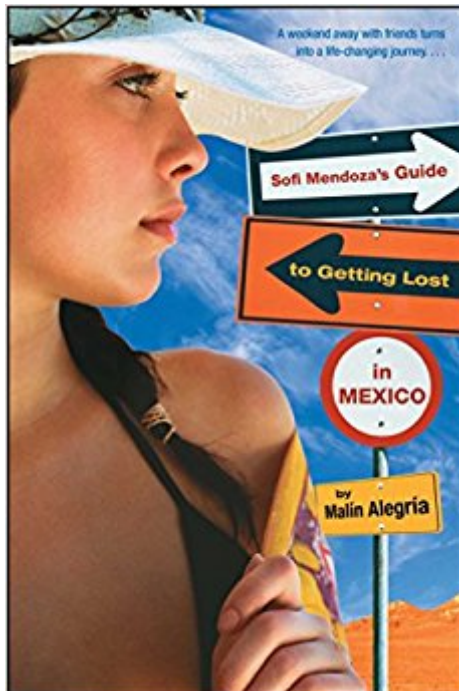


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# Sofi Mendoza's Guide To Getting Lost In Mexico



## Synopsis

"Do you guys have Internet?"..."How about TiVo?"..."You do get American TV?" The house was dark. Wait a minute -- do they even have electricity? Even though Sofi Mendoza was born in Mexico, she's spent most of her life in California -- the closest she gets to a south-of-the-border experience is eating at Taco Bell. But when Sofi and her friends sneak off for a weekend in Tijuana, she gets in real trouble. To Sofi's shock, the border patrol says that her green card is counterfeit. Until her parents can sort out the paperwork and legal issues, Sofi is stuck in Mexico. In the meantime, Sofi's parents arrange for her to stay with long-lost relatives in rural Baja. It's bad enough that Sofi has to miss senior prom and even graduation, but her aunt, uncle, and cousins live on a ranch with no indoor plumbing! As the weeks pass, though, she finds herself adapting to her surroundings. Sofi starts helping out on the ranch, getting along with her bratty cousins, and she even meets a guy with more potential than anyone from school. Through the unexpected crash course in her heritage, Sofi comes to appreciate that she has a home on both sides of the border.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Grade 9 Up – Sofi is a California teen obsessed with clothes, boys, and trying to escape the strict controls of her immigrant parents. Fed up with their rules, she tells them that she is spending

the weekend with a friend, cramming for finals. Instead, she sets off for Mexico with two girlfriends. Instead of the anticipated romantic encounter with her big crush, Sofi experiences drunken make-out sessions and American tourists behaving badly. Eager to return home, she is stopped at the border and told that her green card is a fake. Hysterical, Sofi calls home to discover that she and her parents are not legal citizens, and that she is trapped. Unable to speak Spanish, she goes to stay with her father's sister. Far away from iPods, Internet access, and a working phone, Sofi is forced to review her life and realize the sacrifices her parents made to give her better opportunities. The plot is paced well, with Sofi gradually evolving from a spoiled American teen into a bicultural, bilingual young adult. The Spanish language and foreign setting are well integrated into the book. While the Americans are more shallowly developed, the Mexicans whom Sofi encounters are vivid and well-rounded. Although there are occasional clichés, the writing is emotional and engaging. The author's Estrella's Quinceañera (S & S) and Laura Resau's What the Moon Saw (Delacorte, both 2006) also explore a young woman's struggle with a bicultural identity.

—Melissa Christy Buron, Epps Island Elementary, Houston, TX Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"What's the harm in a little white lie?" wonders Mexican-born, Orange County resident Sofi Mendoza, who attends a classmate's house party near Tijuana against her parents' wishes. On the 17-year-old's return, she's stopped at the border and learns the impossible: her green card is false. Barred from reentering the U.S., she takes refuge with a Mexican aunt she's never met, and while her parents fight legal battles, she gradually shifts from terror and sneering disapproval of her relatives to openhearted love and gratitude. As in Estrella's Quinceañera (2006), Alegria combines chick-lit elements with a girl's struggle to define her Mexican American identity. Unsparing descriptions of ugly Americans include graphic "Girls Gone Wild" episodes that will leave teens examining their own party culture. Views of Mexican life beyond the tourist beaches are welcome and rare in YA novels, and Sofi's bumpy search for herself will resonate with teens of all backgrounds, particularly those who, like Sofi, celebrate a mixed heritage as "a bridge between cultures, the best of both worlds." Engberg, Gillian --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

It's great service and fast shipping! I felt like I definitely got my money's worth with this product! The pages were clean and the cover didn't look too bad either!

