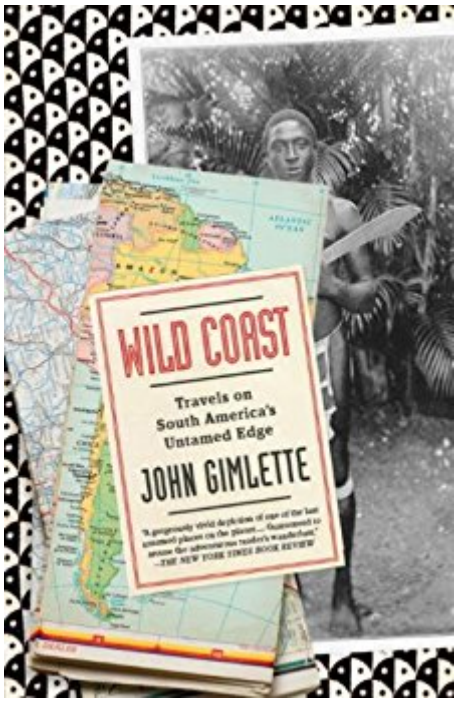
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Wild Coast



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Synopsis

Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana are among the least-known places in South America: nine hundred miles of muddy coastline giving way to a forest so dense that even today there are virtually no roads through it; a string of rickety coastal towns situated between the mouths of the Orinoco and Rivers, where living is so difficult that as many Guianese live abroad as in their homelands; an interior of watery, green anarchy where border disputes are often based on ancient Elizabethan maps, where flora and fauna are still being discovered, where thousands of rivers remain mostly impassable. And under the lens of John GimletteÃ¢â ¬â •brilliantly offbeat, irreverent, and cannyÃ¢â ¬â •these three small countries are among the most wildly intriguing places on earth.On an expedition that will last three months, he takes us deep into a remarkable world of swamp and jungle, from the hideouts of runaway slaves to the vegetation-strangled remnants of penal colonies and forts, from Ã¢â ¬Å“Little ParisÃ¢â ¬Â• to a settlement built around a satellite launch pad. He recounts the complicated, often surprisingly bloody, history of the regionÃ¢â ¬â •including the infamous 1978 cult suicide at JonestownÃ¢â ¬â •and introduces us to its inhabitants: from the worldÃ¢â ¬â„¢s largest ants to fluorescent purple frogs to head-crushing jaguars; from indigenous tribes who still live by sorcery to descendants of African slaves, Dutch conquerors, Hmong refugees, Irish adventurers, and Scottish outlaws; from high-tech pirates to hapless pioneers for whom this stunning, strangely beautiful world (Ã¢â ¬Å“a sort of X-rated Garden of EdenÃ¢â ¬Â•) has become home by choice or by force.In Wild Coast, John Gimlette guides us through a fabulously entertaining, eye-openingÃ¢â ¬â •and sometimes jaw-droppingÃ¢â ¬â •journey.

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Customer Reviews

Interesting description of Guyana, Surinam and French Guiana. Author spends most of his time in Guyana. Particularly interesting account of the Jones Massacre. Likewise Devils Island in French /Guiana. The author's main thrust is recounting historical events which occurred in the various countries, visiting the actual sites and gaining information from the locals. This proved to be somewhat repetitive at times. Nonetheless an enlightening look at a little known area of the planet

I like this book. Some parts, I love 'em! Yet, it is not a perfect book, and I believe that he author enjoys picturing these lands in a darker way than they really are. I love they way the author describes the cities, the villages, and the land. I love how he creatively depicts all the characters he encounters along the way - a mixture of thieves, scums, workers, politicians that seem to blend all together in these three countries. I also loved the research done by the author before travelling to these countries, telling us a lot about the history and the "why" things are what they are today.Yet, as an anthropologist I feel that sometimes he over-simplistically tries to judge what people do. And he has a negative outlook that makes these people look more like damned souls than normal people. He seems to deny these people the opportunity to be happy and to actually enjoy their lifestyle - perhaps all the people he met had problems?Also, I can see his interest in describing everything negatively from the use of adjectives (dark, ghostly, haunted) that he often uses even for describing the pristine rain forest.But, you know, everyone has his/her biases, and they certainly don't spoil the enjoyment out of what is a welcome addition to the (poor) collection of books on Guayana, Suriname, and French Guyana.If you like travel literature, you will enjoy this book.

i've read all of Gimlette's books and they all enlighten and entertain.these are not 'travel' books in the traditional sense. you won't learn about how to get cheap flights or hotels but you will learn plenty about local history and people, good and bad. in 'Wild Coast', i learned about the complex (and ultimately tragic) history of slavery, Amerindians and European colonists of three small south

american countries:Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana.Gimlette travels deep into the interior where not even the locals want to go. he follows the paths of earlier explorers but brings history right up to the present and its lasting impacts. of course, there are historical figures but also present day characters, and they are all colorful real people. the land (along with its flora and myriad crawlies) is described in detail and let me admit that it did not inspire me to go there. Gimlette has surely taken me to those places. it was a wild ride which in fact completed just a couple of days ago.

Gimlette took me to three places I had not even dreamed of before. Yes, we've all heard of the strange South American jungles, and read a little about them in books like "Fordlandia." But we've yet to meet the strange people who prowl those dark, fusty places.Gimlette changes that. Colonizers, slaves, tribe members, some wacky adventurers -- they are fully introduced and explain how these three countries remain as mysterious as they were hundreds of years ago. And by adding details of his own travels, Gimlette shows you what a trip to the dark side would be like today. I, for one, was glad to read about it, although being alongside him as he tread through the underbrush is not the way I'd like to spend my summer vacation.It's a great read, especially in light of today's news of the quest for oil off the South American coast. History could definitely repeat itself. Read "Wild Coast" and you'll see what I mean.

After reading the blurbs on the back cover and inside jacket, one would assume that this is a tale of high adventure and exciting exploits, sprinkled with wit and humor...not quite.The author's intent and gutsy undertakings are to be commended but the redundant theme of gruesome atrocities and brutalities wears away on the reader. These were horrific acts of human nature and we should be aware of these butcheries and bloodbaths on both sides of the slavery issue, but again, this subject matter is overdone.Taken as a whole, it is a good history of a land few dare to venture but do not expect thrilling, attention-grabbing content.

I purchased this book as research for a two week trip to Guyana and Suriname I just returned from. The author had me staying up late and reading through the night. I loved this book. I can't wait to get his other books. This book is totally worth reading, even if you're not traveling to the wild coast.

John Gimlette's an intrepid explorer, heading off to forgotten parts of the world to inspect them in detail. He's written a great book about Paraguay, and now tackles an even less visited corner, the Guyanas and Suriname. While he makes some parts of these countries sound interesting and,

perhaps, intriguing, they don't come across as inviting - and so his travels, and the book that's come from it, lets us learn from and vicariously experience his travel from the comfort of home - a good book for the armchair traveller.

This is a very interesting read taking the reader into a part of the world we don't hear much about. The mighty rivers, vast Savannahs, races of people who live there, and the history surrounding it all, including Jones Town, is fascinating.

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