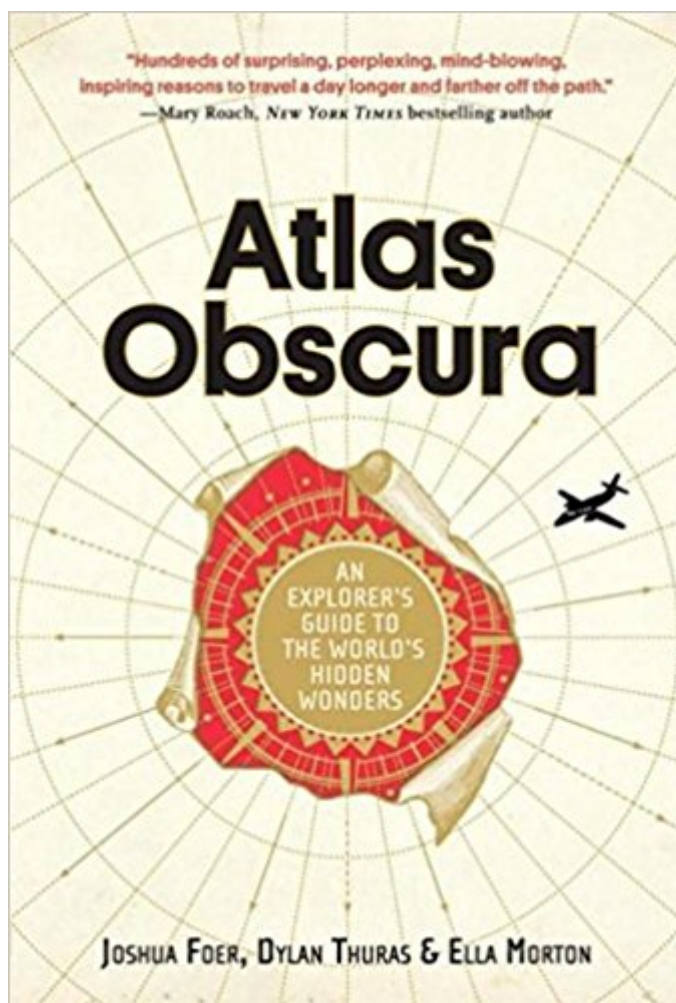


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Atlas Obscura: An Explorer's Guide To The World's Hidden Wonders



Synopsis

It's time to get off the beaten path. Inspiring equal parts wonder and wanderlust, Atlas Obscura celebrates over 700 of the strangest and most curious places in the world. Talk about a bucket list: here are natural wonders—the dazzling glowworm caves in New Zealand, or a baobab tree in South Africa that's so large it has a pub inside where 15 people can drink comfortably. Architectural marvels, including the M.C. Escher-like stepwells in India. Mind-boggling events, like the Baby Jumping Festival in Spain, where men dressed as devils literally vault over rows of squirming infants. Not to mention the Great Stalacpipe Organ in Virginia, Turkmenistan's 40-year hole of fire called the Gates of Hell, a graveyard for decommissioned ships on the coast of Bangladesh, eccentric bone museums in Italy, or a weather-forecasting invention that was powered by leeches, still on display in Devon, England. Created by Joshua Foer, Dylan Thuras and Ella Morton, ATLAS OBSCURA revels in the weird, the unexpected, the overlooked, the hidden and the mysterious. Every page expands our sense of how strange and marvelous the world really is. And with its compelling descriptions, hundreds of photographs, surprising charts, maps for every region of the world, it is a book to enter anywhere, and will be as appealing to the armchair traveler as the die-hard adventurer. Anyone can be a tourist. ATLAS OBSCURA is for the explorer.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Fair warning: It's addictive.” —NPR, “Cosmos &

Culture” —“In this gorgeous collection, the celebrated Atlas Obscura website is

condensed into 480 pages of awe-inspiring destinations. For lovers of history and exploration, the striking color photographs will spark immediate wanderlust.

• *Entertainment Weekly* – “Odds are you won’t get past three pages without being amazed at something truly strange that you didn’t know existed.”

• *San Francisco Chronicle* – “Richly illustrated, delightfully strange, this compendium of off-beat destinations should spark many adventures, both terrestrial and imaginary.”

• *Boston Globe* – “This book is PACKED with wonderful, amazing, fascinating places all around the world. This is the perfect gift for the person who thinks they’ve done it all and seen it all because this shows that there’s so much more in the world to explore. It’s a wonderful, wonderful coffee table book.”

