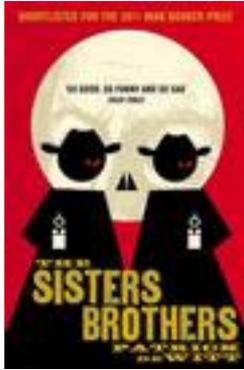


The Reading Passport

Here are some suggestions for your world trip. Bon Voyage!

North America



The Sisters brothers by Patrick DeWitt

“It was one of the most enjoyable books I've read for a long time...perhaps even ever. Now having finished the book, I find myself missing Charlie and Eli Sisters - gunmen for hire during the 1850s Gold Rush. We follow them to San Francisco, where they're looking to assassinate the wonderfully named `thief' Herman Kermit Warm. But, things don't always go to plan for the Sisters boys...”

In Cold Blood by Truman Capote.

Brilliant and chilling account of a real life quadruple murder, notable for its acute portrayal of 1950s rural America and for entering into the minds of the killers.

The Big Sleep by Raymond Chandler

Classic American thriller with tough heros and classy dames. This cool and complex thriller introduces Chandler's iconic PI, Philip Marlowe for the first time.

The 19th Wife by David Ebershoff

“What a great couple of days I've spent in the company of the characters in this book. The novel is so original and so well executed. You have real sympathy for Jordan, who is crusading to save his mother and himself from the religious dogma and indoctrination to which they have been exposed. Running parallel to this is the real life story of the original 19th wife, who is struggling with the same issues facing our boy. Really bittersweet in parts but really well worth the read. I can highly recommend it.”

The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Who is the mysterious, rich Gatsby? The great American dream goes bad in this jazz age classic.

The Other Side of the Bridge by Mary Lawson

“It's a moving and somewhat heartbreaking tale of love, loss and humanity. I liked the way that Arthur and Ian's stories were structurally broken up by chapters; there was no jumping backwards and forwards that often loses a reader.”

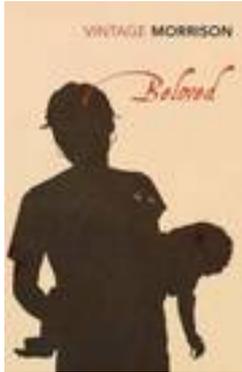
To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

A classic for over 50 years, this is a novel of warmth and humour in spite of the themes of racial injustice and the destruction of innocence.

The Reading Passport

Here are some suggestions for your world trip. Bon Voyage!

North America



Beloved by Toni Morrison

"Disturbing, haunting, frightening, as the narrator peels away the layers of hurt and pain. Not for the hard hearted, or faint hearted. Brilliant."

Gone with the Wind by Margaret Mitchell

This civil war epic recounts the destruction of a whole way of life through the struggles of the unforgettable Scarlet O'Hara.

The Call of the Wild by Jack London

The adventures of Buck the dog as he struggles to survive in the harsh Yukon of gold rush days.

The Horse Whisperer by Nicholas Evans

"I read this book when it was first published and I was blown away by it. I had never before read something so touching. If I had known that there would be romance in it, I probably never would have picked it up, but I am so glad I did."

The Shipping News by Annie Proulx

Unlikely hero Quoye finds refuge and eventually a place of his own in the quirky community of Newfoundland

The Catcher in the Rye by J. D. Salinger

An iconic novel of teenage confusion and rebellion.

"This is the only book that has often made me laugh and cry, often both at the same time. It has no other political or social meaning, and is viable for every generation. I hope they never make a film of it, because, as J.D. Salinger put it: "it wouldn't be what Holden wanted".

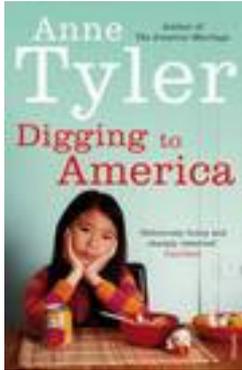
The Help by Kathryn Stockett

The contrasting lives of prosperous 1960s Southern white women and their black maids in a world about to change. Touching and hard hitting.

