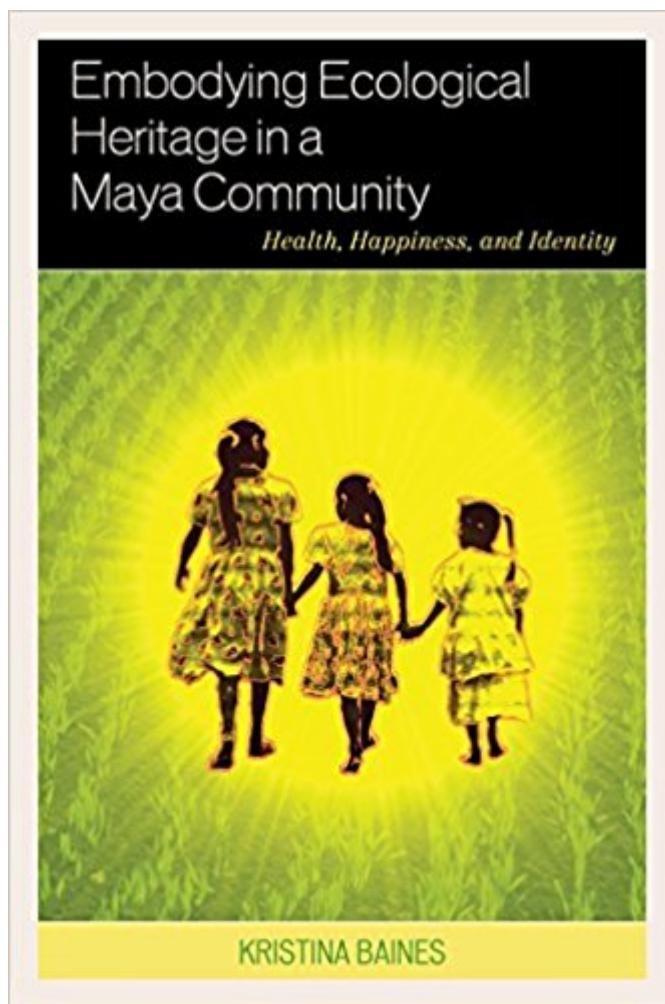


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Embodying Ecological Heritage In A Maya Community: Health, Happiness, And Identity



Synopsis

Embodying Ecological Heritage in a Maya Community: Health, Happiness, and Identity provides an ethnographic account of life in a rural farming village in southern Belize, focusing on the connections between traditional ecological practices and the health and wellness of the Maya community living there. It discusses how complex histories, ecologies, and development practices are negotiated by individuals of all ages, and the community at large, detailing how they interact with their changing environments. The study has wide applicability for indigenous communities fighting for rights to manage their lands across the globe, as well as for considering how health is connected to heritage practices in communities worldwide.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This short book describes concepts of health, wellness, and illness among the Mopan Maya of Belize and their behavior in response to health challenges. They are in transition from a local, tradition-based society to a world of international biomedicine, Evangelical churches, public schools (which do not teach necessary farming and forest skills), wage work, chemical fertilizers, and too much sugar and white flour. Diabetes and other illnesses come with new lifeways, but infectious disease and accidents can now be treated at modern clinics. Bush medicine is still practiced. Beliefs that illness comes from sudden cold (especially cold water), 'bad winds', 'fright', and similar causes are still universal. Local foods are known to be more healthful than purchased ones, with tortillas best. Agriculture, especially growing maize, is the proper activity; men raise it, and women process it into tortillas. Anthropologist Baines' theoretical perspective combines

phenomenology, cognitive anthropology, and ethnography of practice to focus on embodied environmental knowledge, especially knowledge of environmental effects on health and how to eat right and act right to maintain health in a changing world. For anyone interested in Native American medical knowledge or in health and development in rural areas. Summing Up: Recommended. Upper-division undergraduates and above. (CHOICE) In this highly original ethnography of the Mopan Maya, Baines shows us how the health of the body is deeply and strongly connected to the health of the environment. This book is a solid bridge between the traditions of ecological anthropology, and the anthropology of the senses and the encultured body. The writing is fluid and evocative, rich in ethnographic details of daily life. (Richard Wilk, Indiana University)

Kristina Baines is assistant professor at Guttman Community College, CUNY and an applied social anthropologist.

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