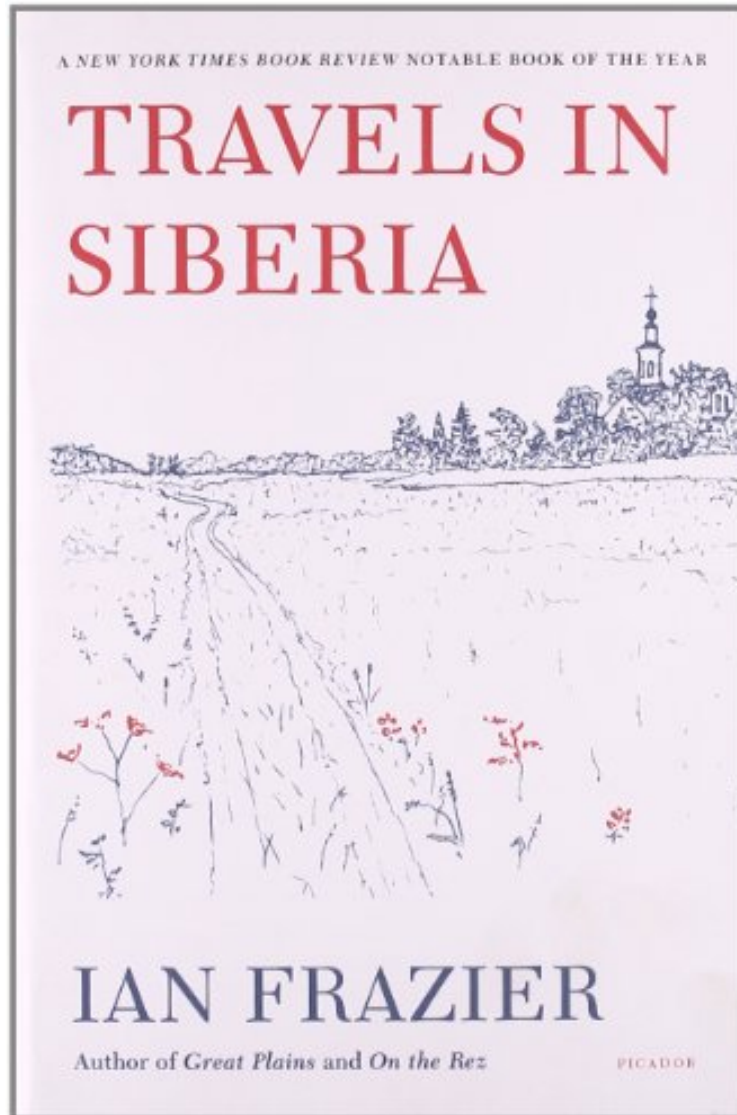


(Pdf free) Travels in Siberia

## Travels in Siberia

*Ian Frazier*

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#156749 in Books Picador USA 2011-09-27 2011-09-27 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.25 x .96 x 5.481, 1.25 #File Name: 0312610602560 pages Picador USA | File size: 38.Mb

**Ian Frazier : Travels in Siberia** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Travels in Siberia:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The Gold Standard in Travel MemoirsBy A readerLike Siberia, this book is big. Like Siberia, this book takes a long time to get through. And like Siberia, it's fascinating and compelling. However, unlike Siberia, it is not freezing cold in winter and overrun with killer mosquitoes in summer. I read it over a period of about a year, which you can do because the narrative has breaks in it and you won't lose the flow if you put it down and come back to it later.A book this size is going to have a lot of detail in it. If you're looking for a quick

