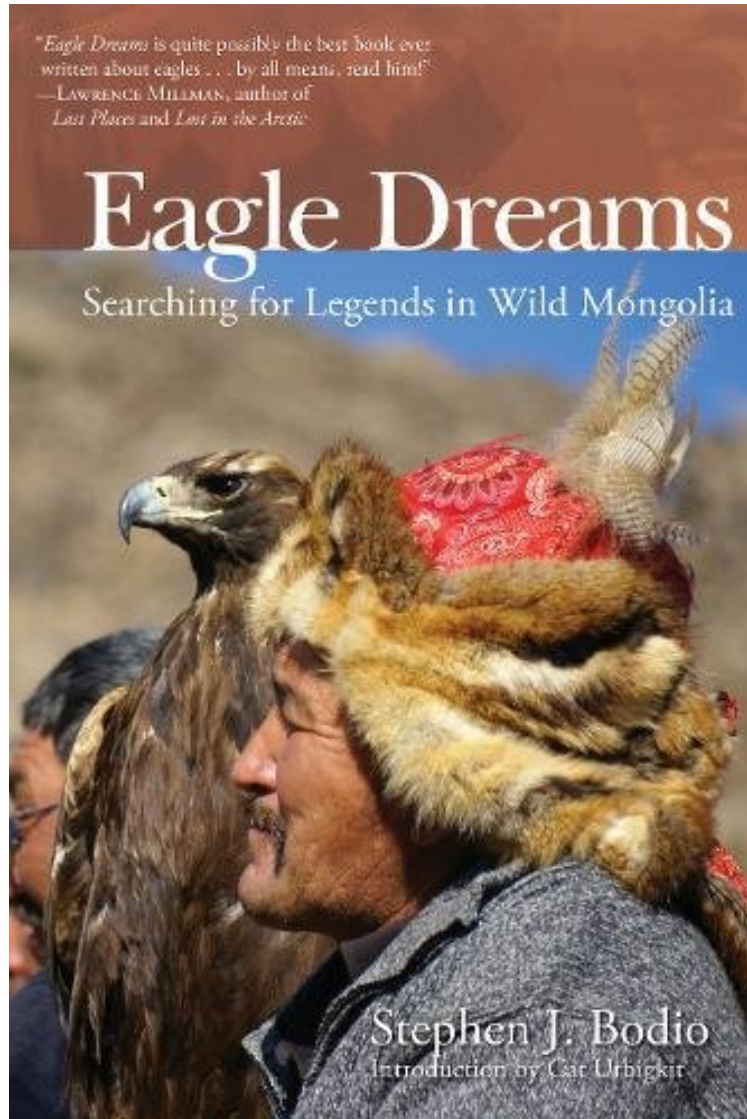


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Eagle Dreams: Searching for Legends in Wild Mongolia

Stephen Bodio

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Stephen Bodio : Eagle Dreams: Searching for Legends in Wild Mongolia before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Eagle Dreams: Searching for Legends in Wild Mongolia:

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Part personal biography, part travelogue, part Kazakh eaglery treatise, gratuitous side of 'Freedom Fries'By Jerry DenimI purchased this book to educate myself and to help me get excited for an upcoming trip to western Mongolia/ Kazakh eagle land. This book was the only title in english I could find on the topic and the book had great reviews here so the choice to purchase it was easy. While I mostly enjoyed the book I would have appreciated more unbiased information about eagles and the Kazakhs if Bodio had any more to

share. With a very few notable exceptions (super-intelligent, emotional mammals with a predilection towards kindness for humans) I have absolutely no issues with people hunting for food or sport as long as the hunted animal belongs to a stable, abundant population and no unnecessary cruelty is involved. That being said, I did not enjoy Bodio's constant Cliven Bundy/Nevada Tea-Party/Fox News flavored political commentary that ran throughout the book. From denigrating liberals, environmentalists, wildlife conservationists and even fisherman who practice catch and release I just didn't see the point including so many of his very American and personal political prejudices in what I thought should have been a fairly non-political book about Mongolian Kazakhs and their remarkable eagles. At one point in the book Bodio berates a fellow American traveller for having the poor taste and judgement to gift the Mongolians - "oversized T-shirts emblazoned with various NFL logos, looking like the ones gang bangers wore back home." NFL logo equals "gang-banger"? I saw lots of Mongolians wearing American sports jerseys, I seriously doubt gifting one is any kind of cultural faux pas but rather a reflection of Bodio's distaste of fashion he equates with American black culture. This is just one example out of many, but remarks like this didn't add anything to the book while making me feel icky and lowering my opinion of Bodio as a person. Perhaps I misunderstand him, but the effect was the same regardless. Having visited the western Mongolian Kazakhs Bodio writes about I found them every bit as warm, generous, gracious and as good-humored as he describes them. I found their imbalanced diet consisting solely of meat and dairy pitiable and contrary to Bodio's depiction, very hard on their health. Nobody living the traditional Kazakh nomad lifestyle that we met in Western Mongolia seemed to live much past sixty. All of the eagle hunters that were in their forties and fifties when Bodio's book was published in 2003 were already dead of natural causes according to the locals who knew and recognized them from the photos in the book. My twenty-four year old guide confessed a bad case of hemorrhoids and the 34 year old son of our host family inside Altai Tavan Bogd was being treated for cancer. He was one of the many cancer stories we heard while in western Mongolia. While I am not even close to being a doctor I have read enough and know enough about basic nutrition to have no doubts concerning the root cause of the Kazakh's health ailments: A diet consisting solely of meat and dairy devoid of any source of fiber or vegetables. The Mongolian Kazakh's freedom, close family units and their ancient yet intact cultural traditions were enviable, their diet while perhaps a product of necessity as well as culture was another matter altogether and undeserving of being romanticized by anyone in the 21st century. I found the Kazakh's food situation in the remote western corner of the country sad and depressing, but I suppose an endless meat and cheese buffet beats the hell out of going hungry in a very cold, hard land. Definitely visit the western Mongolian Kazakhs if you ever get the chance, they are incredible, but bring some Metamucil and dehydrated vegan chili. Your gut will thank you. Bodio's advice concerning vodka and other practical topics is solid however. Bring a good bit with you and use it to wash down the horse meat and rock hard bland cheese, it was the only thing that helped my stomach cope with the Kazakh meals. The Kazakh hunting eagles are just as majestic and awe-inspiring as Bodio writes. Nothing you read can prepare you for your first encounter. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This book will make you want to meet the people and the birds in their Arena but not be disappointed if you can't By CustomerCaptive in every way. This book will make you want to meet the people and the birds in their Arena but not be disappointed if you can't, because it doesn't make you feel you missed something. It's not your personal experience but that, it seems, of a good friend who honestly and generously tells you his story with entertaining clarity and frankness. Almost as good as being there yourself. Read it! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Harold M. Babin Fascinating book from one of the greatest sporting authors of our time.

Mongolia is a vast country located between Siberia and China, and little-known to outsiders. As Mongolia had long been under Soviet rule, it was inaccessible to Westerners. That was until 1990, when Stephen J. Bodio began planning his trip. As a boy, Bodio was always fascinated with nature. When he saw an image in National Geographic of a Kazakh nomad, dressed in a long coat and wearing a fur hat, holding a huge eagle on his fist, his life was changed from then on. When Mongolia became independent in 1990, Bodio knew that his dream to see the eagle hunters from the picture in National Geographic

"Bodio offers insightful, heartfelt, and often humorous observations of the inhabitants and the landscapes of Mongolia. Recommended for all public and academic libraries."-- Library Journal