



Culture and Customs of Haiti (Cultures and Customs of the World)

J. Michael Dash

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Culture and Customs of Haiti begins with an overview of the mountainous island that seemed forbidding to European colonizers. Historical periods, including French colonization, U.S. occupation in the early 20th century, Independence and the Duvaliers' reigns, until today, are reviewed and provide the framework for the volume. A chapter on the people and society details the pride of the black state that managed the only successful slave revolution in history. The extremes of society from the elite to the peasantry and slum dwellers are depicted, along with Haitians in diaspora. Religion in Haiti, with the strong amalgamation of Roman Catholicism and vaudou, a West African import, is then explained. A Social Customs chapter notes the joy that is found in such an economically depressed culture. The media and literature and language chapters necessarily unfold in the context of Haiti's political history. A section on writing in Creole is especially intriguing. Finally, chapters on the performing arts and visual arts evoke the energy and color of the people in such forms as vaudou jazz and dance, contemporary rara rock, and the folkloric influence on Haitian painting. A chronology and glossary supplement the text.

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