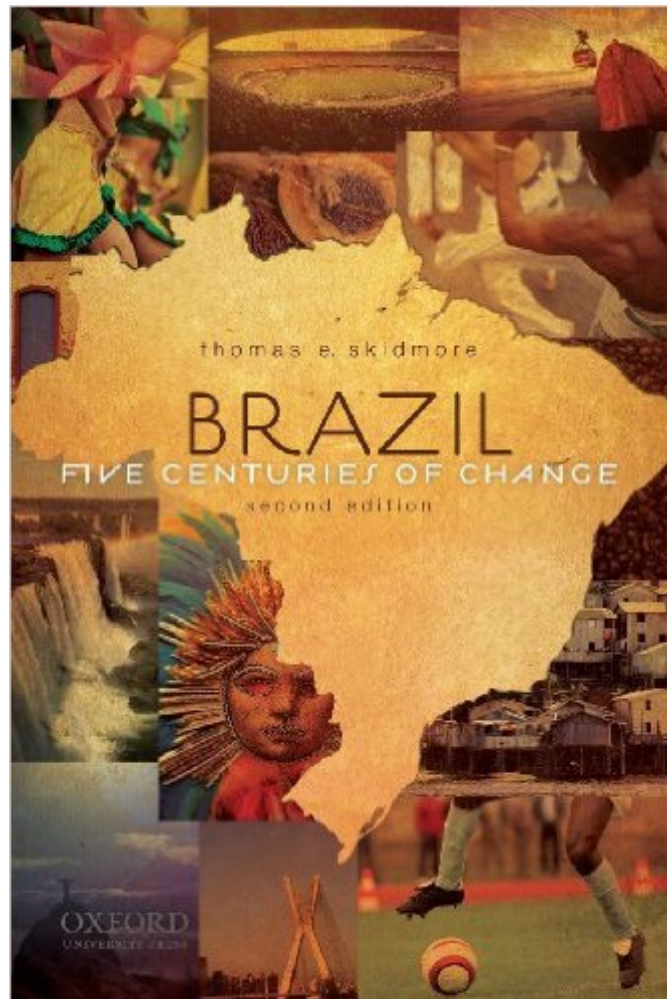


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# Brazil: Five Centuries Of Change, 2nd Edition (Latin American Histories)



## Synopsis

Revised and updated in this second edition, *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change* vividly traces the development of Brazil over the last 500 years. Author Thomas E. Skidmore, a preeminent authority on Brazil, provides a lively political and economic narrative while also including relevant details on society and culture. Skidmore's major revision of the colonial chapters begins with the discovery of Brazil by Pedro Alvares Cabral and includes Portugal's remarkable command of the vast country in the face of Spanish, French, and Dutch colonial interests. The text goes on to cover the move of the Portuguese monarchy to Brazil in 1808, the country's independence in 1822, establishment of the Empire within the context of expansion of the coffee trade, the importance of slavery in nineteenth-century Brazil, and the move towards abolition. This second edition offers an unparalleled look at Brazil in the twentieth century, including in-depth coverage of the 1930 revolution and Vargas's rise to power; the ensuing unstable democratic period and the military coups that followed; and the reemergence of democracy in 1985. It concludes with the recent presidency of Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva, covering such economic successes as record-setting exports, dramatic foreign debt reduction, and improved income distribution. The second edition features numerous new images and a new bibliographic guide to recent works on Brazilian history for use by both instructors and students. Informed by the most recent scholarship available, *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change, Second Edition*, explores the country's many blessings--ethnic diversity, racial democracy, a vibrant cultural life, and a wealth of natural resources. It also looks at Brazil's historically severe problems--including political instability, military rule, chronic inflation, and international debt--and its deplorable environmental record. An ideal choice for undergraduate and graduate courses in Latin American history, this eloquent and detailed look at Brazil will be the standard history of the country for years to come.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is not the book I would recommend as a one volume introductory history of Brazil. The book contains way too many inaccuracies and overlooks many important aspects of Brazil's History. It gets better with the 1930 revolution though. On the book cover's advanced praise the book is welcomed as a standard textbook on Brazil's history for the years to come; I hope not. The book starts well with an overall introduction of Brazil's regions with geographical, economic, historic and demographic information. It brings good maps including a very interesting one with other countries' maps draped inside Brazil's map showing how huge is the territory (bigger than the continental US). From page 5 it goes downhill only recovering at around page 130. The way the book covers the colonial period is plain useless. The 322 years of Colonial Brazil are rushed in only 31 pages. Important events are forgotten and others are distorted. The Dutch invasion is described in the traditional single sided way. The Dutch occupation and posterior expulsion is regarded as the "Birth of Brazilian Nationalism" without considering the fair amount of Brazilians that saw in the occupation an opportunity of a better future under the rule of the Dutch. Domingo Calabar, in my opinion one of the few Brazilian heroes is not even mentioned. The episode known as the "Inconfidencia Mineira" is once more glamorized and reported with a pomp that surpasses the real importance of the movement. The Imperial period is a little bit better than the Colonial period but not quite. Many glitches can be found. Important popular upheavals like the so called "Confederacao do Equador" didn't receive more than one paragraph in the book.

Of the three short (one-volume) histories of Brazil I've read recently, I consider this the best.

Although I agree with Leonardo Alves that the early history is treated too briefly and with minor errors, the book is quite good on the modern history of Brazil. I have one minor criticism, and a wish. Prof. Skidmore uses the words "left" and "right" regularly to describe the political orientation of important individuals and groups in Brazil. I found this confusing and misleading, until I realized that I could get a coherent view by replacing "left" by "reformist" and "right" by "conservative" wherever they occur. The problem is that although "left" and "right" are a useful classification in some countries, they do not fit Brazil. For example, Cardoso is frequently considered to be a former leftist

who has become a centrist liberal, but this is misleading. Cardoso has consistently been a reformer, wanting to make major changes in the political and economic structure of Brazil, and his only shifts have been tactical; his values and underlying views have not changed. Similarly, it's very confusing to try to classify Goulart and his supporters into "left" and "right." Goulart himself would have been considered a rightist in Europe; he wanted to return to the policies of Vargas; most of his supporters would have been considered "leftists" in Europe. To understand what happened during Goulart's presidency and why it was ended by a military coup, it's more useful to think of Goulart and all his supporters as "reformist" and the Army leadership as "conservative."

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