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Blue River, Black Sea

Andrew Eames

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Andrew Eames BLUE RIVER, BLACK SEA

A journey along the Danube into
the heart of the New Europe



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Andrew Eames : Blue River, Black Sea before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Blue River, Black Sea:

57 of 57 people found the following review helpful. Travel Writing at its BestBy RolandReading this book gave me an excellent sense of the countries and people along the Danube, from its source to the Black Sea. It is written with wit

and insight, and I found it difficult to put down the book once I got started. I have worked my way through Claudio Magris' book "Danube", and I still consider it essential reading, but it was a struggle to stay interested in all of the interesting people and their works who lived along the river. Here is how Andrew Eames describes Claudio Magris' work. "The great man exercised his synapses through four hundred pages, displaying immense erudition, leaping between intellectual rooftops and poking his nose down the chimney stacks of downriver nations like a PhD chimney sweep from Mary Poppins." This sums up my impression of Claudio Magris' book far better than anything I could have written, and is an excellent example of Andrew Eames' writing style. I'm also familiar with stretches of the Danube and its people through parts of Germany and Austria. I've found that Eames captures my impressions precisely with a few well-chosen words. I don't know anything about people and places further down the river, but I can only surmise that Eames' observations are as accurate downstream as they were upstream. His book certainly entertained me and inspired me. I now want to grab a bike or boat, or put on a pair of hiking boots to see the country for myself. If you've been dreaming of a similar journey down the Danube, as I have, or if you are merely interested in the landscape and its people, as well as their histories, along the entire length of the Danube, this is by far the best book on the subject. Do yourself a favor and read it.

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A true travel narrative

By John the Reader

This is my third book by this author and the geographical region of this book has certain echoes of his book on the famous Orient Express; "The 8:55 to Baghdad". This time however the author is motivated to follow some of the route of the famous writer, Patrick Leigh Fermor, who went this way in the 1930s and wrote the classic works of "A Time of Gifts" and "Between the Woods and the Water" with a promised third and concluding volume to be published posthumously in 2013. Inspired by these works Eames decides to travel and narrate a trip from Germany through the "Iron Gates" to Istanbul, following - indeed partly traveling on - the "blue" Danube River. It is 70 odd years since the famous "Paddy" journeyed through these same lands and, of course, much has been changed by World Wars, communist domination and neglect and viscous ethnic cleansing and pogroms, but Eames still discovers treasures and even peoples from those times. The author even manages to find his own aristocrats to welcome and awe him, staying in castles and Hofes with surviving descendants of fabled families of the Austrian Holy Empire. But it is with his own generation that he most relates, the Serbian peasants and the gloriously mixed crews of the working Danube fleets as he walks, trains, drives and floats to his successful conclusion, the Black Sea. This gloriously satisfying read is one of the best travel

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An Interesting Journey Through Central Europe

By James A. Gorton

This is an interesting account of several trips by Eames along the Danube or somewhat near it. He begins at the source of the Danube, a highly disputed matter and proceeds down along the Danube to Budapest, where he throws in the towel and returns home. He then returns for a journey by a tramp steamer down the balance of the Danube to the Black Sea with a side trip up to the Saxon Villages of Romania. Oddly enough for a travel writer, Eames occasionally seems to lose objectivity. He takes against Bucharest in particular, but there are certainly charming neighborhoods there. Eames is equally dyspeptic about portions of Austria, not because they're unpleasant or ugly, but because of old associations which these areas, particularly Linz, have with Hitler and the Nazis. All told, even with Eames's prejudices and the odd two in one character of the book, an interesting read and one which anyone with an interest in Central and Eastern Europe would undoubtedly find interesting.

The Danube is Europe's Amazon. It flows through more countries than any other river on Earth from the Black Forest in Germany to Europe's farthest fringes, where it joins the Black Sea in Romania. Andrew Eames' journey along its length brings us face to face with the continent's bloodiest history and its most pressing issues of race and identity. As he travels by bicycle, horse, boat, and on foot Eames finds himself seeking a bed for the night with minor royalty, hitching a ride on a Serbian barge captained by a man called Attila, and getting up close and personal with a bull in rural Romania. He meets would-be kings and walks with gypsies, and finally rows his way beyond the borders of Europe entirely.

"Eames has the adventurousness and pleasantly self-deprecating sense of humour that makes a good travel writer. The book's hero is the Danube itself. Few will forget Eames's lament for the demise of the river in the modern era."

Financial Times

About the Author

Andrew Eames has been writing travel and general interest features for newspapers for nearly a decade, including the Telegraph and the Times. He is the author of *The 8.55 to Baghdad*, *Benn's London*, *Crossing the Shadow Line*, and *Four Scottish Journeys*.