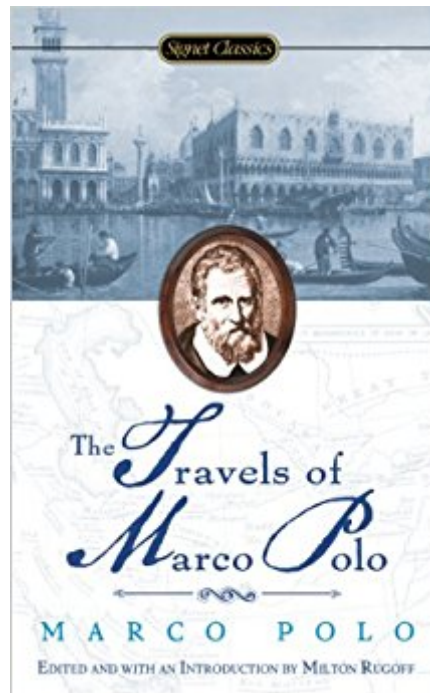




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Travels Of Marco Polo (Signet Classics)



Synopsis

His journey through the East began in 1271â when, still a teenager, he set out of Venice and found himself traversing the most exotic countries. His acceptance into the court of the great emperor Kublai Khan, and his service to the vast and dazzling Mongol empire, led him to places as far away as Tibet and Burma, lands rich with gems and gold and silk, but virtually unknown to Europeans. Later, as a prisoner of war, Marco Polo would record the details of his remarkable travels across harsh deserts, great mountain ranges, and dangerous seas, as well as of his encounters with beasts and birds, plants and people. His amazing chronicle is both fascinating and awe-inspiringâ and still serves as the most vivid depiction of the mysterious East in the Middle Ages. Edited and with an Introduction by Milton Rugoff and an Afterword by Howard Mittelmark

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"A timeless addition to any travel collection."

Text: English (translation) Original Language: Italian --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

It has been a pleasure to revisit the travels of Marco Polo. I was transfixed by these stories of travel and adventure when I was a child, and never questioned the veracity of the narrative. I know today that the narrative has been corrupted over the centuries, that "The Travels" can scarcely be used as an historical reference, and that a more tantalizing and complete manuscript has probably been lost

to the ages. Still, there are glimpses and insights within the narrative that could only have come from first-hand experience, and these describe an enormous, exotic world that titillates even today, while readers in the 13th and 14th centuries must have been enthralled. I was most keen this time around to Polo's descriptions of the cultures and wildlife he encountered, of the whales and lions and leopards and bears--he even describes a white bear, and the people who hunted it were surely of the group often called Eskimos. He describes dog-sledding in the far north and the cannibalistic practices of the people of Java far to the south, both of which are extant in our current era. There are also the fascinating observations of the Mongol Empire, of that group of nomadic people who somehow rose up, like an event in an Isaac Asimov novel, to conquer much of the known world. Somewhat depressingly, though, are Polo's observations of the tensions that existed between the Islamic and Christian worlds, tensions rooted in the competition for hegemony over trade in the Far East. Seven hundred years later, these tensions are still acting themselves out. This translation by Ronald Latham from 1958 includes an introduction that puts Marco Polo's life in context with events and includes footnotes to help the reader make sense of the myriad manuscripts that make up the travels of Marco Polo. This is a somewhat dry read; even Latham comments on the paucity of skill employed by Polo's chronicler. Once I put my mind in context with the narrative, however, I was able to roll with the repetition and sycophancy and enjoy the text.

I got this for my husband and he has read it cover to cover several times. We travel frequently and this book really spoke to him. I highly recommend it.

Read it and re-read it. It does not disappoint.

Highly recommended!

Folks have been following this path for over 800 years. The actual journey is classic and as important today in understanding many of the relationships amongst the peoples, tribes, sects, governments and geographical barriers that have built up, torn down and rebuilt over the last millennium. Marco Polo has to have been "The Most Interesting Man in the World" of all time. In order to "get it" you should read most of the references and appendices as you can get through. Some "followers" are much more reliable than others and it does take a patience approach to claim completion of this opus. There is a danger that getting hooked on Polo many lead to reading many historical novels covering the Polo years and beyond.

The Kindle version is unreadable. First it took about 10 minutes of hitting Next Page in order to get through all the introductions. Second this edition has 2 pages of footnotes for every page of the actual book. The text and notes are the same font so it is hard to distinguish between them. Maybe it is of interest to an academic but to a casual reader it is just annoying. Even for free it is not worth the aggravation.

I just returned from visiting Central Asia and I knew I had to read this book. It is fascinating and remains relevant.

This book represents the first accounts given to Europe of the riches of the East. Marco Polo inspired European explorers to make new adventures. Columbus grabbed at Marco Polo's descriptions and sailed west to find the Orient. He was misled about geographical distances, and spent many years trying to correlate his discoveries with Marco Polo's descriptions. Some observations: - It is remarkable how many city names have not changed in the past 800 years. - Marco Polo describes Christians in China, not far from Taiwan, in a community established in 500 AD. I'd like to know more about them, - It is worthwhile to read this. In addition, I found a great many references from modern life back to Marco Polo. How about the Pony Express, Jaws, and Chechnyan violence? The back pages of the book have an overview map and two regional maps - very handy. I like the spoken style of the writing - what more needs to be said?

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