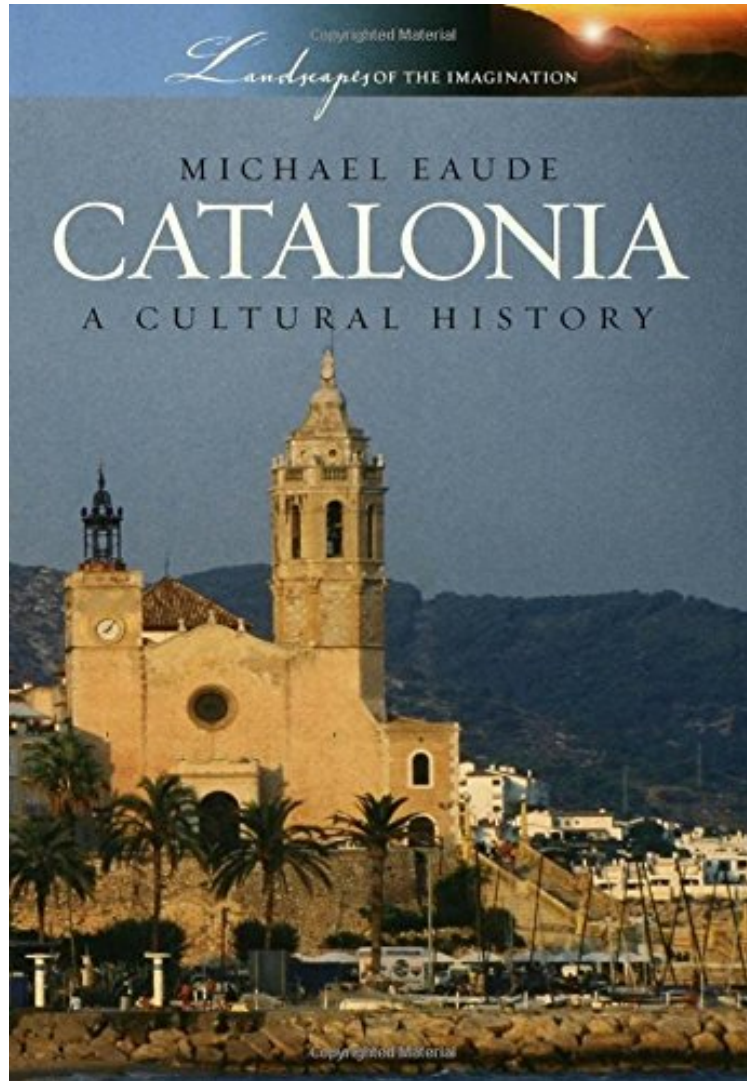


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Catalonia: A Cultural History (Landscapes of the Imagination)

Michael Eaude

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Michael Eaude : Catalonia: A Cultural History (Landscapes of the Imagination) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Catalonia: A Cultural History (Landscapes of the Imagination):

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Interesting look at Catalan history and culture By S. Smith-Peter This book is not a typical historical narrative that starts in the distant past and goes up to the present. Instead, it presents a series of connected essays on Catalonia. The first part, which I enjoyed the most, deals with the various towns and regions of Catalonia. The author does really convey a sense of place, and it worked both as historical and travel writing. The second section, on artists, I found a bit harder to get through, particularly for the earlier, less-known (to

me at least) artists. There weren't many illustrations, which made it a bit hard to visualize. The sections on Gaudi, Picasso, Dali and Miro were more interesting because I had more background knowledge, I think. The last section deals with the key role Catalonia played in the Spanish Civil War and the way that Franco punished it afterward, not allowing for the expression of Catalan identity. Then the author turns to everyday spaces of Catalan identity today, such as food, landscape and FC Barcelona. As someone interested in Russian regional identity, I found this book very interesting. The sense of independent identity is quite strong. It would be very illuminating for someone to compare Catalonia and Siberia, for example, as both are examples of what John Robertson, in his *The Case for the Enlightenment*, calls "a kingdom governed as a province." After reading this book, I came away feeling that I'd been on a journey through Catalan places and times.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Compact Yet Informative
By Nemoman
This is a solid, compact overview of Catalonia, its history, literature, architecture, art, music and cuisine. At times it reads like a textbook; however, it is never dry. In some places, e.g., its sections on Barcelona, it could serve as a guidebook. The book is a good one for structuring and organizing what you may already know about this section of Spain. It also introduces you to many other writers and books on the subject. For this reason, it is a resource that I will dip into repeatedly.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Cultural History of Catalonia
By H. P. Eade
explores Catalonia, the other great un-Spanish region of Spain along with the Basque country, in this cultural history. He looks not just at traditional art and architecture but also food, music, and sport. He also ventures far afield from Catalonia's great metropolis, Barcelona, to the hamlets of the coast and mountains and everything in between. Eade keeps the focus on Catalonia's cultural history, but quite a bit of other history seeps in, especially of the Franco dictatorship.

Squeezed between more powerful France and Spain, Catalonia has endured a violent history. Its medieval empire that conquered Naples, Sicily and Athens was crushed by Spain. Its geography, with the Pyrenees falling sharply to the rugged Costa Brava, is tormented, too. Michael Eade traces this history and its monuments: Roman Tarragona, celebrated by the poet Martial; Greek Empuries, lost for centuries beneath the sands; medieval Romanesque architecture in the Vall de Boi churches (a World Heritage Site) and Poblet and Santes Creus monasteries. He tells the stories of several of Catalonia's great figures: Abbot Oliber, who brought Moorish learning to Europe, the ruthless mercenary, Roger de Flor, and Verdaguer, handsome poet-priest. Catalonia is famous today for its twentieth-century art. This book focuses on the revolutionary Art Nouveau buildings (including the Sagrada Família) of Antoni Gaudí. It also explores the region's artistic legacy: the young Picasso painting Barcelona's vibrant slums; Salvador Dalí, inspired by the twisted rocks of Cap de Creus to paint his landscapes of the human mind; and Joan Mir, discovering the colors of the red earth at Montroig.

About the Author
Michael Eade writes for the Guardian and Independent and is the author of *Barcelona, The City that Re-Invented Itself*.