Anderson, co-director, Pro Arte Maya Deborah Chandler and Teresa Cordón weave a tale as rich and textured as the cloth they describe. It is a triumphant tale of personal artistry and innovation. Mary Anne Wise, president and co-founder, Cultural Cloth Weavers will especially love the detailed information about textile techniques, but every reader will love this tour of Guatemala and introduction to its people. Madelyn van der Hoogt, editor emerita, Handwoven Coauthors Chandler (Learning To Weave; Guatemalan Woven Wealth) and Cordón have written a beautiful book featuring intimate portrayals of a diverse group of Guatemalan artists and their works. Jennifer Namizadeh, Librarian, Richmond Library, Columbia, South Carolina "This is a beautifully illustrated book with enough technical information to interest weavers no matter what their skill level may be. The wealth of colour photographs of textiles will appeal to designers and collectors." Shelly Anderson, Textile Research Centre, trc-leiden.nl

Deborah Chandler is the creator and director of Weaving Futures, where she has had the pleasure and honor of working with many Mayan weavers. She is the author of Learning to Weave. She lives in Guatemala. Teresa Cordón is the owner of the award-winning Comercial Naleb, a handwoven hat business. She is an avid provider of education and marketing for the work of Mayan artisans. She lives in Guatemala. Joe Coca is a photographer of people from all walks of life over five continents, industrial products and installations, architecture, food, and especially handcrafted textiles and other artisan goods. He lives in Fort Collins, Colorado.

I have just finished my third reading of this beautiful book. The first reading was to devour the stunning photos and breeze through the stories of 20 traditional artisans, reading for story line. The second reading was to slowly savor the beauty of Guatemala, of the artisans and of the textiles so clearly captured in Joe Coca's photos that fill this book. I read to deeply feel and let myself be moved by the sensitively told stories of people's lives and their crafts as shared with the authors, Guatemalan Teresa Cordón and weaver Deborah Chandler. In between and ongoing I've taken the buffet approach; I flip through the book only looking for photos of working hands, or faces, or landscape, or a certain textile technique. With a more careful reading of the text and ongoing examination of the pictures I am understanding many things about the textiles and the weavers that I missed the first time. It is a book to be savored. Between the stories of the artisans are very helpful sidebars about Guatemalan cultures and history. The book designer should be credited too because

the photo layout and sidebars complement and help clarify the stories. There are thoughtful little touches like the end pages with glossary and index printed on paper of a slightly different colored so they can be found quickly. This beautiful book will bring pleasure to anyone who loves Guatemala, or traditional textiles, or beautiful photos, or preservation of diverse cultures.

This is a book that will remain a treasured part of my library. Though their words and pictures authors Deborah Chandler and Teresa Cordon and photographer Joe Coca not only stunningly portray 20 Guatemalan artists, but in so doing teach us not only about Mayan and Guatemalan history and culture, but also about the technicalities of weaving, spinning, embroidery and basketmaking, all in terms understandable to the lay person. The glossary was also very useful. The lives and aspirations of these women and men will stay with me for a long time. The artists have managed to overcome so much to create such elegant beauty. I've already given two copies of this book as gifts and I'm sure I will continue to have it as a favorite gift item for a long time to come. I also found it very useful to read before my upcoming trip to Guatemala so that I can become a more educated consumer of textiles when I am there.

This book is an inspiration to all weavers. The lives of the artists featured are intertwined with the fiber arts they practice; the fact that they continue to weave, spin and embroider is a gift to humanity for preserving these techniques, considering the incredible conditions in which they live and the horrors they suffered from past brutal conflicts. Non-weavers will appreciate the remarkable history of these men and women. The book is well written with compassion while celebrating the beauty of the people and their work; the authors are knowledgeable of work, the people and the country. The photography is stunning.

What a wonderful read. What these weavers have accomplished during a life that would test the strongest among us. Thank you for bringing their beautiful art and life accomplishments for all to appreciate.

Beautifully designed, photographed and written. A lovely celebration of some of the finest practitioners of a centuries-old craft. I have spent a fair amount of time among Guatemalan weavers and am always grateful when they are written about with the sort of respect this author brings.

Deborah Chandler and Teresa Cordon I really thought that all the photos from the book were

absolutely great and vivid (since they were taken by a professional) but these photos are amazing now I realized that, is you guys that transmit the passion of everything that you do!! Congrats again I love your book! I can say this is the best book that represents all Guatemala is; colors, history, weavers, food, passion and so on.

WONDERFUL book....such an eye-opener about the culture of Guatemala....wonderful stories and absolutely GORGEOUS photography all the way through!!

Great book. Inspirational!

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