

Download Free Women Of Chiapas

In the highlands of Chiapas, Mexico, a large indigenous population lives in rural communities, many of which retain traditional forms of governance. In 1996, some 350 women of these communities formed a weavers' cooperative, which they called Jolom Mayaetik. Their goal was to join together to market textiles of high quality in both new and ancient designs. Weaving Chiapas offers a rare view of the daily lives, memories, and hopes of these rural Maya women as they strive to retain their ancient customs while adapting to a rapidly changing world. Originally published in Spanish in 2007, this book captures firsthand the voices of these Maya artisans, whose experiences, including the challenges of living in a highly patriarchal culture, often escape the attention of mainstream scholarship. Based on interviews conducted with members of the Jolom Mayaetik cooperative, the accounts gathered in this volume provide an intimate view of women's life in the Chiapas highlands, known locally as Los Altos. We learn about their experiences of childhood, marriage, and childbirth; about subsistence farming and food traditions; and about the particular styles of clothing and even hairstyles that vary from community to community. Restricted by custom from engaging in public occupations, Los Altos women are responsible for managing their households and caring for domestic animals. But many of them long for broader opportunities, and the Jolom Mayaetik cooperative represents a bold effort by its members to assume control over and build a wider market for their own work. This English-language edition features color photographs—published here for the first time—depicting many of the individual women and their stunning textiles. A new preface, chapter introductions, and a scholarly afterword frame the women's narratives and place their accounts within cultural and historical context.

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