

Latin Americans Thought of It

AMAZING INNOVATIONS



Eva Salinas

© 2012 Eva Salinas (text)
Cover and interior design by Sheryl Shapiro
Edited by David MacDonald
Maps on pages 10–11 and running figure on page 19 by Tina Holdcroft

A sincere thank-you to expert reader Matthew Restall, Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of Latin American History at Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania.

Annick Press Ltd.

All rights reserved. No part of this work covered by the copyrights hereon may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical—without the prior written permission of the publisher.

We acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Government of Canada through the Canada Book Fund (CBF) for our publishing activities.



Cataloging in Publication

Salinas, Eva
Latin Americans thought of it : amazing innovations / Eva Salinas.

(We thought of it)

Includes index.

Issued also in Spanish under title: Lo inventaron los latinoamericanos.

ISBN 978-1-55451-376-5 (pbk.).—ISBN 978-1-55451-377-2 (bound)

1. Inventions—Latin America—History—Juvenile literature.
 2. Latin America—Intellectual life—Juvenile literature.
 3. Latin America—Civilization—Juvenile literature.
- I. Title. II. Series: We thought of it

T24.A1S25 2012

j609.8

C2011-907327-7

Distributed in Canada by:
Firefly Books Ltd.
66 Leek Crescent
Richmond Hill, ON
L4B 1H1

Published in the U.S.A. by:
Annick Press (U.S.) Ltd.
Distributed in the U.S.A. by:
Firefly Books (U.S.) Inc.
P.O. Box 1338
Ellicott Station
Buffalo, NY 14205

Watch for more books in the We Thought of It series, coming soon.

Printed in China.

Visit us at: www.annickpress.com



For my family in Canada—Joan, Jim, and Luke. Thanks for
your love and support. And for my Chileno, Christian.
—E.S.



Contents

WELCOME/ 6

MAPS/ 10

CLOTHING/ 12

WORKING THE LAND/ 14

ARCHITECTURE/ 16

COMMUNICATION/ 18

ARTS AND CRAFTS/ 20

EVERYDAY INVENTIONS/ 24

FOOD AND DRINK/ 26

CELEBRATIONS/ 30

MUSIC AND DANCE/ 32

SPORTS/ 36

LATIN AMERICA TODAY/ 38

TIMELINE/ 42

FURTHER READING/ 43

INDEX/ 45

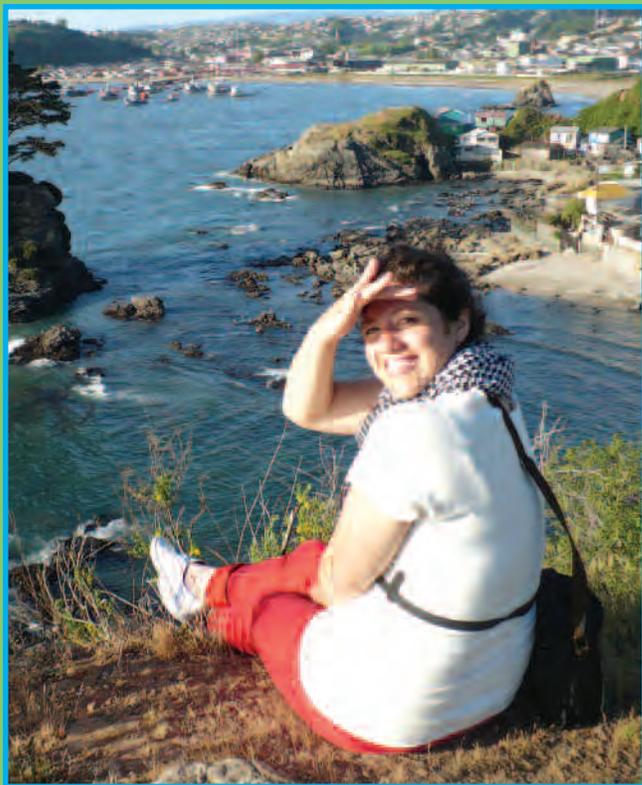
Bienvenido, Bem-vindo,

My Journey

Saludos amigos! My name is Eva. I was born in Canada, to a South American father and a Canadian mother. I spent many years imagining the place where my father and his family came from. Finally, one day I decided to move there to connect with my roots.

I remember my first visit to Latin America. Our airplane flew all night over great stretches of land and water, over jungle, desert, and enormous mountains that reached up into the sky. I landed in Chile, where my father was born and raised before he moved to North America—as many Latin Americans have done, bringing their culture and history with them.

While living in Chile, I discovered that its capital city, Santiago, is full of life and very busy. Like many big cities in North America, it has tall office buildings, beautiful parks, and subways. I experienced the culture of Chile in many different ways—eating seafood by the ocean with my uncle, listening to Andean folk musicians and Mapuche drummers, gathering with friends and relatives to eat the traditional small evening meal called *once* (pronounced *own-say*), and dancing the cueca during Chile's Independence Day celebrations.



Eva in the fishing town of Lota, Chile



Welcome.