The Reading Passport

Here are some suggestions for your world trip. Bon Voyage!

North America



Digging to America by Anne Tyler

Two families' experience of adoption highlight issues of race, culture and identity in modern America

“As always, it is a delight to read a book by Anne Tyler: she is humorous, compassionate, has an observant eye for the details of daily life and an acute ear for dialogue. She portrays the Donaldson type of American to perfection; and one suspects that her insight into Iranian-Americans must come from personal knowledge.”

The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt kid by Bill Bryson.

Comic anecdotes from Bryson's childhood in Des Moines, Iowa in the 1950s and '60s. Full of warmth and wit.

Catch -22 by Joseph Heller

Much acclaimed satirical novel following U.S. airmen fighting in World War II and caught in the strange logic of bureaucracy.

Carrie by Stephen King

School girl Carrie extracts revenge on her tormentors by using her telekinetic powers. This is King's powerful debut horror novel.

The Lincoln Lawyer by Michael Connelly

“It is a gripping read and plot twists offer some genuine surprises that prove ultimately credible. I particularly liked the references to LA Gangsta rap that are both authentic and incongruous.”

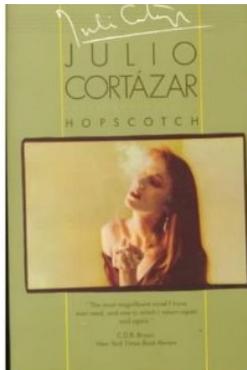
The Bridges of Madison County by Robert James Waller

A powerful and touching love affair between a lonely Italian wife and a visiting photographer.

The Reading Passport

Here are some suggestions for your world trip. Bon Voyage!

South America



Hopscotch by Julio Cortázar

“This is a novel to savour, remember and dig down through its layers and narrative styles. This is the sort of deep novel that is unusually constructed, as detailed by other reviews in that it can be read in a least two chapter orders, in a way that reflects the onion layers and different perspectives presented.”

The Ministry of Special Cases by Nathan Englander

Nathan Englander’s first novel is a timeless story of fathers and sons. Through the devastation of a single family, Englander captures, indelibly, the grief of a nation. The Ministry of Special Cases, like Englander’s stories before it, is a celebration of our humanity, in all its weakness, and--despite that--hope.

City of the Beasts by Isabel Allende

“Adventure-stuffed page turner... Allende’s notorious, luminous gift for imaginative story-telling runs wild in the jungle. Her prose is rich and magical, her characters vivid. She mixes violence and horror, love and humour, with more than a touch of genius.”

Nine Nights by Barnardo Carvalho

An extraordinary Brazilian novel, reminiscent of Naipaul, Faulkner or Conrad in its remarkable power and its exploration of human behaviour on the edges of civilisation.

Kamchatka by Marcelo Figueras

“Figueras - a bestseller across the Spanish-speaking world - writes with power and insight about the ways in which a child uses imagination to make sense of a terrifying and baffling reality.”--Kate Saunders, The Times

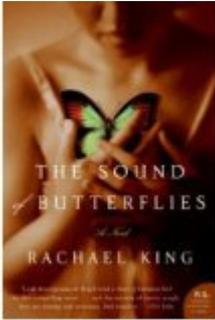
The Silence of the Rain by Luiz Alfredo Garcia-Roza

“This book is a pure pleasure to read, I’m not big fan of detective stories but this was a very refreshing novel. Think of Rio de Janeiro and you picture, sun, sea, samba and sex. Wealth mixed with dire poverty. Crime mixed with carioca and you get a potentially fascinating setting for a novel of any genre.”

The Reading Passport

Here are some suggestions for your world trip. Bon Voyage!