overview, this ain't it. And if you're an impatient person who likes to skim, it's probably not for you. There are things missing; for instance, there's barely a mention of the history of the indigenous populations of Siberia. But Frazier is an expert on Siberia in many respects, and the book is loaded with history, geography, geology, politics, and culture from this incredible place. Frazier is funny and candid, and his wry humor and observations permeate every description. The book is also a travel memoir, full of unique characters and drama of a type and sensibility that, according to Frazier, are unique to Russia and Russians. It's low key in tone, but epic in scope. All in all, it's one of the most interesting and entertaining books I've ever read.<sup>2</sup> of 2 people found the following review helpful. Blends Just Enough Humility and Authority By Sara Goff I appreciated the pieces of history and literature mixed into Frazier's travel stories. His writing voice blends just enough humility and authority to make reading his work like having a long chat with an intelligent friend. The way he connects historical events to ordinary, yet outstanding people he admires, people I wouldn't have heard of otherwise, makes his look into the past feel more like a memoir. Having spent some time in Russia, I smiled reading about the discomforts he endured. Frazier is an honest, personable author with a gift for seeing the details in life we overlook and giving them significance. Whether you're hoping to learn something new about our world or just laugh, I recommend reading *Travels in Siberia*.<sup>4</sup> of 4 people found the following review helpful. all-encompassing, but not always engrossing By Diplocaulus Well-written with humor, honesty, and plenty of history, *Travels in Siberia* encompasses just about everything that could be said about the region. Frazier shares his various voyages to and within Siberia, including a cross-continental road trip in an often-breaking-van, interspersing his narrative with plenty of Russian history. During his multiple expeditions, the author meets people from all walks of life, battles the elements, has a love-hate relationship with his guides, wrestles with his own nervousness and anxiety-ridden tendencies, is attacked by swarms of bloodthirsty mosquitoes, explores an abandoned prison, rides in all sorts of vehicles on terrains both monotonous and dangerous, and never manages to fall out of love with Russia. I greatly enjoyed Frazier's stories. However, I sometimes felt like his history lessons went on for too long. He delves into Russia's bloody history, going back to the time of Genghis Khan, through the tzars, the Decemberists, communism and Stalinism, post-communism corruption, and into the future (where he describes the effects of global warming on Siberia's permafrost). I did like the recounting of local legends, but the countless Russians named (with their lives described in [often] unnecessary detail) became exhausting. Although it was easy to get swept up in the personal travelogue, Frazier's history lessons did not always have the same page-turning draw.

New York Times Book Review Notable Book of the Year  
A Boston Globe Best Book of 2010  
A Christian Science Monitor Best Book of 2010  
A San Francisco Chronicle Top 10 Books of 2010  
A Washington Post Best Book of the Year  
A Kansas City Star 100 Best Books of 2010  
A St. Louis Post-Dispatch Best of 2010  
In this astonishing new work from one of our greatest and most entertaining storytellers, Ian Frazier trains his perceptive, generous eye on Siberia. With great passion and enthusiasm, he reveals Siberia's role in history?its science, economics, and politics?and tells the stories of its most famous exiles, such as Dostoyevsky, Lenin, and Stalin. At the same time, Frazier draws a unique portrait of Russia since the end of the Soviet Union, and gives a personal account of adventure among Russian friends and acquaintances. A unique, captivating, totally Frazierian take on what he calls the "amazingness" of Russia? *Travels in Siberia* is "a masterpiece of nonfiction writing?tragic, bizarre, and funny" (San Francisco Chronicle).

.com Best Books of the Month, October 2010: Over 20 years after *Great Plains*, one of the more oddly wonderful books of the last few decades, Ian Frazier takes us to another territory worthy of his expansive curiosity: the vast eastern stretches of Russia known as Siberia. Through the stories of Russian friends, Frazier was drawn there in the early '90s, and he soon fell in love with the country--an "embarrassing" sort of middle-aged love, an involuntary infection. What he loves is its tragedy and its humor, its stoic practicality and its near-insanity: he calls it "the greatest horrible country in the world," and Siberia is its swampy, often-frozen, and strikingly empty backyard. He took five trips there over the next dozen or so years, and *Travels in Siberia* is based on those journeys. But as in *Great Plains*, when Frazier travels he follows his own curiosity through time as well as space, telling stories of the Mongols and the Decembrists with the same amused and empathetic eye he brings to his own traveling companions. His curiosity quickly becomes yours, as does his affection for this immense and grudgingly hospitable land. --Tom Nissley  
From Booklist  
Frazier (*Great Plains*, 1989; *On the Rez*, 2000) has long been fascinated by vast, empty spaces and the people who live in them. It's only natural that he is interested in the place that is almost synonymous with nowhere: Siberia. Here he tells of his repeated visits, from a summer trip across the Bering Strait to a winter trip to Novosibirsk; however, the centerpiece of the book is his overland crossing from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean. That's a massive journey, and this is a massive book. He captures the character and particulars of the place but lets us down, somewhat, as a tour guide. The very best travel writers possess physical and mental toughness, but Frazier is often surprisingly timid: he allows his Russian guides to drive past prisons he really wants to stop and see. And when, at the end of the book, he finally visits an abandoned, snow-covered prison camp, he doesn't explore the barracks building because it feels wrong: "I was merely a foreign observer." His complaints about the discomforts of the journey occasionally leave us wondering whether he really loves Russia. Still and all, it's an unforgettable and enlightening

