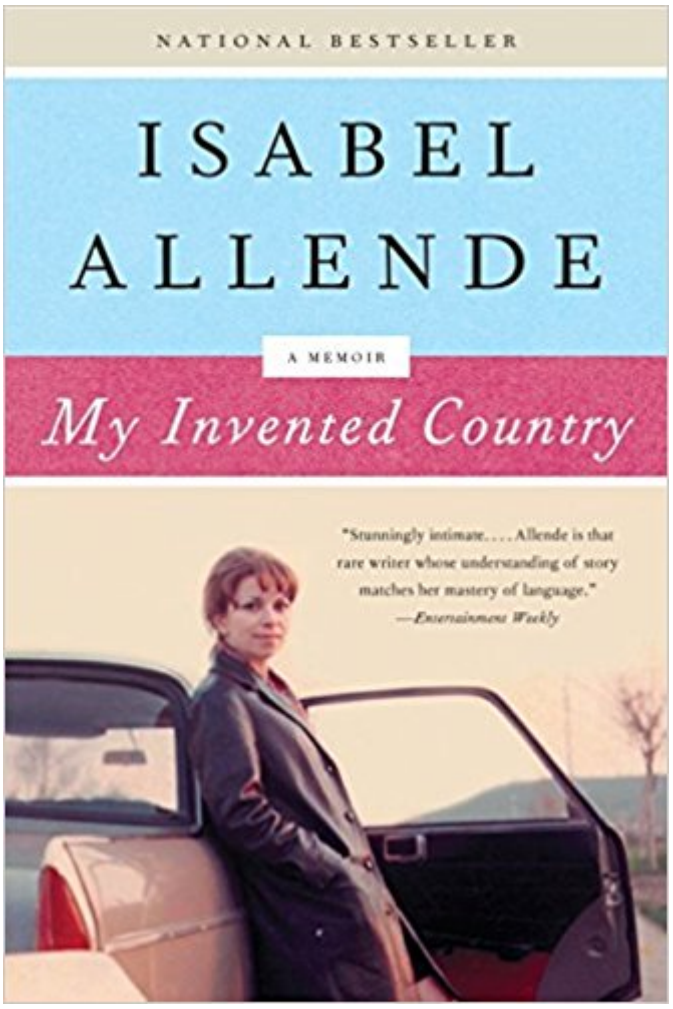
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My Invented Country: A Memoir



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Synopsis

Isabel Allende evokes the magnificent landscapes of her country; a charming, idiosyncratic Chilean people with a violent history and an indomitable spirit; and the politics, religion, myth, and magic of her homeland that she carries with her even today.The book circles around two life-changing moments. The assassination of her uncle Salvador Allende Gossens on September 11, 1973, sent her into exile and transformed her into a literary writer. And the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, on her adopted homeland, the United States, brought forth an overdue acknowledgment that Allende had indeed left home. My Invented Country, mimicking the workings of memory itself, ranges back and forth across that distance between past and present lives. It speaks compellingly to immigrants and to all of us who try to retain a coherent inner life in a world full of contradictions.

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Customer Reviews

"Nostalgia is my vice," admits Isabel Allende in My Invented Country. A question about nostalgia propels an exploration of her past, including the complicated history and politics of Chile, where she spent the better part of her childhood. Despite her strong connection to Chile, Allende says she has "been an outsider nearly all my life." Her stepfather was a diplomat, so her family moved quite frequently. In her travel diary, Allende compares everything to Chile, her "one eternal reference" point. "From saying goodbye so often my roots have dried up," she notes. She successfully reclaims them, however, through two channels. Allende relays anecdotes about what she calls her untraditional family--whom she has based some of her novels upon, including The House of the Spirits. Like a few of her novels, though, her own story is lost in heavy policy analysis. Interspersed