South America



The Sound of Butterflies by Rachael King

"This is a fantastic book! The story is beautifully written and the characters come to life and take you with them on their journey through the rainforest. The book gripped me and I couldn't put it down. You must read it!"

The Tree of the Seventh Heaven by Milton Hatoum

On the occasion of the death of the clan's matriarch, a diverse group of voices tells the story of a large family of Lebanese immigrants who settle in Manaus, a lush Amazonian city.

The Feast of the Goat by Mario Vargas Llosa

A vivid exploration of power and violence, *The Feast of the Goat* is one of Vargas Llosa's most acclaimed novels. The story is woven cleverly around a central historical event, while unravelling an intriguing story of power, hope and betrayal. It's a gruesome, bitter, but beautiful tale told with the vivacity and skill we've come to expect from him.

Brasyl by Ian McDonald

"Absolutely first class read from Ian McDonald. A three handed narrative, in the now almost compulsory Sci-Fi multi narrative, multi timeline format but none the worse for it. I loved Brazil as a source of inspiration, mixing past, present, future and some merely "possible" Brazils with a quantum cascade of possibilities that kept me turning pages well into the night."

In Patagonia by Bruce Chatwin

In Patagonia is Bruce Chatwin's exquisite account of his journey through "the uttermost part of the earth," that stretch of land at the southern tip of South America, where bandits were once made welcome and Charles Darwin formed part of his "survival of the fittest" theory. Chatwin's evocative descriptions, notes on the odd history of the region, and enchanting anecdotes make the book an exhilarating look at a place that still retains the exotic mystery of a far-off, unseen land.

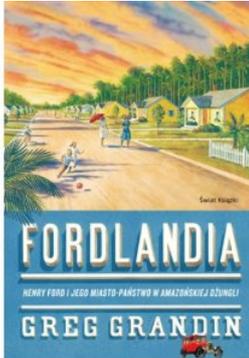
The Ventriloquist's Tale by Pauline Melville

"This is a sensitive tale, well told, that will enthrall and reward. It is the story of an Amerindian family in British Guyana. I would recommend this book to anyone who's open-minded about other cultures and races.....brilliant"

The Reading Passport

Here are some suggestions for your world trip. Bon Voyage!

South America



Fordlandia by Greg Grandin

Fordlandia is a truly amazing account of the car tycoon's attempt to bring small town 1920's America and "civilisation" to the Amazon in return for all the rubber and timber he could grow there. While meaning well, everything from corrupt politicians, pestilence and the logistics of recreating something akin to Michigan in the jungle proved futile despite the millions of dollars and years of manpower thrown at Henry's pet project.

News of a Kidnapping by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Pablo Escobar: billionaire drugs baron; ruthless manipulator, brutal killer and *jefe* of the infamous Medellín cartel. Terrified of the new Colombian President's determination to extradite him to America, Escobar found the best bargaining tools he could: hostages. In the winter of 1990, ten relatives of Colombian politicians, mostly women, were abducted and held hostage as Escobar attempted to strong-arm the government into blocking his extradition. Márquez retells, with vivid clarity, the terror and uncertainty of those dark and volatile months.

Red April by Santiago Roncagliolo

When a charred and mutilated body is discovered during Carnival, the people of the small town of Ayacucho understand that death has once more returned to their land. Only now the terror emanates not from the government death squads, nor from the guerrillas in the mountains, but from a single source. A serial murderer. And now everyone is afraid. Everyone is a suspect.

The Sickness by Alberto Barrera Tyszka,

In its poignant dissection of middle-class malaise and familial dynamics, this novel 'Promises to place Tyszka at the front rank of new Latin American writers, and, establishes him with a claim to be the Venezuelan Ian McEwan' according to some.

