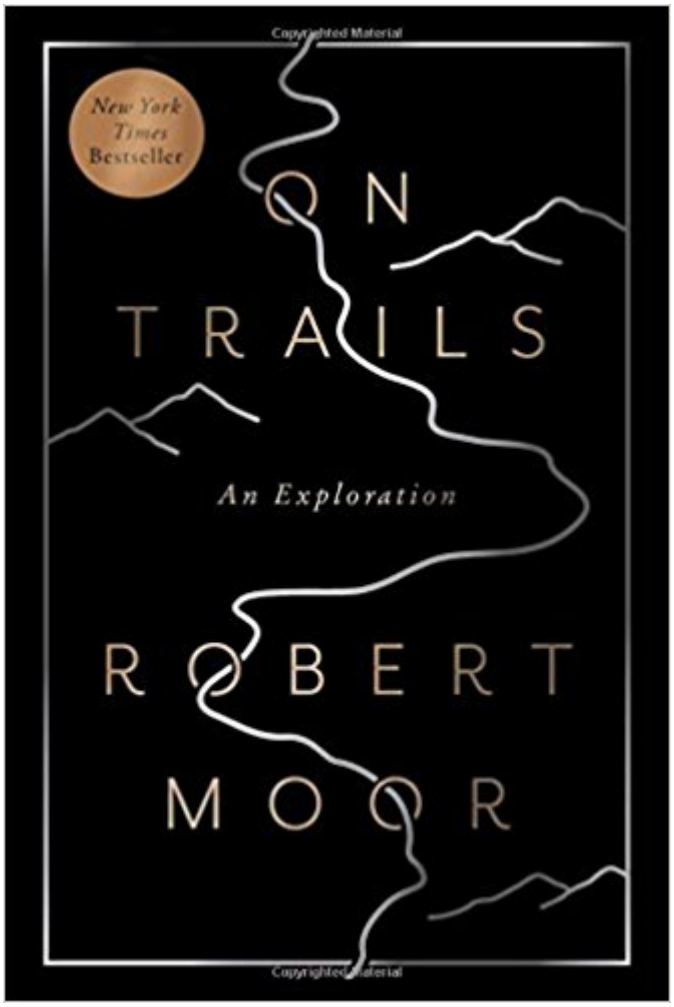
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On Trails: An Exploration



