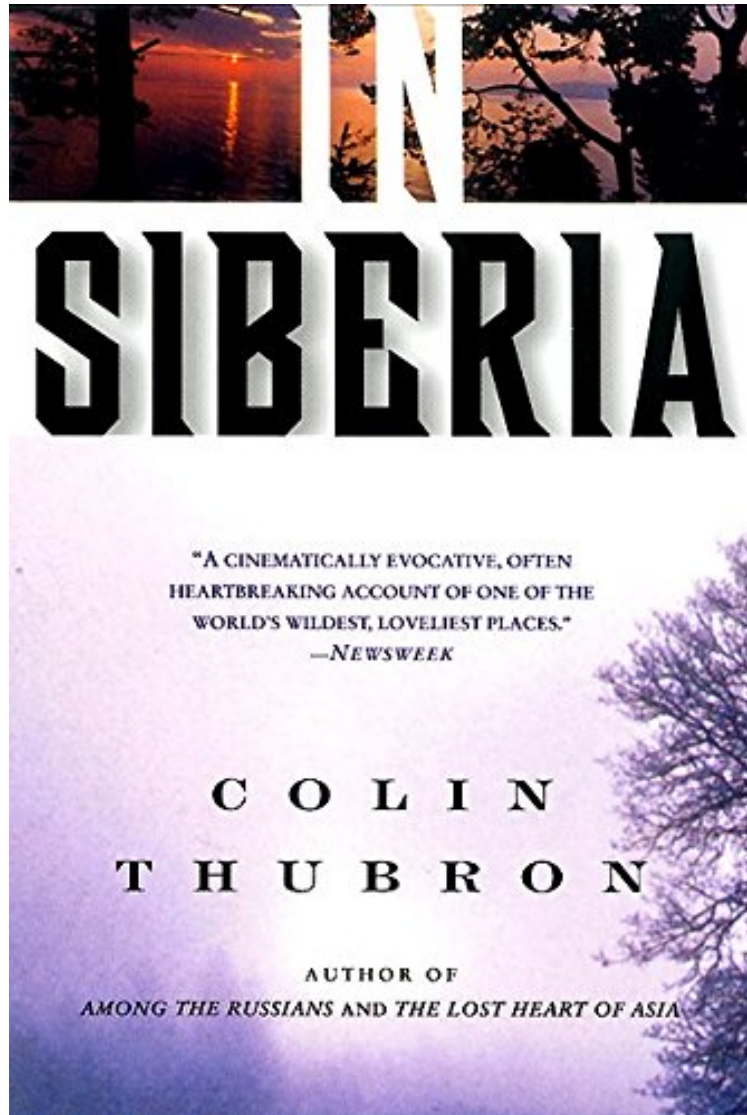


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In Siberia

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Colin Thubron : In Siberia before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In Siberia:

69 of 71 people found the following review helpful. A mesmerizing, gripping bookBy Grady HarpRussia metamorphosed in the 20th century assuming and shedding identities as often as it did heads of state. Finding an examination of the history of these events that maintains some semblance of neutrality and pure observation seemed unlikely - until now. IN SIBERIA is a rare combination study of geography, economics, political science, sociology, and history in a format of conversations with the people who live there. Author Thubron is a modern day Richard

Halliburton (remember him?), a man brave enough to singly explore the vastness of Siberia in search of the identity of its people. What he gives us is a lushly detailed panorama of physical grandeur and a near clinical insight into the psyches of the people he meets along his journey. His characters are so well reported that they seem to inhabit a fine fiction/history novel. But the sweep of his conversations with these time worn people is so honestly presented that the reader feels privy to shrouded secrets of the past and intimations of the future of a much maligned and misunderstood country. Thubron seems intent on finding the sustaining spirit of his acquaintances; we encounter myriad variations of Russian Orthodox /Buddhist/atheist religion. We hear personal accounts of the labor camps of Stalin and Khrushchev that surpass even Solzhenitsyn's descriptions. But more important we are introduced to the ordinary people of this vast country and Thubron shares these characters with insight and intelligent reportage that makes us feel as though we journeyed with him. And this is supposed to be a Travel Book? I think not. This is a volume of first-hand information that leaves the reader enriched and empathetic.....an enormously fine read! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Best book I've read this year .By patricia rosen Fascinating book , very informative .0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By katherine burlakewritten for everyone who wants to go to siberia, but never will.