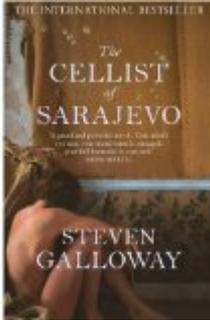
The Dark Bride by Laura Restrepo

"I bought this book at an English book shop in Buenos Aires without having heard of the author before. I couldn't put it down and think its a strong contender for the best book I have read this year. The book is about a child called Sayonara who, at very early age, decides to become a prostitute and arrives at a town in rural Colombia to pursue her chosen career. Dark Bride is a story of ambition, frustrated love and camaraderie among women. It is written in a style that keeps you reading and wanting more."

The Reading Passport

Here are some suggestions for your world trip. Bon Voyage!

European Novels



The Cellist of Sarajevo by Steve Galloway

A cellist sits at the same spot in a bombed street at the same time every day for 22 days and plays Albinoni's haunting Adagio in honour of the 22 people killed there by mortar shells while waiting to buy bread. The book isn't about the cellist himself, though. It's about the inspiration and hope his music conveys to people caught up in a daily struggle to live and stay alive, as well as the tragic waste that inevitably comes with war.

Resistance by Anita Shreve

"I really enjoyed this book and read it in one sitting! It's set in World War II in occupied Belgium and is the story of downed fighter pilot, Ted Brice, and his relationship with Resistance member, Claire Dussois."

The Visible World by Mark Slouka

"This book is for everyone who enjoys an emotive and beautiful writing. For some reason I thought it was an autobiography as the vivid images of central European culture, people and places were so true and beautifully described. It felt like flicking through old photographs of a family that you did not really know, but whose story you had the privilege to peep into. Very very lovely."

My Dirty Little Book of Stolen Time by Liz Jensen

"I loved this book. I picked it up because I liked the cover and I wasn't disappointed. The story is a strange and likeable one, about a Danish prostitute and her mother, who accidentally travel to twenty-first century London and where Charlotte, the heroine, meets and falls in love with a Scottish archaeologist. The plot hurtles along at break-neck speed and there is a wonderfully happy ending. The whole thing is a delightful and absurd concoction, a real feel good story, full of love and naughtiness and perfect for reading on a hot summer's day."

House of Orphans by Helen Dunmore

Finland, 1902, and the Russian Empire enforces a brutal policy to destroy Finland's freedom and force its people into submission. Set in dangerous, unfamiliar times which strangely echo our own, the story reveals how terrorism lies hidden within ordinary life, as rulers struggle to hold on to power. *House of Orphans* is a rich, brilliant story of love, history and change.

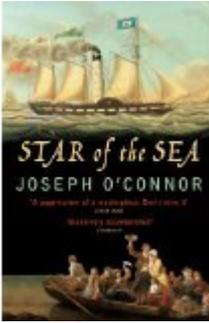
Suite Francaise by Irene Nemirovsky

"I discovered this book by chance and I am so glad I did. Irénes descriptions of occupied France and the effect it had on all classes of people are so vivid and factual. Without malice she takes the reader through each step of what must have been a terrifying journey out of Paris and to the countryside occupied by the German army at a time when trust and hope was in short supply."

The Reading Passport

Here are some suggestions for your world trip. Bon Voyage!

European Novels



Star of the Sea by Joseph O'Connor

O'Connor manages to achieve a real sense of the tragic, as personal dramas of the most distressing kind play themselves out against the background of the Irish potato famine and the almost equal nightmare of the mass emigration that it caused. As passengers die of starvation and disease in steerage, a drama of adultery, incest and inherited disease plays itself out in first class.

Just like Tomorrow by Faiza Guene

Guene's short novel is a great read and there are plenty of subtle side-stories chronicling the perils of living in the poorest suburbs of Paris - stolen cars, drugs, children failing at school, social workers etc - but this is ultimately an uplifting tale of hope, of rising above one's origins and circumstances, through the beautifully rendered naivety of a 15 year old.

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

Set in Germany during the dark days of the Third Reich, this was the best-selling debut literary novel of the year 2007, selling over 400,000 copies. The author is a prize-winning writer of children's books, and this, his first novel for adults, proved to be a triumphant success.

