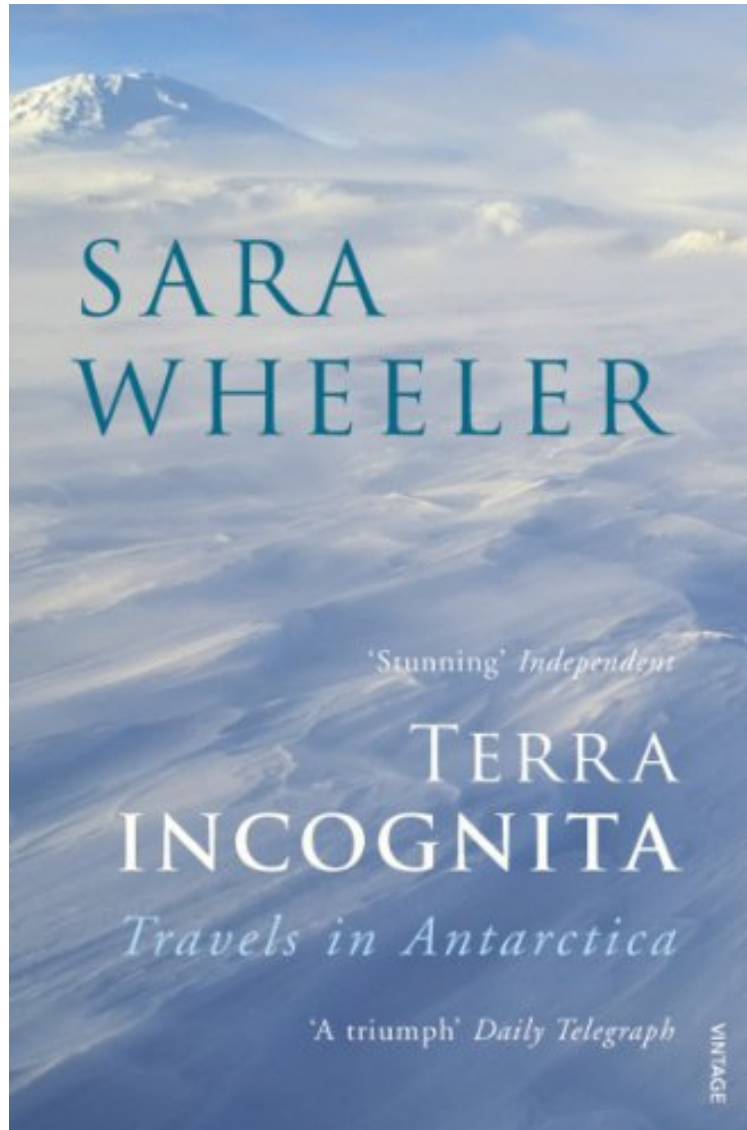


(Read free) Terra Incognita: Travels in Antarctica

Terra Incognita: Travels in Antarctica

Von Sara Wheeler

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Von Sara Wheeler : Terra Incognita: Travels in Antarctica before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Terra Incognita: Travels in Antarctica:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich.

Exploring the author (and her friends) more than the subjectVon Ein KundeI'm not an aficianado of the literature of Antartica. I do, however, have an interest in the place and especially the epics that have taken place there - Scott, Shackleton, etc..I've enjoyed the tales of these epics immensely in my reading.Perhaps this background was a setup for

disaster in my reading of *Terra Incognita* by Sara Wheeler. I hoped to find an account of yet another journey through this strange and remarkable landscape peppered with the history of the place and the unique adaptations necessary for survival there. Indeed, I did find this account in Wheeler's book, except it fell far short of my expectations. Wheeler tends to write as much about her friends she makes along the way as she does about her impressions/travels on the continent. It's all very superficial and without purpose as she wanders from place to place searching for new friends, recent friends, new boyfriend, etc.....It seems more a compilation of tidbits and snapshot glimpses of the places and people she encounters than a profound or meaningful exploration of this unique world. The low point of the book for me was Wheeler's arrival on the continent with the members of the British scientific team (about 2/3rds through the book). She breaks down and cries shortly after her arrival. Why the emotional break? Was it the weather? The intensity of the hardship as she chugs beer in each hidden bar along the journey? Or perhaps the suffering through all that trail mix?.....Nope, she cries because people aren't being very nice to her -- just not as chummy as the kiwis and the Americans she discovers. Cherry-Gerrard said we'd accomplish our "winters journeys" as long as all we wished was "a penguin's egg." Wheeler has no interest in penguin eggs or the passions of discovery that motivated so many of Antarctica's authors. Instead, she wanders the continent seemingly in search of herself.....good luck.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A modern female perspective of the frozen south
Von Linda Linguic