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Synopsis

Winner of the Pacific Northwest Book Award Ã¢â ¬Å“The best outdoors book of the yearÃ¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Sierra Club A New York Times Bestseller A Best Book of the YearÃ¢â ¬â •as chosen by The Boston Globe, The Seattle Times, , National Post, New York magazine, The Telegraph, Booklist, The Guardian Bookshop From a debut talent whoÃ¢â ¬â„¢s been compared to Annie Dillard, Edward Abbey, David Quammen, and Jared Diamond, On Trails is a wondrous exploration of how trails help us understand the worldÃ¢â ¬â •from invisible ant trails to hiking paths that span continents, from interstate highways to the Internet.In 2009, while thru-hiking the Appalachian Trail, Robert Moor began to wonder about the paths that lie beneath our feet: How do they form? Why do some improve over time while others fade? What makes us follow or strike off on our own? Over the course of the next seven years, Moor traveled the globe, exploring trails of all kinds, from the miniscule to the massive. He learned the tricks of master trail-builders, hunted down long-lost Cherokee trails, and traced the origins of our road networks and the Internet. In each chapter, Moor interweaves his adventures with findings from science, history, philosophy, and nature writingÃ¢â ¬â •combining the nomadic joys of Peter Matthiessen with the eclectic wisdom of Lewis HydeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s The Gift. Throughout, Moor reveals how this single topicÃ¢â ¬â •the oft-overlooked trailÃ¢â ¬â •sheds new light on a wealth of age-old questions: How does order emerge out of chaos? How did animals first crawl forth from the seas and spread across continents? How has humanityÃ¢â ¬â„¢s relationship with nature and technology shaped world around us? And, ultimately, how does each of us pick a path through life? Moor has the essayistÃ¢â ¬â„¢s gift for making new connections, the adventurerÃ¢â ¬â„¢s love for paths untaken, and the philosopherÃ¢â ¬â„¢s knack for asking big questions. With a breathtaking arc that spans from the dawn of animal life to the digital era, On Trails is a book that makes us see our world, our history, our species, and our ways of life anew.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“Like Montaigne, Mr. Moor writes about one subject as a way of touching on 100 others. Although his ostensible topic is how humans and other creatures make the routes that get them from A to B, On Trails also considers Greek mythology and the origins of life, the intricacy of caterpillar nests and the stealth of elephants, the physicistÃ Â Richard FeynmanÃ Â and theÃ Â Biblical Cain.Ã Â The thicket of information here comes to resemble a densely wooded trail itselfÃ¢â ¬â •one that Mr. Moor expertly navigates. HeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s a philosopher on foot, recording his journey through miles of wilderness and through a mind sorting out the meaning of travel itself. Ã¢â ¬Â¦ The only constant in On Trails is the promise of surprise.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •The Wall Street JournalÃ¢â ¬Å“The best outdoors book of the year. Ã¢â ¬Â¦ An outstanding work that should be read by anyone who has spent time following a footpath through the woods. Robert MoorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s debut book,Ã Â On Trails, trips through natural history, anthropology, gonzo reporterÃ¢â ¬â„¢s adventures, and memoir in a ramble that unpacks the many meanings of the routes we humans and other animals sketch on the land.Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Â¦ The prologue alone is worth the price of admission: a nearly-30-page set piece about hiking the A.T. that puts Bill Bryson and Cheryl Strayed to shame. (Moor actually, you know, completed the full thru-hike.)Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Sierra ClubÃ¢â ¬Å“Part natural history, part scientific inquiry, but most of all a deeply thoughtful human meditation on how we walk through life, MoorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s book is enchanting.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •The Boston GlobeÃ¢â ¬Å“A wandererÃ¢â ¬â„¢s dream, even from an armchair.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •The EconomistÃ¢â ¬Å“Stunning Ã¢â ¬Â¦ a wondrous nonfiction debut. Ã¢â ¬Â¦ In each chapter, Moor explores the same phenomenon in a surprising new context, from the fossilized traces of prehistoric smudges to swaths of jungle flattened by elephants, from the paths of nomadic Native Americans to the interstates that paved them over. Along the way, Moor reaches into the history of science, religion, and philosophy to trace similar lines of refinement in the amassing of knowledge and ideas.Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Â¦Ã Â ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s an exhilarating journey.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •DeparturesÃ¢â ¬Å“You might think of Robert Moor as the Roger Angell of trail-walking. Just as AngellÃ¢â ¬â„¢s reports on specific baseball games segue effortlessly into reflections on the venerable sport itself, so Moor looks up from whatever trail he may be on to see the big picture.