portrait of a place most of us know very little about. --Keir Graff “[Travels in Siberia is] an uproarious, sometimes dark yarn filled with dubious meals, broken-down vehicles, abandoned slave-labor camps and ubiquitous statues of Lenin--On the Road meets The Gulag Archipelago . . . As he demonstrated in Great Plains, Frazier is the most amiable of obsessives . . . he peels away Russia's stolid veneer to reveal the quirkiness and humanity beneath . . . Frazier has the gumption and sense of wonder shared by every great travel writer, from Bruce Chatwin to Redmond O'Hanlon, as well as the ability to make us see how the most trivial or ephemeral detail is part of the essential texture of a place . . . [An] endlessly fascinating tale.” ?Joshua Hammer, The New York Times Book “Frazier is a sophisticated, intense writer who--Twain-like--uses a deceptive style of naïveté and comic self-deprecation to carry serious perceptions....Always beautifully written, often very funny, serious, and moving in its cumulative impact.” ?The New York of Books“While the hand- and mind-numbing trip through geographic purgatory couldn't have been a joy, the humor and genuine awe Frazier injects into his depictions are the stuff of a great vicarious vacation. Grade: A-” ?Entertainment Weekly“Frazier is besotted, happy, free, on high alert, drunk with space....He expands to fill it, and his awe is contagious.” ?Los Angeles Times“Siberia provides Frazier with the perfect canvas to paint what may be his masterpiece.” ?The Boston Globe“It's always easy to figure out whether you should read the latest book by Ian Frazier: If he's written it, then you'll want to read it . . . Much more than ‘travel writing,’ [Travels in Siberia] covers memoir, history, literature, politics and more. There are many reasons to love it, including the fantastic ending, possibly the best of any book in recent memory. Travels in Siberia is a masterpiece of nonfiction writing--tragic, bizarre and funny. Once again, the inimitable Frazier has managed to create a genre of his very own.” ?Carmela Ciuraru, San Francisco Chronicle“[Travel writing] . . . is revived by Ian Frazier's Travels in Siberia, which evinces a passion as profound as Homans's zeal for dance: Frazier's ‘Russia-love’ . . . Between excursions to towns like Neudachino (‘Unhappyville’), he ponders a question that has puzzled many a visitor: ‘how Russia can be so great and so horrible simultaneously.’ In exploring this paradox, Frazier describes the physical world with a keen eye . . . Some of his descriptions read like medieval nightmares: the mosquitoes of western Siberia, so numerous that they gather in fierce black clouds; or the feeling of being locked, for almost two days, in a windowless train compartment beneath a ceiling so low that it is impossible to stand. Frazier candidly addresses Siberia's tragedies and opportunities, even as his narrative offers, like explorer stories of old (crossing the Sahara, hacking through the Congo, landing in Tahiti with Captain Cook), all the thrills of armchair travel.” ?Ben Moser, Harper's“Ian Frazier, a staff writer for The New Yorker, is a master of nonfiction narrative. As with his previous travel classics Great Plains and On the Rez, Frazier's Travels in Siberia not only explores the geography of a remote, seemingly barren region, but also illuminates its dark history and resilient spirit. Frazier isn't just a chronicler--he's a central character . . . After reading Frazier's passionate travelogue and history of Siberia, you'll never again view the region as a big, empty space on a map. Frazier brings Siberia into vivid, monochromatic focus.” ?Minneapolis Star-Tribune