Sometimes I think I must have been an Eskimo in a prior life, because I love books about the frozen north. When I came upon this book, subtitled "Travels in Antarctica", by Sara Wheeler, my imagination was immediately captured as I realized this was a whole new territory for me to explore in my reading experience. Ms. Wheeler is a young British travel writer who spent 7 months in Antarctica in 1995 as a writer-in-residence with the U.S. National Science Foundation. What a great gig! A lot of research went into the writing of this book. And a lot of love. She mixes all the historical details of the early explorations of Shackleton, Amundson and Scott with her own modern and female perspective of the places she goes, the people she meets and the emotional effect all this has on her as she explores the coldest, windiest and driest continent in the world. As Antarctic explorations go, hers has a certain degree of comfort. She is helicoptered around to various bases, and even though there are periods of time that she spends in a tent or igloo or prefab shelter, she has radio contact with the base and always has a supply of food. But this, of course, is what it is like to travel to Antarctica these days, and she is fortunate indeed to have the experience of going there. This is not a tourist destination after all. And virtually everybody there is a scientist of some sort. She describes her experiences well and I loved her sense of humor, especially when describing the differences between the bases manned by different nationalities. The Italians have the best food. The Brits are completely male, bonded in their background of English private schools and given to bawdy toilet humor and practical jokes. And the American staff is approximately 25% female. The book was a slow read, especially the parts which go into detail about the fascinating history, but I didn't mind. Also, the pace of the book tended to remain the same throughout as she traveled from base to base making her observations. The bases might have been isolated, but even in 1995, she was able to get e-mail there. The concluding chapters were the most interesting. Perhaps it is because by then the reader has absorbed all the history and first impressions. During these last chapters, Ms. Wheeler spends several months with an American woman artist in a prefabricated cabin out on the ice. The artist paints. The writer writes. They develop a deep friendship as they prepare meals and grapple with the environment amidst the startling beauty of their surroundings, watching the long polar nights welcome the sun. I was sorry to see the book end because during the time I was reading it, I was transported to a very real part of the world that I will probably never have the opportunity to visit myself. So for all my fellow armchair travelers, I definitely recommend this book.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A very different report on life in Antarctica
Von F. C. Lacher

In brief, this book is very good and interesting. Ms. Wheeler lived for quite a while (7 months) in the Antarctic, at various sites. Without spending too much time, she describes the history of Antarctic exploration, and the kind of characters it attracts. Most interesting to me was her interest in the individuals she encountered there, and the effect isolation has on them. Some return time after time, which most of us would find puzzling. She explains the hold the continent has on these people. While travelling from camp to camp, run by several nations, she also examined cultural differences, some of which are insightful...the Italian camp seemed especially "human", for example. And compare the British and American camp atmospheres. By interspersing her reportorial observations with personal comments, she reveals something of herself, but not too much. She does not become overly familiar. Nor does the book dwell too much on the scientific minutiae of the area, as some others do. This is a good book about a very harsh place, written by a very good reporter and observer. I'd very much like to meet this woman. How many books leave one with that feeling about an author?

Kurzbeschreibung After writing two highly praised travel books, Sara Wheeler was accepted by the American government to be the first foreigner on their National Science Foundation's Antarctic Artists' and Writers Program. She spent seven months on the continent, travelling from the fabled Ross Ice Shelf to the Pole itself, the remoter reaches of the West Antarctic ice sheet, and the balmy Antarctic Peninsula. *Terra Incognita* is a meditation on the

landscape, myths and history of one of the remotest parts of the globe, as well as an encounter with the international temporary residents of the region - living in close confinement despite the surrounding acres of white space - and the mechanics of day-to-day life in extraordinary conditions. Through Sara Wheeler, the Antarctic is revealed, in all its seductive mystery..deWhen explorers such as Ernest Shackleton, Roald Amundsen, and Robert Falcon Scott all set off to Antarctica in the early years of the 20th century, the polar regions were among the last truly unexplored areas of the world--and arguably the least hospitable. Scott lost his life, pinned down in a howling blizzard only 11 miles from his supply depot; Shackleton lost his ship, crushed in the ice. Even those who survived the icy wastes did so only with enormous effort. And yet, there is something about Antarctica that beckons people; eighty years after Shackleton's voyage, Sara Wheeler answered the call, leaving her comfortable home for "the Great White." Terra Incognita is the result of her sojourn in that legendary land. In addition to chronicling her own encounters with the people and the place, Wheeler brings the past alive as well, through vivid stories about the heroes of polar exploration: Shackleton, Scott, Amundsen, and others who practically become secondary characters in Wheeler's account. But it is her interactions with the living people who make up the community--scientists, drifters, and dreamers who have settled this forbidding landscape--that make Terra Incognita a rare and worthy book.Pressestimmen"A triumph . . . I cannot believe that anything better will ever be written about Antarctica." --Daily Telegraph"Compelling . . . leaves the reader with a visceral understanding of the mysterious, even sublime power the poles have exerted on the human imagination, and the desolate beauty that resides there amid the glaciers and icebergs and penguins."--Michiko Kakutani, The New York Times"I have read many accounts of polar exploration, but never one which so touchingly describes its emotional topography. . . . What she has done could not be done better." --Richard Eyre, The Independent "The first funny book about Antarctica." --Los Angeles TimesFrom the Trade Paperback edition.