Which is often very big, indeed.Ã Â ... Highly satisfying Ã¢â ¬Â¦ On Trails is an engaging blend of travelogue, sociology, history and philosophy that might be summed up as a meditation on the centrality of trails to animal and human life.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •The Washington PostÃ¢â ¬Å“MoorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s writing compares better with wilderness philosophers like Annie Dillard or Edward Abbey. Each chapter of thisÃ Â GQÃ Â writerÃ¢â ¬â„¢s debut work is packed with ideas, switchbacking to and fro. Each idea is so carefully portrayed and deeply fascinating that I had to stop and catch my breath often. Ã¢â ¬Â¦ ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢sÃ Â a beautiful trek through the human and naturalÃ Â landscapes of modern life.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Chicago Review of BooksÃ¢â ¬Å“A beautiful thing to behold. Ã¢â ¬Â¦ what a profoundly talented writer Moor is. He brings a keen essayist's eye to themes both personal and empiric; his prose is lush and lively and his analysis adroit Ã¢â ¬â • all makingÃ Â On TrailsÃ Â a true treat to read.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •BuzzFeed BooksÃ¢â ¬Å“Spectacular ... an example of narrative nonfiction at its finest. Those with a passion for walking, hiking or exploring will be naturally drawn to Moor's subject, but this is so much more than a subject-specific story; it is a book that poses big questions about humanity's place in the world (literally and figuratively) and how we've come to be hereÃ¢â ¬â •and it's fascinating to its very end.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Shelf AwarenessÃ¢â ¬Å“A wonderfully rich and human book. It is a trail all on its own, marked by the procession of internal contemplation and idea-spinning that a long solitary walk in the woods can produce. Moor is interested in everything, with a knack for communicating that curiosity to the reader Ã¢â ¬Â¦ Fascinating facts fall fast and furiously Ã¢â ¬Â¦ He has succeeded admirably. Thru-hikers be warned: youÃ¢â ¬â„¢ll be ditching some essentials to make room for On Trails in your pack.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Portland Press HeraldÃ¢â ¬Å“Falling into a trail trance, for Moor, opened the spigot to a torrent of questionsÃ¢â ¬â •most of them scientific, some of them philosophical, and nearly all of them profound, provocative, and under MoorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s analysis, deeply entertaining. Ã¢â ¬Â¦ Little flowers of information bloom on the graceful canes of Moor's prose. HeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s erudite, witty, and relentlessly curious.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Garden & GunÃ¢â ¬Å“[A] fascinating debut Ã¢â ¬Â¦ both fun and intriguing. Ã¢â ¬Â¦ Following MoorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s trails in this book opens many fascinatingÃ Â vistas.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •The Seattle TimesÃ¢â ¬Å“In the hallowed tradition of Robert Macfarlane, MoorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s beautiful travelogue is a meditation on trails: as cultural space, as history, as intimate terrain. This is just the ticket for your big summer adventure.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •San Francisco Chronicle"[Moor]Ã Â brilliantly synthesizes his own hiking experiences so that distinctions between history, science, and philosophy meld into a beautiful book.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •The National Book ReviewÃ¢â ¬Å“There are revelations at every

turn here, from the nature of shepherding, to the vast network of ancient animal and Native American trails that underlie modern North America, to the very qualities of the best trailsÃ¢â ¬â •durability, efficiency, and flexibilityÃ¢â ¬â •and how we learn from them even as we move beyond them....[A] deeply informed study of nature and history of trailmaking.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Booklist, Starred ReviewÃ¢â ¬Å“A sagacious walker and writer guides us on a new journey of discovery, a different kind of road trip about roads themselves and what they mean. [On Trails] is consistently fascinating and entertaining. Ã¢â ¬Â¦ With side trips to areas scarcely visited before, this is a fine guide to places with better views of the world.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Kirkus ReviewsÃ¢â ¬Å“Chockful of historical trivia, philosophical musings, and an unflagging sense of joy in winding oneÃ¢â ¬â„¢s way through both the outdoors and the inner self, MoorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s multi-dimensional exploration earns him a place on the map of writers to watch. Ã¢â ¬Â¦ Moor [is] an elegant essayist and fastidious researcher. Ã¢â ¬Â¦ Whether perambulating or cogitating, if you love to follow a twisting path, making unexpected connections between Point A and Point B, youÃ¢â ¬â„¢ll love the literary adventure of nonfiction writer Robert MoorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s compelling debut.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Passport MagazineÃ¢â ¬Å“An ingeniously conceived collection. ... Like Tom VanderbiltÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Traffic, MoorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s book is an appealing mix of the physical and philosophical.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •National Post, Ã¢â ¬Å“The books you should be reading inÃ Â JulyÃ¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬Å“A hike becomes a classic when it takes hold of a person like a memorable story Ã¢â ¬â œ when the journey is marked by surprises.Ã Â On Trails, the first book by American journalist Robert Moor, embodies this. It is a surprising story of trails as Moor takes us on disparate journeys. Ã¢â ¬Â¦ As Moor walks, his bigger themes coalesce Ã¢â ¬â œ and evolve. [His] exploration becomes a consideration of the trail/path of life, where to walk, how to live.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •The Globe and MailÃ¢â ¬Å“Hiker and journalist Moor [is] the rare thru-hiker whose philosophical ramblings youÃ¢â ¬â„¢ll actually want to read. Ã¢â ¬Â¦ [A] treatise on how trailsÃ¢â ¬â •the ones we plan and the ones we accidentally leave behindÃ¢â ¬â •shape our culture.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •OutsideÃ¢â ¬Å“Profound and interesting, it dwells on big questions and brings together an engaging collection of facts and stories.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Book Riot, One of the best Science/Nature books published this summer- Winner of the Pacific Northwest Book Award - Finalist for the BC National Non-Fiction Award - Longlist for the Goodreads Choice Award for Best Science and Technology Ã¢â ¬Å“This book is about so many things: about breaking down the binary between Ã¢â ¬Ëœhumanityâ ¬â„¢ and Ã¢â ¬Ëœnature,Ã¢â ¬â„¢ Ã¢â ¬Ëœcivilizationâ ¬â„¢ and Ã¢â ¬Ëœthe wild.Ã¢â ¬â„¢ ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s an exploration of exploring, a philosophical-psychological-journalistic adventure in the tradition of Michael Pollan and