The Island by Victoria Hislop

"This has to be one of the best books I have read in a long time. It is certainly a quality book but without being heavy like an old classic. It is well-researched and contains powerful imagery and detailed descriptions of Crete. It makes you want to go and look up the places on the internet so you can see exactly where the novel is set. It is tragic without being upsetting."

Miss Garnet's Angel by Salley Vickers

Julia Garnet and her long-standing companion and flatmate Harriet decide to retire from work together, on the same day, but when two days later Harriet unexpectedly dies, Miss Garnet decides it is time to take a trip abroad and settles upon six months in Venice. Cautious, dignified and unadventurous by nature, Julia is also a virgin and inexperienced in matters of the heart. Venice is quite a revelation.

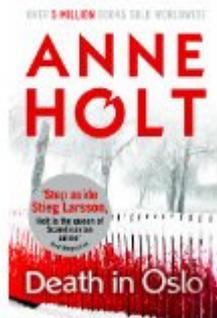
The Madonnas of Leningrad by Debra Lean

"Having recently visited St Petersburg (formerly Leningrad) and visited the stunning Hermitage Museum, I was intrigued to read this. In wartime all the paintings and many of the artefacts in the museum were packed up and stored in places of safety. The story is told from the viewpoint of Marina, a tour guide at the Hermitage, who helped to save the paintings."

The Reading Passport

Here are some suggestions for your world trip. Bon Voyage!

European Novels



Death in Oslo by Anne Holt

When Helen Barclay becomes the first female US president, the whole world takes notice. So when Helen Barclay goes missing from a locked, heavily secured bedroom, then the FBI and the Norwegian police, are forced - unwillingly - to work together to find her. Has she been kidnapped? Murdered? Can the US president really just disappear into thin air...?

Pompeii by Robert Harris

"This book, although not complicated or amazingly original plotwise, is utterly enthralling and I challenge anyone to be able to put it down for too long. You can't help but like Marcus Attilius or get involved with his struggle to prove himself to the might of the Roman Empire as the new Aquarius, overseer of the aqueduct providing Campania with its much needed water supply."

The Kaiser's Last Kiss by Alan Judd

Focusing on a few days during WWII, this is the tale of the last days in the life of the exiled Kaiser as his Dutch home is taken over by a group of invading Nazis who haven't yet decided if he's more valuable to them dead or alive. Judd has taken some unlikely ingredients and brilliantly fashioned them into a touching, poignant story.

Shadow of the Wind by Carlos Ruiz Zafon

International bestseller, The Shadow of the Wind by Carlos Ruiz Zafon is literary fiction in the truest sense. The drama is played out amid the horrors and uncertainties of Revolutionary and Post-revolutionary Barcelona and it is a novel about books - about one book in particular - and about the power of words to inspire, inflame and ultimately destroy.

Esther's Inheritance by Sandor Marai

Hungarian author Sandor Marai's newest novel to be translated into English plumbs the depths of a love thwarted and then revisited years later.

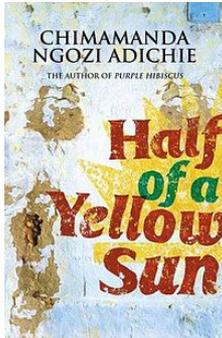
Missing by Karin Alvtegen

"When a serial killer strikes, a homeless woman finds herself in the wrong place at the wrong time, and framed for horrifying murders that she didn't commit. On the run and living on her wits, can she avoid capture long enough to prove her innocence? This is a very entertaining introduction to the work of yet another excellent Swedish author of thrillers. Definitely worth a read."

The Reading Passport

Here are some suggestions for your world trip. Bon Voyage!

African books



Half of a yellow Sun by Adichie Chimamanda

“Half of a Yellow Sun was simply fantastic. It was a JOY to read. I have tried, and failed, to read many a book on the Nigerian Civil War. Its a part of my country's history that I feel is poorly documented and is glossed over by many Nigerians, the bulk of whom understandably still bear very painful memories of its brutality and futility. Chimamanda's novel is so fantastic because her characters are astoundingly real.”