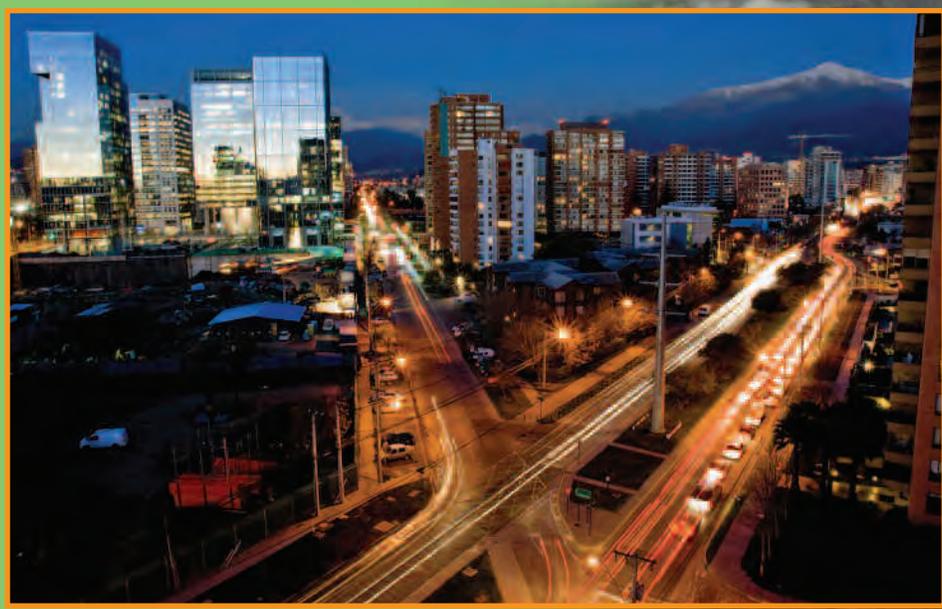
Thanks to my father, I was born with Chile in my blood. Now, after having spent much time there, it is part of my soul.

What Is Latin America?

Latin America is a relatively new term, only a few hundred years old. But the story of its people is much older.



The Andes Mountains, seen from an airplane



Chile's busy capital city, Santiago

Examples of wildlife from Latin America



When Christopher Columbus sailed to the Caribbean Islands and, on a later voyage, Central America, Europeans thought he had discovered a "new world." At that time, they did not know about the Caribbean Islands and the American continent. But this "world" wasn't new at all—it had been home to many different cultures for thousands of years.



Latin America is not a continent. It is a large region with about 20 countries spread across North, Central, and South America, as well as in the Caribbean. People use the terms *Latin America* and *Latin Americans* as a means of acknowledging the cultural similarities among the people who live in these countries. One important similarity is that most of the people in these countries speak Spanish, although in Brazil—the largest country in South America—most people speak Portuguese.

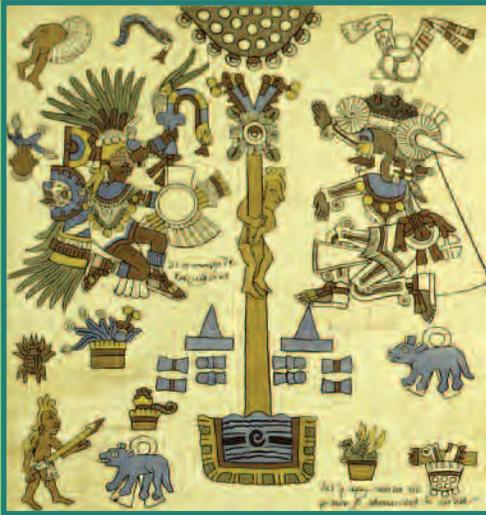


There are some countries south of the United States that are not usually considered part of Latin America (for example, Belize, Suriname, and Guyana). People in these countries have closer ties to cultures from Africa or Europe (other than Spain or Portugal).

Many people who live in Latin America don't often call themselves Latin Americans. They prefer to think of themselves as proud citizens of their own country—for example, as Mexicans, Cubans, or Bolivians.

Your Journey

This book is a celebration of the achievements and innovations of Latin American cultures. From the ancient peoples of the past to the people of today, Latin Americans have created amazing innovations—Mayan pyramids, new ways of farming, and lively music and dance styles, just to name a few. Some of these innovations are well known, while others may be new to you. There are many more that I was not able to include, but this book is a good place to start your journey of discovery. It has certainly been a fascinating journey for me, and I hope it will be just as enjoyable for you.



An illustration from an Aztec book



Young people in Panama compete in a motocross race.



Colombian singer and songwriter Shakira

MAPS OF LATIN AMERICA



* The cultures in these countries are not generally considered primarily Latin American.

† Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory, but the culture is Latin American.



* The Patagonian Desert is not a typical sandy desert. Some areas are rocky, while others are covered with grass or shrubs.

CLOTHING

Some clothing items from Latin America have become symbols of national pride. Others have become fashion items that are now worn around the world.



Sombrero

The word *sombrero* comes from the Spanish word *sombra*, meaning "shade." In the Spanish-speaking world, a sombrero is any kind of hat with a brim that provides shade from the sun.

After the Spanish brought a brimmed hat to Latin America, the Mexicans developed their own unique version—a sombrero made of straw or felt, with a wide brim, a tapered top, and a chin strap. Some sombreros have intricate, embroidered designs. Traditionally worn by ranchers, the Mexican sombrero is now famous around the world.



Mexicans often wear sombreros at parades and festivals.



Panama Hat

This light-colored hat actually comes from Ecuador, where it is called *sombrero de paja toquilla* (Spanish for "straw hat of the toquilla plant"). The Panama hat's brim protected workers' ears and neck from the sun. The Spanish brought this style of hat back to Europe, where it became very popular in the 1700s CE. The Panama hat gained worldwide popularity in 1906, when U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt was photographed wearing one while on a visit to Panama. Back then, this hat was shipped from Panama, which is how it got its name.

Former U.S. president Harry Truman wears a Panama hat in the 1940s.



The Kuna people of Panama make colorful fabric art to use in blouses.