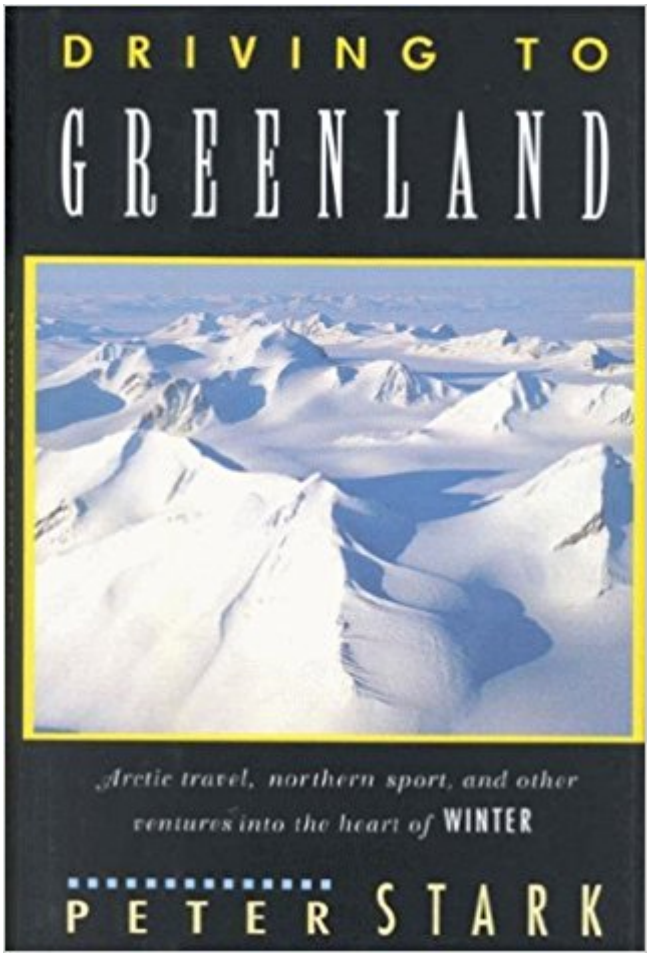
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Driving To Greenland



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Synopsis

This essay collection showcases Stark’s infatuation with snow and ice, winter sport, and arctic travel.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Peter Stark’s Driving to Greenland delivers the many voices of winter with a crystalline clarity. Intensely personal and often electrifying, Stark’s collection of essays, now in paperback, share a love for winter with an acute eye for its scientific virtues as well as the grandness of ice and snow. Following the autobiographical introductory essay, "A Life Built on Snow," 11 essays are divided among three sections: "The Way Down: Winter Sports," "The Road North: Arctic Travel," and "On the Surface: Snow and Ice." In "The Way Down," Stark relates his hair-raising adventures--experiments, really--ski-jumping, luge-running, taking on the frightfully steep Aztec run at Aspen, and skiing with World Extreme Skiing Champion Doug Coombs. Writings in "The Road North" evoke a strong sense of place, as Stark hops into a VW bus and heads for Greenland, explores the duality of Iceland’s fire and ice, and paddles into the legacy of the sea kayak. "On the Surface" brings the collection nicely to a close with an intimate, and at times magical, sense of wonder. Of midnight ice-boating, Stark writes, "You’re released from friction as well as sprung from time and space, aware only of raw speed--a slender projectile wrapped in the scream of the wind and the roar of the runners." Within these covers Stark relates life’s lessons learned at the brink, often at high speeds, as he slips, regains an edge, and rights himself again and again. An elegant and wise book. --Byron Ricks

Snow and ice warm Stark’s heart, and in this collection of a dozen essays, most of which appeared in the Smithsonian and Outside, he envelops readers in the frigid charms of ski jumping, narwhal hunting, dogsledding, iceboat sailing, skating on thin ice and kayak-making. One chapter is gleefully devoted to connoisseurs’ names for different kinds of snowflakes and the mysteries of their structure, another to descriptions of bad and good ice and prescriptions for making the latter. Besides providing appreciations of the beauties of snowflakes, newly fallen snow and good ice, Stark’s account of his journeys to Greenland and Iceland is filled with rare tidbits about both countries and his daring adventures there. Instructive and enchanting. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Peter Stark speaks warmly of the `carnivorous’ North in his introductory essay, "A Life Built on Snow." The `life’ he refers to is his own. His grandfather was a skater and iceboater, he and his mother and father were (and are) skiers. His whole family belonged to the winter. All the way through this book, wintery thrills overtake fear--the thrill flying four hundred feet down a ski jump; the thrill of stomping a ski into the snow at the top of a slope, then watching the resulting avalanche take out the whole hill; the thrill of hunting narwhal off Greenland’s icy shore.The author drives to Greenland in the sense that he arrives in a two-engine Cessna Skymaster after puddle-jumping across the bleak terrain of Baffin Island, dodging through flocks of lesser auks along the way.First though, his essays take us ski jumping in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, sliding for glory down Lake Placid’s Olympic luge course, through a run down Aspen’s World Cub downhill course, and down Mount Hood. There’s a sense that the author only really comes alive during these icy adventures, when all his senses are focused on the moment.Luckily for us, he is able to share that aliveness with his readers. He puts us in touch with something beyond our immediate selves--I’ll call it the spirit of the North for lack of a better term.Between adventures, there are long, interesting riffs on different types of ice and snow, a short history of Iceland, and a discussion on building the perfect sea kayak (among other Northerly subjects).Peter Stark is a contributor to "Outside," "Smithsonian," and "New Yorker" magazines. His latest book is "Last Breath: Cautionary Tales from the Limits of Human Endurance." He is also the editor of an anthology of writing about the Arctic, "Ring of Ice." He typifies a rugged new breed of ’hands-on’ journalists, and "Driving to Greenland" should appeal to both armchair adventurers and to those few among us who actually long to live in the heart of winter.

This book was pure fun! Peter Stark who has written on winter sports for Outside magazine, has penned some interesting and informative essays on his lifelong fascination with snow, the Arctic and winter sports. The author packed up a 1974 Volkswagon minibus and set out to drive to Greenland. Full of fun escapades and musings on that wonderful fluffy, white stuff-snow.

Excellent book!I found the author’s elegant yet down-to-earth style to make for very comfortable reading. The stories (there are several) are well-told.I do have a small complaint, however. I think the author would do well to add more detail and then split this book into several books. Take the first chapter, for example. Definitely fascinating but I found myself saying, "Oh. That’s all there is." when I reached Chapter 2.Complaints about story length aside, I still highly recommend this book. If you’re a fan of Tim Cahill, you’ll definitely see some similarities.

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