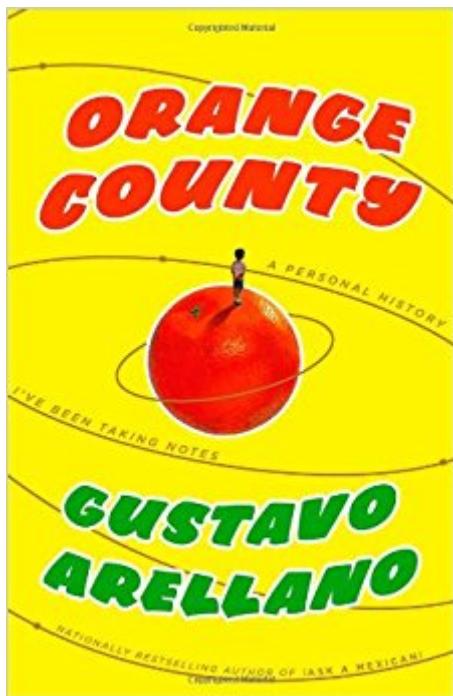


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# Orange County: A Personal History



## Synopsis

The story began in 1918, when Gustavo Arellano's great-grandfather and grandfather arrived in the United States, only to be met with flying potatoes. They ran, and hid, and then went to work in Orange County's citrus groves, where, eventually, thousands of fellow Mexican villagers joined them. Gustavo was born sixty years later, the son of a tomato canner who dropped out of school in the ninth grade and an illegal immigrant who snuck into this country in the trunk of a Chevy. Meanwhile, Orange County changed radically, from a bucolic paradise of orange groves to the land where good Republicans go to die, American Christianity blossoms, and way too many bad television shows are green-lit. Part personal narrative, part cultural history, Orange County is the outrageous and true story of the man behind the wildly popular and controversial column *Ask a Mexican!* and the locale that spawned him. It is a tale of growing up in an immigrant enclave in a crime-ridden neighborhood, but also in a promised land, a place that has nourished America's soul and Gustavo's family, both in this country and back in Mexico, for a century. Nationally bestselling author, syndicated columnist, and the spiciest voice of the Mexican-American community, Gustavo Arellano delivers the hilarious and poignant follow-up to *Ask a Mexican!*, his critically acclaimed debut. Orange County not only weaves Gustavo's family story with the history of Orange County and the modern Mexican-immigrant experience but also offers sharp, caliente insights into a wide range of political, cultural, and social issues. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Readers get two stories for the price of one in this witty and informative memoir. Journalist Arellano (Ask a Mexican!) chronicles the sweet-and-sour story of his family's assimilation into American culture, while also recounting a historical narrative at odds with the bucolic ideal of a place that's been mythologized for decades. We're so American, so Orange County, that we're even prone to romanticize a past that never existed. Arellano's structure keeps the narrative moving along at a snappy pace, alternating the threads of the story so odd chapters constitute the memoir, even chapters tell the history, and one complements the other. Readers get solid background on the beginning of master-planned communities during the 1920s, the little remembered Citrus War, Orange County's embarrassing 1994 bankruptcy and special mix of conservatism coupled with a dollop of big-time religion. A 2005 Harper's article named Orange County the country's second hotbed of evangelical Christianity after Colorado Springs, Arellano writes, and of the 100 megachurches in the U.S. with the largest congregations, four are in Orange County. Arellano explores a place he calls the Petri dish for America's continuing democratic experiment and delivers a prescient view of the new American landscape. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Gustavo Arellano's Ask a Mexican! column has a circulation of more than two million in thirty-eight markets (and counting). He has received the President's Award from the Los Angeles Press Club, an Impact Award from the National Hispanic Media Coalition, and a 2008 Latino Spirit Award from the California State legislature. Arellano has appeared on the Today show, Nightline, NPR's Talk of the Nation, and The Colbert Report. For more information, visit [AskAMexican.net](http://AskAMexican.net).

Gustavo Arellano is one of my favorite young authors. He writes a regular column for the OC Weekly called "Ask a Mexican". Standing astride two distinct cultures in Southern California is not always an easy task, but Gustavo manages to do so with humor and bite. I loved the book, but I am familiar with all of the Orange County references as I live in the area. As other reviewers have mentioned, the book is divided into alternating chapters chronicling the family history of Gustavo Arellano and topics related to Orange County. I am a teacher at a high school with a large Latino student body. The personal story of Gustavo's family revealing warts and all was fascinating and I gained new insight (and some confirmation) into the lives of my students. I adored the chapters on Orange County, but you have to be a local to really appreciate some of the crazy things that have happened in the county. From the Ku Klux Klan in Anaheim during the 1920's to the current doggie fashion show at Fashion Island in Newport Beach, the book describes the eclectic OC lifestyle.

Gustavo does have a liberal bent and is a little bit overbearing at times, but he is also FUNNY.

Overall, a good read.

This is a great history book for Americans, Californians, and Mexicans alike. I like the way Gustavo Arellano highlights the confluence of the various cultures of Orange County. I lived in southern California for three years and Gustavo pointed several things I had missed. Because of this book, I watched the TV show Arrested Development, about which I have mixed feelings. I'm not sure if I should give Gustavo credit or blame for me watching the show.

This is a book that's probably only going to be very interesting for people from Southern California, generally speaking. Especially people from the Greater Los Angeles area, for obvious reasons. There's some great historical information about Orange County, great depth into how the Catholic Church scandal affected Orange County and some interesting Arellano family history. I recommend it to all Southern Californians, people who have an interest Mexican-American history, people with an interest in Orange County and anyone who enjoys a fun, yet informative, reads.

I recently moved to Orange County and wanted to find a local history book. This popped up in a Google search. I have been laughing my way thru this book while learning quite a lot about the history and politics of Orange County.

A hilarious, touching, and insightful look at the history of Orange County--and perhaps its most cantankerous resident. Loved it!

I read this book for my class on gentrification. It was a very enjoyable read and it was interesting learning about the commercialization of Orange County and its racial/political history. I would definitely recommend this book.

We purchased this book for my Daughter's college class. Great price!!

just as described ;-)

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