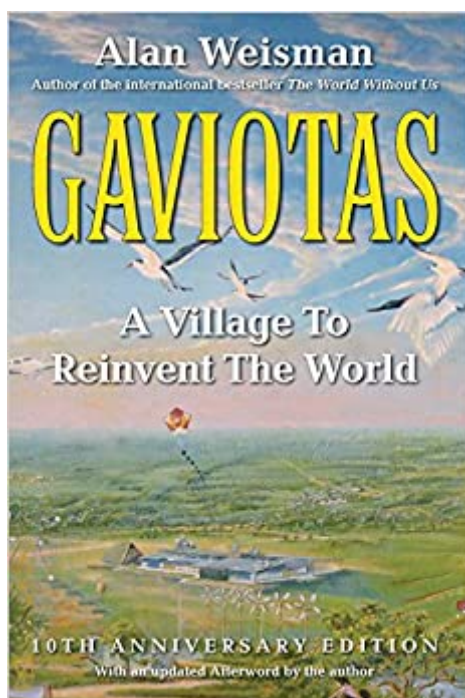


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# Gaviotas: A Village To Reinvent The World, 2nd Edition



## Synopsis

Los Llanos—the rain-leached, eastern savannas of war-ravaged Colombia—are among the most brutal environments on Earth and an unlikely setting for one of the most hopeful environmental stories ever told. Here, in the late 1960s, a young Colombian development worker named Paolo Lugari wondered if the nearly uninhabited, infertile llanos could be made livable for his country's growing population. He had no idea that nearly four decades later, his experiment would be one of the world's most celebrated examples of sustainable living: a permanent village called Gaviotas. In the absence of infrastructure, the first Gaviotans invented wind turbines to convert mild breezes into energy, hand pumps capable of tapping deep sources of water, and solar collectors efficient enough to heat and even sterilize drinking water under perennially cloudy llano skies. Over time, the Gaviotans' experimentation has even restored an ecosystem: in the shelter of two million Caribbean pines planted as a source of renewable commercial resin, a primordial rain forest that once covered the llanos is unexpectedly reestablishing itself. Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez has called Paolo Lugari the "Inventor of the World." Lugari himself has said that Gaviotas is not a utopia: "Utopia literally means 'no place.' We call Gaviotas a topia, because it's real." Relive their story with this special 10th-anniversary edition of *Gaviotas*, complete with a new afterword by the author describing how Gaviotas has survived and progressed over the past decade.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In the early 1970s, a unique community was founded in the los llanos region of Colombia. Located north of the rain forest, this region is an expansive savannah, sparsely populated and generally considered uninhabitable. Gaviotas originated out of the belief that the current state of urban expansion and poverty and the continued depletion of natural nonrenewable resources could not be sustained and that the future required people to learn how to live in harsh, inhospitable environments and to do so in an ecologically sound and sustainable manner. Journalist Weisman tells the story of a remarkable and diverse group of individuals (engineers, biologists, botanists, agriculturists, sociologists, musicians, artists, doctors, teachers, and students) who helped the village evolve into a very real, socially viable, and self-sufficient community for the future. The people of Gaviotas today produce innovative technologies (solar collectors, irrigation systems, windmills, and hydroponic gardens) that use the environment without depleting or destroying it. While some of their creative endeavors have not succeeded, even the failures tend to spawn ideas for future successes. Weisman does a fine job of detailing Gaviotas's evolution and placing it within the larger global historical context. The story he presents is wonderful testament to human creativity, commitment, and effort toward building a socially viable and environmentally sustainable future. Karen Collamore Sullivan, Consortium for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), Saginaw, MI Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

"...a book telling a tale too lovely for fiction, a lyrical, well-observed book that reports from the llanos of eastern Colombia, savannas tortured by guns and cows and cocaine, of an experiment in solar democracy in which 'appropriate technology' is anything but a sad product on the discount tables of broken, post-sixties idealism."--Tom Athanasiou, The Nation (This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title)