The YA "teenage girl goes on an international trip and learns about herself" novel is a rather overexposed subgenre in which books filled with mediocre writing, vapid storylines, and flat protagonists often proliferate. Nothing could be further from the truth in the case of *Sofi Mendoza's Guide To Getting Lost In Mexico* by Malin Alegria, though you wouldn't know it from looking at the totally boring and generic cover. Sofi Mendoza is a senior in high school growing up in California. Frustrated by her overprotective parents' strict (and often unreasonable) rules, she tells them she'll be at a friend's house for the weekend and heads south across the border into Mexico to party at the vacation home of her crush's parents with some friends. Caught between two cultures: the Mexican one everybody assumes she identifies with due to her background and appearance, and the American one she claims as her own, Sofi unwittingly embarks on a journey of self discovery. What started out as an unsupervised party weekend filled with beer and prospects of making out turns into a much more serious self-examination of her personal identity, values, culture, heritage, and lifestyle when Sofi attempts to re-enter the United States with her friends, only to discover that her green card is a fake. Marooned in Mexico with an aunt, uncle, and cousins she has never met, Sofi is furious and heartbroken. With little in the way of material resources, she's forced to summon personal strength she didn't know she had while trying not to focus on missing the Senior Class Trip, Prom, Finals Week, and Graduation. But tempering those disappointments is the perspective of her newfound relatives, whose main concerns are staying safe and functioning without clean running water, constant electricity, phones, or any of the other conveniences and creature comforts Sofi has grown up taking for granted. Alegria peppers the story of Sofi's adventure with many Spanish words and phrases, for which there is a glossary in the back. The natural rhythm of the manuscript pairs wonderfully with these cultural inclusions, which bring the setting of Mexico to life. My only complaint there is that footnotes with the translations would've been more user-friendly, or the glossary could've at least been placed at the front of the book (as with Aussie slang in *Tomorrow, When The War Began*), because I read the entire novel before discovering it. If you enjoy YA travel novels, examinations of cultural identity, and huge amounts of character growth, *Sofi Mendoza's Guide To Getting Lost In Mexico* is for you.

Sofi Mendoza's life was made when she and her best friends were invited to the hottest party of the year. Just when Sofi thought everything was perfect, her overprotective parents say she can't go. But that doesn't stop her -- after she tells her parents a lie, she heads straight to the party. After the party, Sofi and a group of her friends decide to make a quick trip to Tijuana and make it back before

morning, but little do they know that everyone will return, except for Sofi! The only thing stopping her is the green card she has. Well, the counterfeit one. While her parents do the necessary paperwork, Sofi ends up staying with her aunt and cousins. Spending her time working on their ranch, living in their house with no electricity, Sofi finds a new love. By the time she falls head over heels, her paperwork gets completed and Sofi is on her way home. But will the romance continue? Will she learn what life is really all about, and will she finally understand why her parents care so much? You'll have to find out the answers yourself when you read *SOFI MENDOZA'S GUIDE TO GETTING LOST IN MEXICO*! Reviewed by: Cho

I will forgive the somewhat clichéd plot twists and stilted dialogue, because this book was overall one of the most deeply touching books I have ever read. It's got love, suspense, romance, family drama, everything you want! Sofi starts out as an infuriatingly clueless teenager and gradually figures out her place in the world as she gains new experiences. Having grown up on the Mexican border myself, I highly recommend it to everyone.

Being a publishing and education professional, I can't say enough about *SOFI MENDOZA'S GUIDE TO GETTING LOST IN MEXICO*. Alegria's voice is very real as well as engaging. Her description of Mexico truly brought me back to the moment I first stepped into the country--the sights, smells, attitudes... Also, the problems and hurdles that Sofi must overcome are not exaggerated nor simple. Again, Alegria's voice is real, and Sofi deals with real emotions and real problems. I couldn't be more impressed. Alegria captures the struggle for identity and independence of every emerging adult--with a Latino spin. Can't wait to buy Estrella's Quinceañera!

This book starts off pretty mindless, with a spoiled girl who wants to go to a party in Mexico because the guy she likes is going. Once she tries to get back in the U.S., however, she finds out that her parents did not enter legally & she can't get back to the life she knew. Inspired by a true story, the book examines border issues and immigration from a highly personal viewpoint. Sofi is forced to become a tougher person in Mexico and you will like her all the better for it. Very realistic--great romance as well as eye-opening in terms of culture. Highly recommend!

I greatly enjoyed reading this book. It was very interesting to observe how Sofi gradually began to change over time and respond to the environment around her in new ways. This book had a good moral at the ending which clearly demonstrated the importance of the saying "things are not always

as bad as they seem". All in all, I would definitely recommend Sofi Mendoza's Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico to a friend. Haili Adams

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