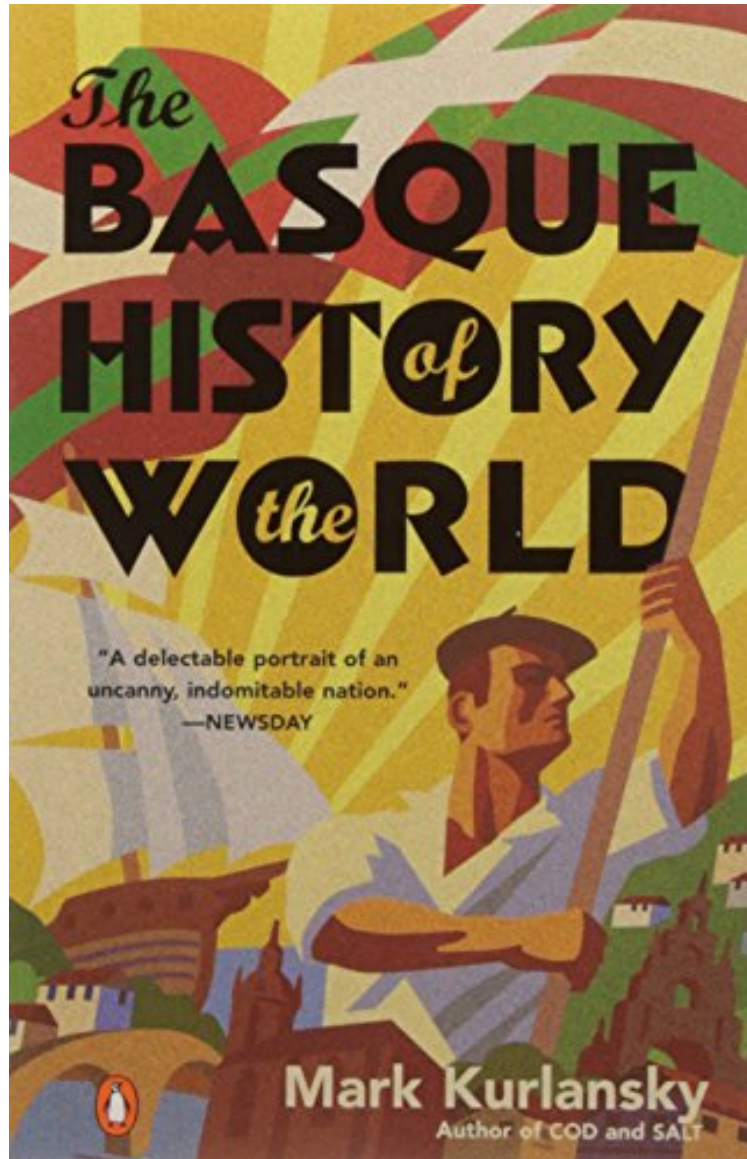


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The Basque History of the World: The Story of a Nation

Mark Kurlansky

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#69322 in Books Mark Kurlansky 2001-02-01 2001-02-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 7.70 x .70 x 5.10l, .58 #File Name: 0140298517400 pagesThe Basque History of the World The Story of a Nation | File size: 26.Mb

Mark Kurlansky : The Basque History of the World: The Story of a Nation before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Basque History of the World: The Story of a Nation:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Great introductory lesson about family's distant heritageBy Scott OxandaboureI really enjoyed this book, as a way to learn about my heritage on my father's side of the family. Learning about the history of the Basque people, the reasons for the difference in culture between French Basques and Spanish

Basque was very interesting. It really was the introduction I've been missing to the culture. I'm not 100% sure about the historical accuracy of some of the information in the book, but I felt that the author let us know when he was offering a possibility rather than fact. All in all, I was very happy for the attempt at offering as much information as possible, and adding grains of salt when they were required. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Kurlansky is an entertaining and very well versed writer. By Andy McKinney About half this book comes easily up to the high and entertaining standard of Mark Kurlansky's work. But a great deal of the modern era gets bogged down in petty details of horrible deeds. Up to the Carlist wars the tale flows smoothly with loads of interesting tid bits. This is a fascinating nation, one of the nations of the world which has remained a nation without being able to form a country. I just think he got bogged down in the repression imposed by Spain on Basqueland, the execution, and arrests, the shootings, murders and bombings. These are all important parts of the Basque history but the history goes back 2,000 years and more. But I am not discouraged. This is Kurlansky book number three for me. Going to order out his book on the Caribbean next. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Very Informative Book By James S. Ford I have always had a curiosity about the Basque and gained a great deal of information about the people, their history, and their customs from this book. I was amazed at the amount of influence the Basque have had on the cultures of other Europeans and Americans as well. The author describes the sea fairing exploits of these hardy people and suggests they actually may have been the first Europeans to visit North America before the Vikings. He notes that Christopher Columbus' flagship, Santa Maria, was built by Basque shipbuilders and Basque seamen made up a good percentage of the crew on the initial voyage to America. The author spent a great deal of literary space in the description of Basque culinary specialties including detailed recipes. While I personally do not think I would partake in most of these meals, it was interesting to find out what to expect in Basque restaurants. There are numerous illustrations and maps to supplement the author's descriptions of people and places. I enjoyed reading it.