Rebecca Solnit.Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Â¦ Not all who wander are lost, and Moor helps us see what they seek.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •New York MagazineÃ¢â ¬Å“An inspired exploration of the collective wisdom of trails. The warm, sinuous line of the narrative is its own reward.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •William Finnegan, author of Barbarian DaysÃ¢â ¬Å“For a combination of adventure physical and intellectual, this book is tough to beat. ... ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s the perfect companion for a long hike someplace down the trail.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Bill McKibben, author The End of Nature and Wandering HomeÃ¢â ¬Å“This strange and delightful book combines the best elements of travelogue, science writing, and spiritual guidebook. The work of a curious, hungry, eccentric, and profoundly secular mind, it leaps from ants to elephants to the Internet to us in beautiful, looping prose. You can find something brilliant and enlightening on every page. While Moor hikes his trail through our world, teaching you amazing things you never imagined learning, he also manages to be not just entertaining but actually funny. In the end though, his goal is to show us that our own species, and the other species with whom we share the planet, have a trail-hardened wisdom that, respected properly, might just save us all from catastrophe.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Amy Wilentz, author of Farewell, Fred VoodooÃ¢â ¬Å“Here is an erudite meditation on the communities of creatures who roam the planet, and how they decide where to go. Robert MoorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s eye scans from the dirt beneath his boot to the wide expanse of animal movement through time and through space. He is a pilgrim and a philosopher, walking and wondering, talking to thinkers and thinking wisely on his own; and his book is a lively companion, whether for your own long walks or for contemplating the lines we make across fields and through snow.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Ted Conover, author of The Routes of Man and Rolling NowhereÃ¢â ¬Å“Robert Moor gets you thinking. What is the meaning of trails in human history, ecology, the journeys of life? Gary Snyder and dharma, E.O. Wilson and ants, the International Appalachian Trail? ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s a sinuous route to a robust relationship between feet and landscape. Walk on.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •David Quammen, author of Spillover and The Song of the DodoÃ¢â ¬Å“Robert MoorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s primer on the history of trails is a literary gem, encompassing everything from insect travel to road-building in Colonial America. Addictive readers and knowledge junkies, however, should be careful. On Trails is a whirlpool of fact that will suck you in and not let go.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Rinker Buck, author of The Oregon Trail Ã¢â ¬Å“My old professor used to say, no matter how good a book is there is always a Ã¢â ¬Ëœhowever.Ã¢â ¬â„¢ However, I don't have a however with On Trails. This book is a gift to those of us who like to let our minds and feet wander. As a guide Robert Moor is deeply knowledgeable, entertaining, easy-going, erudite, and funny, leading us on a trip that winds around the world and culminates in a profound discussion of the meaning of human wisdom. He shows us that connectivity

didnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t start with a keyboard, but on the pathways that we created as those same pathways were creating us. With this inspiring book as your map, you can indulge in those twin passions that made us human: thinking and walking.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •David Gessner, author of All the Wild That RemainsÃ¢â ¬Å“Hanging with [Moor] you meet a host of different byways, get in (and out) of trouble and the experience is not just enlightening, itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s sweaty, hot, cold andÃ¢â ¬Â¦well, to say it plainlyÃ¢â ¬Â¦fun.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Robert Krulwich, Ã¢â ¬Å“Curiously Krulwich,Ã¢â ¬Â• National Geographic- Seattle TimesÃ¢â ¬â„¢ Best Books of 2016 - Boston GlobeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Best Books of 2016 - Ã¢â ¬â„¢s Best Nonfiction Books of 2016 - The TelegraphÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Best Travel Books of 2016 - National PostÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Best Books of 2016 - New York MagazineÃ¢â ¬â„¢s 5 Best Science Books of 2016 - WaterstonesÃ¢â ¬â„¢ Best Travel Writing of 2016 - The Guardian BookshopÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Best Nature Writing of 2016 - BooklistÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Top 10 Literary Travel Books of 2016

Robert Moor has written for HarperÃ¢â ¬â„¢s, n+1, New York, and GQ, among other publications. A recipient of the Middlebury Fellowship in Environmental Journalism, he has won multiple awards for his nonfiction writing. He lives in Halfmoon Bay, British Columbia. On Trails is his first book.

It’s hard to believe that ON TRAILS is Robert Moor’s debut as an author (although as a journalist he’s been published for many years). ON TRAILS is an engaging book which began to take shape when the author through-hiked the Appalachian Trail a few years ago - the five months in solitary hiking gave the Moor time to being to think about what trails mean to a society - how the interplay between the concept of "wilderness" and the organization lent to us by trails is both a modern construct and a primeval calling. (Just wait until you read about the trails forged by simple-celled organisms.). Moor recounts his various adventures exploring trails and their meaning (including a hair-raising story of bush-bashing in the Maritimes during a raging thunderstorm, and an amusing one of losing a flock of sheep he was herding for the Navajos) with humor and clarity. I read the entire book in a day and a half; that’s the first time I’ve powered through a work of non-fiction like this for many years. Highly recommended.

Great combination of looking at trails and paths through multiple perspectives and dimensions and posing questions about broader issues common to all life, not just human beings. I especially enjoyed the pre-Cambrian exploration of movement and Cherokee trails well before the tragic relocation in the 1830’s. Moor maintains a presence throughout, which I found engaging and

reflective. The final sections on the International App Trail and the ultra-hiker Nimblewill Nomad bring out the tensions between exploration and conservation graphically and are a fitting coda to a masterful "ramble," as one reviewer remarked. I will return to parts of Moor's ramble many times.

I'm only on the second chapter and already I can't get this book out of my head. Moor has a way of describing things that sticks with you. A glassine dawn, being mauled by Tuckamore trees, the high arching steps of a moose as he walks atop said trees, the astral appearance of his hiking gear. I find myself turning those phrases over in my head, looking forward to when I can settle back in to catch a few more pages before bed. The book balances action with learning, moving along before it gets too heavy. It's not a book to rush through, as I fear it will be over too soon.

I am not a hiker, adventurer or an outdoors-man, but this story had me from page one. Thoughtful, well-crafted, engaging -- His manner with language, arranging themes and connecting journeys are entertaining on many levels. Mr. Moor illustrates a perspective on humanity worth the many miles and drafts it took to get there. Treat yourself.

I love trails and this book leaves me with an even deeper appreciation for the nature of trails, their history, the role they play and the symbolism they evoke. Plus, the writing quality is A+!

As I expected, this book goes far afield (pun intended) from just human trails. Trails was just a great excuse to write a book about all sorts of subjects related to trails and various animal behaviors. The writing style is casual and fun. A big thumbs up from this reader.

On Trails effortlessly transitions from vividly described personal narrative to extensively researched scientific and historical analysis throughout. The author's ability to weave stories into his analysis of all kinds of trails makes for an enjoyable and informative read on how something rarely thought about has shaped our history and impacts our daily lives.

A good read. The beginning and the end particularly kept me interested. I admit the frequent focus on the Appalachian Trail didn't captivate me as much other than learning about the origins of the trail. There were many many nuggets of wisdom and truths that I kept finding...and that kept me looking for more. This will definitely be a book that I will return to a different times, knowing I missed bits of wisdom and perspective that tickled my fancy. Great epilogue.

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