• *NBC*, – “TODAY” – “A perfect tome for the armchair explorer and the actual traveler alike.”

• *Austin American Statesman* – “The most addictive book of the year.”

• *Colin McEnroe, WNPR* – “Whether describing a Canadian museum that showcases world history through shoes, a pet-casket company that will also sell you a unit for your severed limb, a Greek snake festival, or a place in the Canary Islands where inhabitants communicate through whistling, the authors have compiled an enthralling range of oddities. Featuring full-color illustrations, this hefty and gorgeously produced tome will be eagerly pored over by readers of many ages and fans of the original website.”

• *Booklist (Starred Review)* – “If this compendium of the weirdest, wackiest, and most wonderful destinations on the planet doesn’t fill you with insatiable wanderlust, then you need to check your pulse.”

• *mental_floss* – “This is the fun way, a deep dive (sometimes literally) into places you’d never find otherwise, the weird and wild wonders of the world.”

• *WIRED* – “The book is for people who prefer to live like locals when they travel, seek out new cultures on vacation, or just prefer the weirdness of history to traditional by-the-book experiences. Even if you can’t travel, Atlas Obscura is a window into places you’d otherwise never know existed.”

• *lifehacker* – “A travel guide for the most adventurous of tourists . . . a wonderful browse [for] armchair travelers who enjoyed Brandon Stanton’s Humans of New York and Frank Warren’s PostSecret.”

• *Library Journal* – “I thought I had seen most of the interesting bits of the world. Atlas Obscura showed me that I was wrong. It’s the kind of book that makes you want to pack in your workaday life and head out to places you’d never have dreamed of going, to see things you could not even have imagined. A joy to read and to reread.”

• *NEIL GAIMAN*, author of *Sandman* and *American Gods* – “Atlas Obscura is a joyful antidote to the creeping suspicion that travel these days is little more than a

homogenized corporate shopping opportunity. Here are hundreds of surprising, perplexing, mind-blowing, inspiring reasons to travel a day longer and farther off the path. . . . Bestest travel guide ever. • MARY ROACH, author of *Stiff* and *Gulp* “Atlas Obscura may be the only thing that can still inspire me to leave my apartment. . . . This resource is essential for exploring the world and engaging adventure with wit and style (often from the comfort of my bed).” • LENA DUNHAM, creator of *Girls* and author of *Not That Kind of Girl* “My favorite travel guide! Never start a trip without knowing where a haunted hotel or a mouth of hell is!” • GUILLERMO DEL TORO, filmmaker, *Pan’s Labyrinth* “What a strange and wonderful book! It is as curious and surprising as Saddam Hussein’s very own *Blood Qur’an* written in his own blood which I would never have known about had I not read the amazing Atlas Obscura.” • JON RONSON, author of *So You’ve Been Publicly Shamed* “This book is as curious and enthralling as the world it covers. Each page reveals some hidden realm a realm that is frightening, or funny, or magical, or simply mad, but that always leaves the reader in wonder.” • DAVID GRANN, author of *The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession* in the “Your peregrine falcon needs a small talon trim? Go straight to the Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital. . . . Be grateful when visiting the Karni Mata Rat Temple if one of the 20,000 venerated rodents runs across your bare foot it is considered good luck. . . . You won’t be able to enter the 20-years-in-the-making and still abandoned tallest hotel in the world. It does not matter. Wherever you look around Pyongyang, North Korea, the 105-story skyscraper silently towers over all. . . . Life is short. Our planet is filled with curiosities and marvels . . . and this wondrous book is your guide!” • PHILIPPE PETIT, high-wire artist and explorer

Joshua Foer is the cofounder and chairman of Atlas Obscura. He is also the author of *Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything*, a bestseller published in 33 languages, and a forthcoming book about the world’s last hunter-gatherers. Dylan Thurais is the cofounder and creative director of Atlas Obscura. Ella Morton is a New Zealand-born, Australian-raised, Brooklyn-based writer, focusing on overlooked aspects of history and culture. After covering consumer technology at CNET she hosted *Rocketboom NYC*, a web show about New York’s quirkier people and places. Her most popular interview was a chat with Cookie Monster on the set of *Sesame Street*. Ella is now associate editor at AtlasObscura.com, where she writes about such topics as tobacco smoke enemas, Victorian streaming music services, and the etiquette of marrying a ghost.

