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Autor: Everton, Macduff

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Ancient Maya cities draw travelers from all over the world to Mexico's Yucatán peninsula. But while tales of the "Maya collapse" give an air of mystery to the ruins, modern Maya still live in communities across the Yucatán, where they strive to maintain their culture and way of life despite centuries of political, social, and environmental disruption. Photographer Macduff Everton has spent more than four decades living and working among the Maya. His 1991 book on the modern Maya provided a superb photo-essay and ethnographic record of the Maya during a time of critical change and globalization. In this book, he masterfully updates his portrait of the modern Maya, while investigating the effects of NAFTA, tourism, the evangelical movement, world trade and maquiladoras, racism, sexism, and drugs on Maya communities.

Combining splendid photography of ancient Maya sites and modern Maya communities with an illuminating narrative, Everton takes us into the homes and lives of farmers and chicle gatherers, ranch hands and henequen workers, as well as the Mayan-speaking urbanites who work at the resorts on the Riviera Maya. His long acquaintance with the Maya allows him to tell dramatic stories of how individuals and families have seen a way of life that was centered around the milpa (farm) and the cultivation of tropical forest products transformed by the effects of globalization and the necessity to labor for wages. At the same time, Everton also reveals the amazing adaptability of the Maya, who hold onto the essence of their culture despite all the destructive pressures from the outside world.