As mysterious as its beautiful, as forbidding as it is populated with warm-hearted people, Siberia is a land few Westerners know, and even fewer will ever visit. Traveling alone, by train, boat, car, and on foot, Colin Thubron traversed this vast territory, talking to everyone he encountered about the state of the beauty, whose natural resources have been savagely exploited for decades; a terrain tainted by nuclear waste but filled with citizens who both welcomed him and fed him—despite their own tragic poverty. From Mongolia to the Arctic Circle, from Rasputin's village in the west through tundra, taiga, mountains, lakes, rivers, and finally to a derelict Jewish community in the country's far eastern reaches, Colin Thubron penetrates a little-understood part of the world in a way that no writer ever has.

.com In Siberia explores a region of astonishments, where "white cranes dance on the permafrost, where a great city floats lost among the ice floes, where mammoths sleep under glaciers." Colin Thubron's latest chronicle also delivers its subject from rumor into reality. An expanse larger than the entire United States, Siberia is undoubtedly a country of contrasts, which elicits from the author both awe and melancholy. Here on one hand is a northern wilderness "shattered into a jigsaw of ponds and streams," and on the other a "black detritus of factories and ruins." No less memorable than the landscape are the people that Thubron encounters. He gathers their stories like rough jewels, showing us a self-proclaimed descendant of Rasputin, an isolated Jewish community, and a parade of "indestructible babushkas." Woven among the often bitter and eroding memories of a Siberian past is a sense of new freedom. After all, this is the first time in Russia's history when foreigners can travel freely throughout the region--and its inhabitants can comment openly about their government without fear of reprisal. Thubron coaxes an institute official at the Akademgorodok Praesidium to speak his mind: His face was heavy with anger. "We have one overriding problem here. Money. We receive no money for new equipment, hardly enough for our salaries. There are people who haven't been paid for six months." Then his anger overflowed. He was barking like a drill sergeant. "This year we requested funds for six or seven different programmes! And not one has been accepted by the government! Not one!" Thubron's portrait is as elegant as it is evocative. But just as notably, his journey to the east manages to break the long and destructive Siberian silence. --Byron Ricks From Publishers Weekly Many adventurers plunge into Siberia in search of untrammelled roads or unspoiled grandeur; only a handful bring with them a significant knowledge of the land's history, geology and wildlife. Even rarer are those who relay the experience as magically as does this award-winning author. Thubron (The Lost Heart of Asia) recounts a journey studded with fantastic encounters: in Pokrovskoye, a peasant who claims to be a descendant of Rasputin wrestles with his own identity as he nears the age of the infamous holy man's death; in Omsk, wizened grandmothers talk of skinny-dipping in holy water; in the Pazyryk valley, excavators remove a prince, his concubine and a team of stallions from two and a half millennia of frozen slumber; in Kyzyl, a local shaman places an order for Scottish walrus tusks. The author marvels: "wherever I stopped seemed atypical, as if the essential Siberia could exist only in my absence." In fact, that phantom essence pervades Thubron's journey, which stretches from the site of the grisly murder of the Romanovs to the Far Eastern epicenter of the brutal penal camp system that killed millions of Soviet citizens. More than a report of an inquisitive traveler's adventures, Thubron's account doubles as a haunting elegy to the victims of the bloodshed and hardship that are Siberia's most lasting legacy. Only his tender treatment of Siberia's enchanting characters and extraordinary natural beauty brighten what would be an otherwise dark and desolate path. 4-city Author tour. (Jan.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal In this powerful, final volume of his trilogy on the Asian continent (Where Nights Are Longest, The Lost Heart of Asia), veteran travel writer Thubron traverses all points of the compass in Russia's vast, sparsely settled Wild East. Thubron journeys into what "seems less a country than a region in people's minds," encountering people in search of explanations for past atrocities and ways to live through current hardships--all the while finding solace in science or religion. In Novosibirsk, Thubron visits the scientific center of Russia,

Akademgorodok, a place where funding has been severed and brilliant minds live isolated in laboratories without electricity. Several weeks and worlds away, Thubron reaches the far-eastern city of Khabarovsk. From there he flies to the eerie skeletal structures of Siberia's most famous gulag, Kolyma, where up to two million prisoners died. Thubron's well-researched, moving account is a testament to the hardships endured by Siberia's people and their ability to turn their backs on history, look to the future, and whistle a hopeful tune. Readers who enjoyed Jeffrey Taylor's *Siberian Dawn* (LJ 2/15/99) will appreciate Thubron's deeper, meditated exploration of Siberian life. Highly recommended for all libraries.---Mark Rotella, Brooklyn, NY Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.