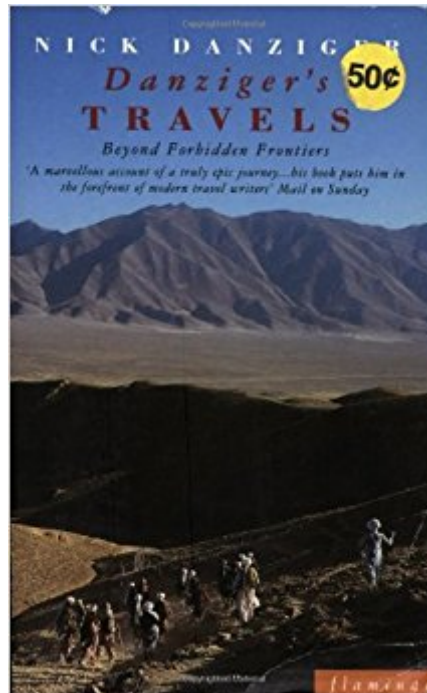




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Danziger's Travels: Beyond Forbidden Frontiers (Paladin Books)



Synopsis

This account describes the author's adventures during an 18-month journey "beyond forbidden frontiers" in Asia. With minimal equipment and disguised as an itinerant Muslim, he hitch-hiked and walked through southern Turkey, and the Iran of the Ayatollahs, entering Afghanistan illegally in the wake of a convoy of Chinese weapons and then spent months dodging Russian helicopter gunships with the rebel guerillas. He was the first foreigner to cross from Pakistan into the closed western province of China since the revolution on 1949.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Danziger is the stuff that legends are made of—some of the most exciting travel writing I have ever read." — THE LITERARY REVIEW

Written with engaging humor, this is Nick Danziger's account of an 18-month journey "beyond forbidden frontiers" in Asia. Disguised as an itinerant Muslim, and drawing on funds from a Winston Churchill Travel Fellowship, he set off, walking and hitchhiking his way through southern Turkey and Iran. Following in the wake of a Chinese weapons convoy, he then illegally entered Afghanistan; there, he spent two months with rebel guerillas dodging Russian helicopter gunships. Danziger went on to become the first foreigner since the 1949 revolution to cross from Pakistan into the closed western province of China. An incredible journey, brilliantly told. Nick Danziger is an award-winning documentary filmmaker.

I want to inject a little caution amongst all the wild enthusiasm I read in the reviews of this book. I rate this book 3-1/2 to 4 stars. (See below of a sample of books I consider to be 5-star books.)Danziger's Travels is, no doubt, a fun read. Mr. Danziger does a fine job of relating what he sees in his long trip across Eurasia -- once he actually gets going. The hand-wringing, wingeing, and adolescent philosophizing that is given before the actual trip starts could be skipped (pp. 1-16 in the hardcover). At least he keeps it brief unlike T.E. Lawrence who carries on for 100 pages before landing in Jiddah (just start after he lands in Jiddah, an excellent book after that.) (Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph)Danziger writes an entertaining travelogue about an interesting time, particularly in central and east Asia (the Afghan resistance to the Soviets, the rebuilding of Tibet, the economic invasion of Sinkiang by the Han, the first cracks of daylight into China and Tibet since the 1950s, Khomieni's Iran in its early days.) He certainly had good timing. The book reads effortlessly and he is an excellent writer on what he sees and the people he meets. And I will grant this: He indulges in very little navel-gazing (after the first chapter) something which many current travel writers could learn from. My problem with the book as a whole is that it just doesn't ring true. No one has this kind of luck, is this patient, had this kind of equanimity and equilibrium, while having the smarts of a local and the endurance of a Kenyan distance runner and the nerve of front line soldier. Just far too many perfect coincidences. (And he needn't have shared his sexual conquests with us: I guess he really was YOUNG wasn't he?) This excerpt makes the point: "I wasn't prepared to have my movements hampered by artificially imposed barriers* and I wanted to break the myth that all foreigners were a breed apart." [*Such as the local laws!] My, he pontificates well for a man with the wisdom of age 25 or 26. A fun read, if can take it with a grain of salt and keeping the thousand and one nights in mind. A peek at some interesting times in Asia. Certainly not a classic. The gushing reviews indicate to me less the quality of this book than the limited travel literature reading of the reviewer. I strongly recommend to you the following: Jupiters Travels: Four Years Around the World on a Triumph One Man Caravan ("Incredible Journeys" Books) News from Tartary: A Journey from Peking to Kashmir (Marlboro Travel) A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush (Travel Literature) Love & War in the Apennines (Travel Literature) Seven Years in Tibet Arabian Sands (Penguin Classics) Motoring with Mohammed: Journeys to Yemen and the Red Sea Two Years Before the Mast (Signet Classics) Sailing Alone around the World, by Joshua Slocum Full Tilt: Ireland to India with a Bicycle, by Dervla Murphy No Picnic on Mount Kenya: A Daring Escape, A Perilous Climb, by Felice Benuzzi

I found this book about 15 years ago, and pick it up at least once every 2 to 3 years to re-read.

Absolutely fascinating, and a great look into the cultures along the Silk Road. In fact, this book sparked my interest in it, culminating with trips to Afghanistan (for work) in 2003, and on the Silk Road from Beijing to Kashgar in 2007. Nick Danziger tells a great tale, and the journey across Afghanistan, dodging Soviet patrols and Hinds is riveting.

Entertaining.

This is my favorite travel book of all time. I read it for the first time nearly 20 years ago. It inspired me to take my own pilgrimage across Asia retracing some of Danziger's actual footsteps in Pakistan and Western China. After nearly two years of back packing in Asia on my own, I have no doubts that Nick Danziger lived all of the experiences in his book. Despite some of the doubts expressed by other reviewers. To me this is a classic travel novel, and a great read. Read it for yourself and you won't be disappointed.

I read this book in college (while I was supposed to be studying) and it has stayed with me over the years like few other books. Perhaps this is because at its heart it is a story of adventure and now I can daydream about adventure while I'm supposed to be working (Plus ca change, plus ca meme chose). Danziger traveled across the lands of the Silk Road across nations and regions that in the post 9-11 world are now all but inaccessible. Perhaps one of the last great journeys of its kind.

I first picked up this book ten years ago at a secondhand shop in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, at the end of the Karakoram highway and read it with fascination. Having travelled most of the same route very thoroughly myself, some things in the book come across as a little too fantastic, and others are just wrong . To be generous these could be failings of memory. Yet, these are minor flaws, that haven't stopped me from enjoying the book. I disagree with the complaints on the .uk site about the quality of the prose, keeping in mind it is a personal travel book and not a scholarly examination of the regions he passes through. We get insights into the people he meets but most importantly into the life of Mr Danziger himself. The omissions, the fantasies and ultimately the focus of the book always, like a dream, come back to the narrator and his own experience on his narrow path across the globe. Well worth a read.

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