

The Hidden Europe: What Eastern Europeans Can Teach Us (Wanderlearn Series)

Francis Tapon

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Francis Tapon : The Hidden Europe: What Eastern Europeans Can Teach Us (Wanderlearn Series) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Hidden Europe: What Eastern Europeans Can Teach Us (Wanderlearn Series):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The best book about how things are going on in Eastern European countries By Dmitry The name of this book, The Hidden Europe: What Eastern Europe Can Teach Us gives us the

broad description of what we can see inside. The book is about Eastern European countries, their history, traditions and culture. Unlike many other travel books, this one goes into ethnography in a superior way. Francis Tapon dedicated a part of his life to travel and describe the world. His first book *Hike Your Own Hike* is for those who like to get travel experiences by foot. As a consequence, it would have been loved by a small circle of readers, but *The Hidden Europe* is dense with information which is full of action and humor. His work is a result of about 3 years travelling in 25 Eastern European countries. Because the name Eastern Europe is stigmatized, from the first part of the book Francis gives the reason why he included particular counties in that region. There are many definitions of Eastern Europe, and most identities are spatial. For that reason, the chapter with introduction takes up many pages explaining geographical reasons for the selection of lands. In the same chapter, he advocates himself for using generalization. Many conclusions in this book are brought up from the process of generalization. As a result, a number of readers from these countries might disagree with the opinion of the author. But generalization on the other hand gives us the way to judge. Stereotypes are just side effects of generalization. To fill this book with unique information Francis tried to immerse into a local life as much as possible. He stayed in private apartments using his account in Couchsurfing, he got to know locals and visited different cities, dealt with weather, homesick and local authorities. As a result, he not only expressed the full characterization of each country and its brief history, but he also conveyed national moods. In other words, he did a terrific job. Hats off to him. What we should know is that the book is not an insult for particular traditions or habits. It shows full picture of how things are going on specific countries. I look forward to his next book about Africa. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Especially interesting for the lesser known countries. By Anna I enjoyed the stories and the author has a good conversational tone. As the premise is seeing what changed from an original on '05, to a revisiting of the same areas in '09, I'd be interested in an 3rd visit update. The last almost-decade has seen a lot of changes in that region, and it'd be an interesting perspective. However, the world is a very large place, with lots to explore, so I can understand the author striking out into new territory, instead of re-revisiting this particular one. Thumbs up as a travel journal, vs a more guide style. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Great (If Flawed) Achievement. By Aaron I learned a lot from this book, in more ways than one. First, the book is, truly, a great achievement, being a vast volume comprised mostly of firsthand experiences in Eastern Europe. There was much valuable information in this sense alone, in a purely travelogue-type way. Also, there were many informative historical briefs for each country and its people, which I also found valuable (insofar as brief historical treatments can be valued, anyway). Second, the author offered many intelligent, sound analyses based on these experiences, along with what he felt they could teach us. Usually, his logic and conclusions were above-average and reasonable, respectively. The author impressed me as genuinely enamored with the world, and concerned for its well-being. The book was often funny, to boot, with a steady sprinkling of clever wisecracks -- never a bad thing, humor. One negative, however, was the scathing, insulting tone used throughout the text (or so I perceived the tone; perhaps hearing these things spoken aloud would've clarified my perceptions). People and practices were regularly judged as "stupid," "retarded," or "crazy," along with lots of generalizing and conclusion-jumping thrown in the mix. While these things wouldn't normally have bothered me, the fact that, in the book's preface, the author himself denounced all such shallow thinking, lent an annoying, double-minded dimension to it all, making the book a bit hard to read. It would be like me saying "Francis Tapon is a stupid idiot for calling people stupid idiots." In this sense, the book had a third dimension, presenting a study of how even a seemingly intelligent and self-analyzing person can blatantly contradict themselves. (But then, who of us are without our contradictions and mental blindspots?) All in all, I enjoyed this book very much, and benefited from it. So, a big thank-you to the author and the book's subjects.