In the book Gaviotas the author, Alan Weisman paints a vivid picture of a desiccated savanna in Colombia being transformed into a beautiful and rich rain forest. Weisman documents the story of a young development worker named Paolo Lugari who was curious on whether or not an uninhabited and infertile land could be made into a livable place for his growing country. I was pleasantly surprised while reading Gaviotas on how interesting it was and enjoyed reading this book because the author did a great job taking all the information he had about the Gaviotas and making it into a story that was easy to read. Although the book was easy to read, it wasn't always easy to follow. I had no prior knowledge about Columbia so when the author rattled off places in Columbia

or famous people of Columbia I was lost. It would have been easier to follow if the author first gave the readers some back ground knowledge about these places and people. Over-all, this book was interesting and I would recommend others to read it.

This is an extremely important book to read if we are to understand how the intelligent use of technology can help us survive the collapse of the oil driven economy/world we live in as we run out of that resource. Tech can be used to improve life with out a massive profit motive behind it and community can be formed and sustained with different models for our coming together into community. The story of Gaviotas is amazing and we need to know about it and what has been achieved in a place that was uninhabitable by modern standards, and yet is still supporting a thriving community in a country ravaged by violence and greed....

Amazing. Uplifting. Inspiring. Practical. Read this if you want to know how we can create a sustainable future/less fossil fuel consumption. \*After reading this, about how people living in a "third world country" could create and implement energy efficient technologies, I became very frustrated that the United States did not have the foresight to utilize the same technologies in the 1980's when it would have helped to reduce the coming energy crisis of the next 200 years/end of the industrial age. The technologies/lifestyle created by the people of Gaviotas serves as a beautiful example of ways to soften our fall from extravagant energy consumption ---> sustainable society. People have the power, don't let consumer culture steal your creativity. We really do have the brain power (as individuals, don't rely on the federal government for too much) to create a world in which we can live comfortably and happily without relying on the rampant energy usage that we have only gotten accustomed to in the past 100 years. If you enjoy this book (and I think you will), you may also enjoy: *The World Without Us*, *Small is Possible: Life in a Local Economy*, *The Long Descent: A User's Guide to the End of the Industrial Age* and maybe this one if you're interested in communes/community: *A Walden Two Experiment*; *The First Five Years of Twin Oaks Community*.

. . . deep into my latest find - "Gaviotas: A Village to Reinvent the World" - and I can't help think about the people I know both here and around the world whose hearts beat to help the world's poor and marginalized people. I have said many times that I believe there is enough collective genius and imagination in the world to solve the problems that plague us. This book is an exciting validation of that belief. If you are interested in development . . . if you are working to help find ways to help people help themselves . . . if you work or minister in harsh, unforgiving lands, considering giving

this book a read. It will make your heart beat faster . .

In 1966, when he was 22, Paolo Lugari and his brother drove over barely passable roads to a desolate area 200 miles east of Bogota, Columbia. The llanos area is a poor-soil barren that grows only a few nutrient-deficient grasses, a vast expanse of sun-baked plains in spite of over 100 inches of rain per year. A place of deadly water and hungry mosquitos. Conditions were so daunting that the Columbian government abandoned an attempt to build a road through the area. Lugari saw an opportunity to create something very special. And he did it. Today Gaviotas is a thriving, sustainable community of hundreds of joyous people studying, inventing, producing, singing and dancing amidst a huge forest that they planted. Residents from all walks of life have designed and built, planted and harvested, birthed, nurtured, taught, and entertained. There are teeter-totters that operate super-efficient pumps to bring water to the school, solar heat to cook meals, solar kettles to sterilize drinking water, ultra-light windmills to provide power. The hospital has been designated one of the 40 most important buildings in the world. Some have called Gaviotas a utopia. Lugari insists that, "Utopia literally means no place. We call Gaviotas a topia because it's real." Gaviotas the village is surprising, uplifting, extraordinary. Gaviotas the nonfiction book is as compelling as a novel, as educational as a textbook, as inspirational as the biography of a great person. If you need to rise early, do not take this book to bed with you.

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