



Marco Polo Didn't Go There: Stories and Revelations from One Decade as a Postmodern Travel Writer

By Rolf Potts

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Marco Polo Didn't Go There is a collection of rollicking travel tales from a young writer *USA Today* has called “Jack Kerouac for the Internet Age.” For the past ten years, Rolf Potts has taken his keen postmodern travel sensibility into the far fringes of five continents for such prestigious publications as *National Geographic Traveler*, *Salon.com*, and *The New York Times Magazine*. This book documents his boldest, funniest, and most revealing journeys—from getting stranded without water in the Libyan desert, to crashing the set of a Leonardo DiCaprio movie in Thailand, to learning the secrets of Tantric sex in a dubious Indian ashram.

Marco Polo Didn't Go There is more than just an entertaining journey into fascinating corners of the world. The book is a unique window into travel writing, with each chapter containing a “commentary track”—endnotes that reveal the ragged edges behind the experience and creation of each tale. Offbeat and insightful, this book is an engrossing read for students of travel writing as well as armchair wanderers.

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Marco Polo Didn't Go There: Stories and Revelations from One Decade as a Postmodern Travel Writer By Rolf Potts Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #908418 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Travelers' Tales
- Published on: 2008-09-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .78" w x 5.10" l, .78 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 344 pages

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Editorial Review

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This could be the first travel book ever to open with a discussion of the word postmodern, which Potts uses to mean placelessness, or dislocation as a result of travel. Many of these stories first appeared online, too, while Potts was “in the midst of a two-year vagabonding journey across Asia and Europe.” In fact, this could be the essence of postmodern travel writing: stories written in the field, filed electronically, and instantly available to readers anywhere. But even if you’re coming to these stories for the first time in the comfort of your own living room, you get a very vivid sense of what Potts experienced in such locales as Thailand (where he tried to infiltrate a Leonardo DiCaprio movie set), Vietnam, Turkey, and Cambodia. Potts is an enthusiastic traveler, eager to try new things and meet new people, and he’s an energetic writer, making sure he describes not only the sights of the places he visits but also the sounds, the smells, and the tastes. Armchair travelers will get an enormous kick out of this thoroughly entertaining book. --David Pitt

Review

"Potts is one of the best travel writers to emerge in the last decade. Intrepid and thoughtful, he's a Paul Theroux for the backpacker generation, and *Marco Polo* reflects this."

—*San Francisco Chronicle*

"This hilarious collection of stories provokes because Potts asks the serious question of how to travel in a discovered world. ...If you aspire to be a travel writer, read this book."

—*The Guardian* (U.K.)

"Potts isn't so much a travel reporter as a story teller. ...He's more about getting under the skin of a place — detailing a cast of characters that would either enthrall or scare the hell out of most travelers, depending on where they come down on the trust-paranoia continuum."

—*Orange County Register*

"An equal mix of humor and enlightenment...Potts shows travelers and would-be travelers the joy of immersing oneself in a foreign culture."

—*St. Louis Post-Dispatch* "Best Books of 2008"

"Potts, Internet raconteur and travel-advice sage, is the kind of guy you wish the pubs had more of: well traveled, generous with funny stories, eager to listen to yours. You feel envious that you weren't with him in Cairo to share the convivial squalor of a backpacker hotel, or at an Indian ashram to study Tantric sex, or even in the Libyan Desert, in the dark, out of water and lost. And he's able to draw insights from all that without draining the fun out of the conversation — difficult to carry off in a pub or a book."

—*The Washington Post*

"Armchair travelers will get an enormous kick out of this thoroughly entertaining book."

—*Booklist*

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Sylvia Harrington:

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Bradford Bryant:

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