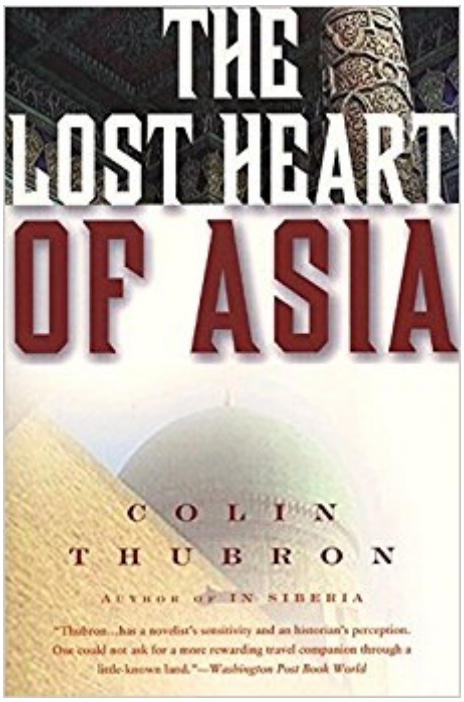
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The Lost Heart Of Asia



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Synopsis

A land of enormous proportions, countless secrets, and incredible history, Central Asia was the heart of the great Mongol empire of Tamerlane and scene of Stalin's cruelest deportations. A remote and fascinating region in a constant state of transitionÃ¢â ¬â •never more so than since the collapse of the Soviet UnionÃ¢â ¬â •it encompasses terrain as diverse as the Kazakh steppes, the Karakum desert, and the Pamir mountains. In The Lost Heart of Asia, acclaimed, bestselling travel writer Colin Thubron carries readers on an extraordinary journey through this little understood, rarely visited, yet increasingly important corner of the world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

West of China, south of Russia, hemmed in by mountains, steppe, and desert, lie the five Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union. Cut loose from Moscow in the early '90s, the five "Stans" (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan) discover that their newly found freedom plays tug-o-war with despair and a nostalgia for the certainties of the Soviet past. It's during this time that author Colin Thubron travels the width of central Asia, asking questions about the past, present, and future. Not content to simply bounce from place to place, Thubron travels from person to person, uncovering their many vibrant stories and developing a deep understanding of the area's lesser-known history. Kyrgyz and Uzbeks debate the place of Islam. Koreans and Germans, descendants from forced migrants, wonder if they know enough of their ethnic tongue to return to their homelands. Russians find themselves left behind, disbelieving, as the tide of Russian power recedes toward Moscow. Central Asia was mostly off limits to foreigners during the Soviet years,

and while officials are still uncertain about how to deal with a backpack-wearing solo traveler, the locals Thubron meets are not. Thubron finds the heart of Asia in the hearts of its people, swimming in a sea of tea, vodka, and hospitality. From the oldest-known Quran to a deserted Soviet naval base on the shores of a high mountain lake 1,500 miles from the ocean (used to test torpedoes far from spying eyes), Thubron's writing echoes the melancholy emptiness of the wide spaces he passes through. The Lost Heart of Asia is a rare meeting of a marvelous writer and a mysterious land. --Ken Peavler --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A 6000-mile journey takes Thubron (Where Nights are Longest) through Central Asia to the countries of the ancient Mongol empire of Tamerlane-Tashkent, Kazakh, Samarkand, Bukhara-more recently part of the Soviet Union. He supplies helpful historical background and a multitude of conversations with residents. He shows that while several generations grew to adulthood under communism, previously proscribed nationalist, Muslim and other religious practices have quickly reasserted themselves as these republics have gained nationhood. Thubron finds a range of reactions to the collapse of the Soviet Union: some people are nostalgic for the unity it provided, however repressive the regime, but many seem overjoyed and look forward to material improvements even though the problems confronting each country are sobering. Thubron has a gift for describing the ambiences of unfamiliar villages and cities, but his self-conscious literary style sometimes distracts from the instructive content. First serial to Conde Nast Traveler. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Thubron's travels in the heart of Central Asia are for the most part a dour affair. He has a brilliant way with words and pen portraits of various informants spring to life with a mere description of an eyebrow and moustache. Few travellers would invite then sustain situations and people he encounters and seems to thrive on. They are fodder for his wry and frequently sardonic humour and his icy distance from them is maintained throughout. His architectural descriptions are the most elevating, despite the ruined state of many of the iconic buildings and suspect renovations to others. Conceding these gifts he frequently deploys excess adjectives which frustrated my reading at times. But such hindrances were trifling in the general flow.

an intersting book for any history buff or any interest in adventure travel especially concerning the historical places along the silk road. The characters the author meets gives one quite in insight on the way of life in an area and how the environment shapes the type of person and character that

develops due to those circumstances. The dangereous situations that the author was experiencing would shake anyone but he seems handle each one with the equanimity and calm of a seasoned adventurer.Well worth the read especially if you are curious about the state of these historical places at that time period.

Colin Thubron has the ability to put the reader into the atmospherics of foreign lands. He fills his books with sounds and temperatures of other worlds and paints the histories of these lands so we can understand some of the mechanisms of the past which seem to drive the present in today's Middle East and Far East, along with descriptive commentary on the characters he meets along the way. He clarifies what the news refuses to provide us, and opens us up to the ancient movers of history abroad, resplendent with both the good and murderous qualities they displayed. Wonderful reads.

Masterful mix of history and travel diary. Makes you feel as though you're on the journey with him. Sorry it had to end.

At times I found it convenient to have the computer close by so I could look up words I was not familiar with. That aside, this was truly a wonderfully revealing look at the history and current situation in Central Asia. It should be required reading for anyone interested in traveling to that area of the world. It is indispensable for me for my upcoming visit.

A great read somewhat dated now but it gives a great window to the Central Asian psyche following the fall of the Soviet Union. Thubron as always gives great account an detail of his travels.he also portrays an excellent sense of melancholy among the Central Asian people who he seems to regard as Tribesmen who were shepherded into countries that they did not know existed. Overall an enjoyable book of travels written by the best travel writer in the world.

Outstanding travel book by Colin Thubron. His writing never bores. His descriptions are excellent. He befriends & gets to know a wide variety of people

An outstanding book. Knowledge combines with curiosity, a wonderful prose is used to describe people and places with sensitivity and humor.Bravo and thanks to Colin Thubron, it is great to have this book put on Kindle

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