among her ancestors' tales is an all-too-exhaustive report of Chile: the terrain, its people, customs, language, its heroes and villains, and the government. Allende fled Chile after the military coup on September 11, 1973. Twenty-eight years later, and now living in the United States, this date haunts her when terrorists attack New York City and Washington, D.C. Allende admits that the place she is homesick for may have never existed. In spite of that, Allende asserts that she can live and write anywhere: "I don’t belong to one land, but to several, or perhaps only to the ambit of the fiction I write." The irony is that she steadfastly has "one foot in Chile and another here." --C.J. Carrillo --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Allende's novels-The House of the Spirits; Eva Luna; Daughter of Fortune; etc.-are of the sweeping epic variety, often historical and romantic, weaving in elements of North and South American culture. As with most fiction writers, Allende's work is inspired by personal experiences, and in this memoir-cum-study of her "home ground," the author delves into the history, social mores and idiosyncrasies of Chile, where she was raised, showing, in the process, how that land has served as her muse. Allende was born in Peru in 1942, but spent much of her childhood-and a significant portion of her adulthood-in Santiago (she now lives in California). She ruminates on Chilean women (their "attraction lies in a blend of strength and flirtatiousness that few men can resist"); the country's class system ("our society is like a phyllo pastry, a thousand layers, each person in his place"); and Chile's turbulent history ("the political pendulum has swung from one extreme to another; we have tested every system of government that exists, and we have suffered the consequences"). She readily admits her view is subjective-to be sure, she is not the average Chilean (her stepfather was a diplomat; her uncle, Salvador Allende, was Chile's president from 1970 until his assassination in 1973). And at times, her assessments transcend Chile, especially when it comes to comments on memory and nostalgia. This is a reflective book, lacking the pull of Allende's fiction but unearthing intriguing elements of the author's captivating history.Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I picked up this memoir after reading Allende's foreword in a copy of Eduardo Galeano's Open Veins of Latin America. Knowing Allende was the niece of Salvador Allende, I was interested in how that turbulent time shaped her life. I had no idea Isabel Allende was such an accomplished writer or had published so many books, I simply knew her for her connections to the man ousted by Pinochet. This book has made me an Isabel Allende fan!I've never read a memoir which is so poetic and full of insight not only into the character of the writer, but into life itself. Several chapters in I no

longer cared about her connections to Salvador Allende or the coming coup of 1973, but was memorized by her ability to weave a story, to reflect on the lives of others, and to offer numerous insights into the meaning of a well lived life.Sure enough, later in the book there are chapters on Salvador Allende and Pinochet, and they are remarkably reflective and powerful (especially her discussion of the difference between an exile and an immigrant), yet those won't be the moments I remember.What I will remember is the beauty of Chile, the importance of being outspoken, and the need for us all to be "patiperros"!

I enjoyed Isabelle AllendeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s nostalgic look back upon her young life in Chile. She shares insights into the national character of the country, a democracy that became ruled by a dictator whose heavy-handed policies forced her to flee. This a personal memoir in which she explains why she will always be an immigrant in the U.S. even though she has lived here most of her adult life enjoying huge success and freedom of expression in her writing. I had hoped for more description of the natural beauty of Chile and insights into where I should go what I should see when I go there. However, this book was focused more on the politics and idiosyncrasies of a layered society than travel tips. The bottom line is that AllendeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s writing has given her fractured journey continuity that has held her together over the years.

I almost gave this book 4 stars because the beginning was more like a travelogue and very repetitive of "Inez of my Soul, but when I got to her descriptions of the people of Chile, Venezuela, Spain, and all Hispanic countries, I just cracked up. Haven't laughed so much in a very long time. Since I am of Hispanic ethnicity, she had the family structure and the male/female roles down perfectly. It was wonderful reading and I recommend it highly even if you're from Bora Bora and not Hispanic! It seems that Allende has perfected her wonderful talent for seeing and uncovering the traits of people in this book and I thank her for a wonderful read.

Clearly the most nostalgic book I have ever read. I am from Chile but I live in the USA for 38 years. This book describe Chileans to the tea. If any one is looking for a book to learn about other cultures and their people, this is it!

I read this book while travelling to Chile for a 10 month break after university. On arrival, I realised its value. Her writing is excellent but above that it was an enchanting insight into the Chile that once was and is. It felt like the stories my father would tell me, him also being an ex patriot. Both true and

hilarious, capturing the essence of the Chilean people.

Anything written by this talented woman is worth reading! Anyone who has immigrated will understand the basis of having a foot in more than one place. While a life that includes immigration is definitely educational, no question about that, offers twice the amount of life's opportunities into the bargain, it can bring with it the disconnects with ones past & life left behind.

Beautifully executed, this memoir clarifies the assumptions I made after reading House of the Spirits. As someone who has rarely left California, Allende had made it possible for me to live as a Chilean, as a refugee, as an immigrant, and as an idealist without ever leaving. As she always does, Allende whisked me away from sunny California to a partially missed and deeply romanticized past marked by austerity, chaos and viable ghosts, buried decades ago.

Anything by Allende is bound to be good.

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