Francis Tapon yearned for a European adventure, but Western Europe seemed too tame and passe. So he traveled for 3 years visiting every Eastern European country all 25 of them. *The Hidden Europe* cleverly mixes insightful facts with hilarious personal anecdotes. It's profound, yet light. Francis Tapon is a sharp observer who helps you distinguish a Latvian from a Lithuanian, while not confusing Slovenia with Slovakia. You'll also learn: - Why Baltic people are human squirrels. - When and why Poland disappeared from Europe. - Why Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia broke up. - Why Hungarians are really Martians. - How Slovenians learn languages so quickly. - Why the Balkans is so screwed up. - Why there's much more to Romania than Dracula. - Which Moldovan tradition saves marriages. - What the future holds for Belarus, Ukraine, Russia. - Why communism was a dream . . . and a nightmare. You'll understand a side of Europe that is still mysterious and misunderstood even 20 years after the fall of the Soviet Union. Francis Tapon is an ideal guide in a book that will become a classic travel narrative. SUMMARY When people say that they're "going to Europe," they're usually referring to Western Europe. But what about Eastern Europe? You don't really know Europe until you visit its mysterious eastern side. Francis Tapon's quest was simple: explore every country in Eastern Europe from the Gulf of Finland to the Black Sea. He saw them all in 2004 and then returned in 2008 to revisit them to see what had changed. He finally left in 2011 to share a side of Europe that few know. Starting in the Baltic, you'll move through Belarus, Poland, Slovakia and get as far west as Slovenia before heading south into the thrilling Balkans. Then you'll head northeast through Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine, and Russia. It's a 25-country adventure spanning over 3 years! *The Hidden Europe* is an entertaining travelogue that also shares practical lessons that will impact your

day-to-day life. You'll learn about today's Eastern Europe along with understanding the complex history of this fascinating region. You'll also see how the locals live and realize that they do some things better than most of the world. You'll understand why smart money and groundbreaking tourists are flocking to this undiscovered territory. Best of all, you won't have to deal with the grumpy train ticket vendors. INCLUDES 60 COLOR PHOTOS AND 2 COLOR MAPS

"Francis Tapon provides us with a wide-ranging personal and historical travelogue. . . . The result is one of the world's most personal, idiosyncratic, and unorthodox cultural and historical travel guides. . . . It's really an impressive and ambitious book."--Michael Krasny, Host on KQED's ForumAbout the AuthorFrancis Tapon's mother is from Chile and his father is from France. They met in San Francisco thanks to a slow elevator. His brother, Philippe Tapon, is the author of two novels. His family spoke Spanish at home, unless an English swearword was necessary. Francis was born in San Francisco, California where he attended the French American International School for 12 years. Native French teachers convinced him that France is the coolest country in the universe. He is fluent in English, French, and Spanish. He struggles with Italian, Portuguese, Slovenian, and Russian. If you point a gun to his head, he'll start speaking other languages too. He earned a Religion Degree with honors from Amherst College. He also has an MBA from Harvard Business School. After Harvard, he co-founded a robotic vision company in Silicon Valley. Then he decided to change his life forever. In 2001, he sold what little he had to hike the 3,000 km Appalachian Trail. Then, after consulting for Hitachi, he visited all 25 countries in Eastern Europe from June to November 2004. He consulted at Microsoft before hiking the 4,200 km Pacific Crest Trail in 2006. In 2007, he became the first person to do a round-trip on the Continental Divide Trail a seven-month journey spanning 9,000 km. In 2008-2011, he visited over 40 European countries, but focused on revisiting all the Eastern European ones. In 2009, he climbed up Mont Blanc and walked across Spain twice (once by traversing the Pyrenees from the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean, and then later by hiking El Camino Santiago). He's backpacked over 20,000 kilometers (12,500 miles) and traveled to over 80 countries. He has never owned a TV, chair, table, couch, bed, or rocket ship. He is the author of Hike Your Own Hike: 7 Life Lessons from Backpacking Across America. He is donating half of that book's royalty to America's three major scenic trails. The Hidden Europe: What Eastern Europeans Can Teach Us is his second book of his WanderLearn Series. In 2013-2018, he plans to visit every country in Africa and write a book about that in . His goal is to wander to all 193 countries of the world, see what we can learn from them, and share it with everyone.