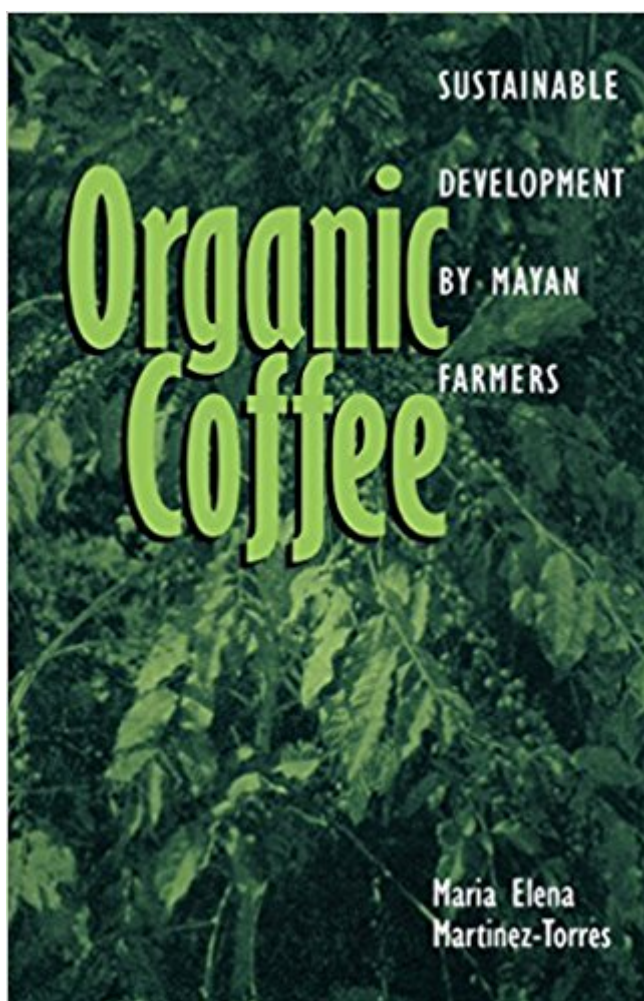




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# Organic Coffee: Sustainable Development By Mayan Farmers (Ohio RIS Latin America Series)



## Synopsis

Despite deepening poverty and environmental degradation throughout rural Latin America, Mayan peasant farmers in Chiapas, Mexico, are finding environmental and economic success by growing organic coffee. *Organic Coffee: Sustainable Development by Mayan Farmers* provides a unique and vivid insight into how this coffee is grown, harvested, processed, and marketed to consumers in Mexico and in the north. Maria Elena Martinez-Torres explains how Mayan farmers have built upon their ethnic networks to make a crucial change in their approach to agriculture. Taking us inside Chiapas, Mexico's poorest state and scene of the 1994 Zapatista uprising, she examines the anatomy of the ongoing organic coffee boom and the fair-trade movement. The organic coffee boom arose as very poor farmers formed cooperatives, revalued their ethnic identity, and improved their land through organic farming. The result has been significant economic benefits for their families and ecological benefits for the future sustainability of agriculture in the region. *Organic Coffee* refutes the myth that organic farming is less productive than chemical-based agriculture and gives us reasons to be hopeful for indigenous peoples and peasant farmers

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"I encourage you to indeed pour yourself a cup of Peace Coffee, sit down, and read Maria Elena Martinez-Torres's *Organic Coffee*. It is a wonderful intellectual achievement that will improve your enjoyment of each cup fairly of traded and organically produced coffee. Fair Grounds" Highly capitalized plantation groves are so degraded by erosion that their

productivity is plunging. Organic practices appear to be seriously improving the soil, lending support to the notion that the process of conversion to organic is a real investment in building natural capital for the future."Organic Coffee

Maria Elena Martinez-Torres is from Mexico and is Global Alternatives Associate at the Center for the Study of the Americas (CENSA) in Berkeley, California. She is director of Desarrollo Alternativo, AC, a non-profit organization in Mexico that works towards alternative, sustainable development practices.

If you ever wondered if organic farming can really be as productive as chemical farming, or if it is really better for the environment, then read this book. The author manages to include a lot of scientific data and theory, yet keep everything readable and entertaining, and it will convince you. Beyond addressing the organic farming debate, the book tells the fascinating story of how coffee is grown, and of the indigenous people who grow it. This would be an excellent text for college courses, and also for graduate seminars.

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