The world is still filled with interesting, exotic, and improbable places. In the twenty-first century, when you can wash down your KFC chicken with a Starbucks vente frappuccino in Beijing, it is refreshing to re-discover the awe and mystery of travel. This is a perfect book for a two minute break whenever your spirit needs boosting. Whether you find Jeremy Bentham's mummified corpse at University College London; the Beer Bottle Temple in Sisaket, Thailand; or the Canadian Potato Museum in D'Leary, PEI, you can return to your drab, dreary existence with the assurance that the World is "not only queerer than we suppose, but queerer than we can suppose". Buy this book! Revel in the places that you've seen! Revel in the places that you'd like to see! You won't be disappointed.

I bought this for a 30-year old nephew whose county count was, I believe, pushing 40 about a year ago, and I think it may satisfy even him. (He's the hardest to buy for member of the entire family!) I read a short description of the book in the travel section of the SF Chronicle a few weeks ago, and made the purchase based on that. Well, that combined with my sister verifying that her son might actually appreciate this book! There are many hundreds of places and things described over about 450 pages, with most including a photo, and the balance a drawing. I think the only things without a graphic are the short, "Also in or near" entries. Those graphics add interest and tend to draw you in, encouraging you to read the piece about whatever is depicted graphically. The book must weigh something like 2 pounds just guessing meaning you might not be likely to pack it in your suitcase. However, it's easy enough to take digital photos of any entries you may want to have easy access to on a trip. It's printed on heavy paper, and I like that the pages are a pleasing, very light buff color, much nicer than stark white. Point being, it's aesthetically a very nicely put together book. Because I bought this as a gift, I've looked through it closely but have not read it cover to cover. The entries seem to be written for a variety of readers and travelers, but certainly far from the lowest common denominator. It's not a typical travel book! I don't find every entry to be about a fascinating item, but a great many are, and possibly none whatsoever are dull. Even things that might not seem of particular interest based on the heading end up proving to be interesting when you get into the text. That said, there are items about things I have no interest in seeing, e.g., "Lake Monsters of the USA" but there don't seem to be many of that sort of thing included. As with "Lake Monsters,"

even if you (or a recipient) aren't likely to visit many of the places described, I think for many curious people this would make for an interesting read even without the travel element. It's not a perfect book, and I don't think any one book can be perfect for all readers, but I do think it's very good and I can easily recommend it for anyone who might be potentially interested. Given the quality of the contents and of the physical item itself, I am very pleased with the price. Easy 5 stars and recommendation!

This book exceeded my already higher-than-average expectations. It's gorgeously designed and **PACKED** with interestingness on every page. The page layouts are complex and varied too, so it's fun to flip through and land on random sections about odd, wondrous places and artifacts halfway around the world (or in your own hometown!). So the act of making your way through the book feels like the kind of discovery and adventure covered in the content itself. Brilliant. I pre-ordered this because I was already a huge fan of the website and decided to support the project. I figured at the very least I'd have a gift ready for the holidays. But I am absolutely keeping this for myself, and will probably buy another copy for one of my family members soon. The book inspires you to venture out and explore, and reminds you that even in this era of Google Earth and Twitter there is plenty of mystery left out there that's waiting to be stumbled upon.

I bought this for an Xmas present and needed to send it across country but had such a hard time letting go of it. It is packed full of interesting and unusual things to see or visit in worldwide destinations. As I said to my friend I sent it to, "just a great book to keep on the shelf so that anytime you're traveling somewhere you can grab it and find a couple of things to do that many other sources might not mention or that are special to the personality of a destination." She agreed.

This is a beautiful book filled with wonder and fantastic stories of real places. I cannot speak more highly of this book and the website behind it. Buy this book post haste! You will not regret it!

The book is beautiful, as thoughtful as the website which created it. It does not exhibit the cheap paper, subpar printing, and mediocre typesetting which many website-to-book projects suffer from. It is a book that is a proud one through and through.

This book is beautiful! A must-have (and perfect gift) for anyone with a sense of wanderlust and curiosity who wants to learn about the world. Full of amazing places in the real world I never know

existed, a refreshing escape from all the grim news we hear these days and screens our eyes are glued to. You will be inspired!

I love their site and have gotten their emails for years but it's super fun to have a book full of obscure places to read about and to dream of visiting!

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