From Mark Kurlansky, the bestselling author of *Cod*, *Salt*, *Birdseye*, and *Paper* the illuminating story of an ancient and enigmatic people straddling a small corner of Spain and France in a land that is marked on no maps except their own, the Basques are a puzzling contradiction: they are Europe's oldest nation without ever having been a country. No one has ever been able to determine their origins, and even the Basques' language, Euskera, the most ancient in Europe is related to none other on earth. For centuries, their influence has been felt in nearly every realm, from religion to sports to commerce. Even today, the Basques are enjoying what may be the most important cultural renaissance in their long existence, as displayed by new cookbooks like chefs Alexandra Raij and Eder Montero's *The Basque Book* and restaurateur Jose Pizarros *Basque*. Mark Kurlansky's passion for the Basque people and his exuberant eye for detail shine throughout this fascinating book. Like *Cod*, *The Basque History of the World*, blends human stories with economic, political, literary, and culinary history into a rich and heroic tale. Among the Basques' greatest accomplishments: Exploration: the first man to circumnavigate the globe, Juan Sebastian de Elcano, was a Basque and the Basques were the second Europeans, after the Vikings, in North America. Gastronomy and agriculture: they were the first Europeans to eat corn and chili peppers and cultivate tobacco, and were among the first to use chocolate. Religion: Ignatius Loyola, a Basque, founded the Jesuit religious order. Business and politics: they introduced capitalism and modern commercial banking to southern Europe. Recreation: they invented beach resorts, jai alai, and racing regattas, and were the first Europeans to play sports with balls. A delectable portrait of an uncanny, indomitable nation. *Newsday*: Exciting, Illuminating, and thought provoking. *The Boston Globe*: Entertaining and instructive [Kurlansky's] approach is unorthodox, mixing history with anecdotes, poems with recipes. *The New York Times Book Review*

.com The buzz about the Guggenheim Bilbao aside, the Basques seldom get good press--from the 12th-century *Codex of Calixtus* ("A Basque or Navarrese would do in a French man for a copper coin") to current news items about ETA, the Basque nationalist group. Mark Kurlansky, author of *Cod*, sets out to change all that in *The Basque History of the World*. "The singular remarkable fact about the Basques is that they still exist," Kurlansky asserts. Without a defined country (other than Euskadi, otherwise known as "Basqueland"), with no known related ethnic groups, the Basques are an anomaly in Europe. What unites the Basques, above all, is their language--Euskera. According to ETA, "Euskera is the quintessence of Euskadi. So long as Euskera is alive, Euskadi will live." To help provide a complete picture of the Basques, Kurlansky looks at their political, economic, social, and even culinary history, from the valiant Basque underground in World War II to medieval whalers to modern makers of the *gâteau Basque*. The most affecting chapter focuses on Guernica, a small market town bombed by German planes for over three hours on April 26, 1937, and uses interviews with survivors to illustrate the horror of the attack. Kurlansky is clearly enamored of the Basques, which leads him to see them in a uniformly positive light. That rosy outlook aside, *The Basque History of the World* is an excellent introduction to these romantic people. Are they the original Europeans? Kurlansky doesn't weigh in on the issue, preferring instead to honor the Basque request *Garean gareana legez*--let us be what we are. --Sunny Delaney From *Publishers Weekly* Straddling the border of southern France and northern Spain, the land of the Basques has long been home to a people who had no country of their own but have always viewed themselves as a nation. In this marvelous work of cultural history and appreciation, Kurlansky traces Basque history from pre-Roman times,

when Basques worked as the mercenaries of Carthage, to the region's recent renaissance in language and arts. Along the way, he explains how the Basques came to be among Europe's first whalers, capitalists, explorers, industrialists and international traders. As he did in *Cod*, Kurlansky fuses political and economic history with delightful digressions into cultural and culinary traditions (several delicious recipes are included). The book is as politically loaded with opinion as it is culturally informative: Kurlansky expresses sympathy for the cause of Basque independence, arguing that many of Spain's current policies toward its Basque minority are holdovers from the repressive Franco regime. He also tends to accept the claim that the Basques "are the original Europeans," largely on the ground that Euskera, the Basque language, appears to have no linguistic relative and is likely the oldest European language still spoken. For all the ground it covers, this wildly informative work is a marvel of clarity, glittering with unusual facts and marked by penetrating insights into a people always "making complex choices about the degree of independence that was needed to preserve their way of life, while looking to the rest of the world for commercial opportunities to ensure their prosperity." 56 illustrations, 6 maps, 10 recipes. Agent, Charlotte Sheedy Agency. 5-city author tour. (Oct.) FYI: *Cod* received the James Beard Award for Excellence in Food Writing and was a New York Public Library Best Book of 1997. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* In this study, award-winning author Kurlansky examines Europe's oldest and most mysterious surviving culture from pre-Roman times to the present. The Basques fought with Hannibal against Rome and became the first to circumnavigate the globe when a Basque took the helm after Magellan's death. They were Europe's first commercial whalers and played a prominent role in commerce with the New World. The author's lively style is most endearing; he'll often use Basque recipes as a means of transition. Since this does a first-rate job explaining relations among modern Basques, Spaniards, and Europeans, the work is an important source. What makes this recorded book version so exquisite is George Guidall's magnificent narration he finds drama and humor where no one else can. James L. Dudley, Westhampton Beach, NY Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.