Guide to the birds of East Africa by Drayson Nicholas

“I got this book knowing it was not what it said on the cover but a charming little tale of unrequited love set in Post Independence Kenya. I was not disappointed. Without spoiling the plot it revolves around two mature men and their quest for the hand of the same lady. Having really enjoyed the plots and sub plots I am left wondering if one of the author's little jokes is on us and the whole book is a similar skit on life in modern Kenya?”

Things fall apart by Achebe Chinua

First published in 1958, this is often seen as the archetypal modern African novel and one of the first African novels written in English to receive global critical acclaim. Okonkwo is a leader and local wrestling champion in Umuofia. The story centres on his family and personal history, the customs and society of the Igbo, and the influence of British colonialism and Christian missionaries on the Igbo community during the late nineteenth century.

A long way gone : memoirs of a boy soldier by Ishmael Beah.

This book provides a firsthand account of the decade-long civil war in Sierra Leone and the ongoing plight of child soldiers in conflicts worldwide. It is the simple story of a child unwittingly caught up in the appalling violence of civil war. The narrator tells his own story as he describes the process of desensitization that allows him to survive the horrors he participates in and the even more difficult process of learning to re-engage with civil society once he has been rescued from the battlefield.

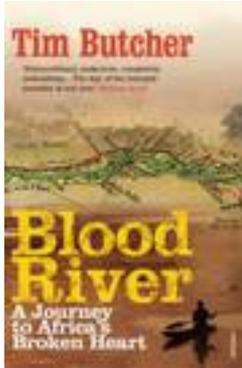
Out of Africa by Karen Blixen

Out of Africa is a memoir first published in 1937 which recounts events of the seventeen years when Blixen made her home in Kenya. The book is a lyrical meditation on Blixen's life on her coffee plantation, as well as a tribute to some of the people who touched her life there. It is also a vivid snapshot of African colonial life in the last decades of the British Empire.

The Reading Passport

Here are some suggestions for your world trip. Bon Voyage!

African books



Blood river: A Journey to Africa's Broken Heart by Tim Butcher

Tim Butcher's account of his 2004 journey through DR Congo overland from Lake Tanganyika and down the Congo River, following the route of Henry Morton Stanley's 1874–77 trans-Africa expedition. The book reached Number 1 in the *Sunday Times* bestseller list in March 2008 and was shortlisted for several prizes.

Lyrics alley by Leila Aboulela

Lyrics Alley is set in the Sudan of the 1950s and was long-listed for the Orange Prize 2011. It's a graceful and elegantly told saga of the powerful and affluent Abuzeid family and two societies, Sudan and Egypt, on the cusp of momentous changes. *Lyrics Alley* is an evocative description of the struggle between tradition and modernization, a conflict that is still being fought in present-day Islamic culture.

The life and times of Michael K by J M Coetzee

"It has been a while that I have read anything as brave, honest and utterly compelling. Coetzee's insight into the struggle of life is quite humbling. Here the character wishes nothing more in life than to exist as a simple man living from the fruits of his labour. To enjoy life immersed in a simplicity which you or I can only read about. Through man's ignorance he is never granted this liberty."

Sunday at the pool in Kigali by Gil Courtemanche

Set in Rwanda in 1994, this novel is an attempt to portray and come to terms with both the terrible social fault-lines which led to the genocide of Tutsis by Hutus and with the plague-like spread of AIDS, which recognizes no social or political boundaries. The main protagonist is a white documentary film-maker who falls in love with a young Tutsi woman and their relationship becomes the vehicle for the author's impressive intertwining of the personal and the political. It's a nightmarish, uncompromising and disturbing read and a very powerful debut, translated from the French by Patricia Claxton.

The Last King of Scotland by Giles Foden

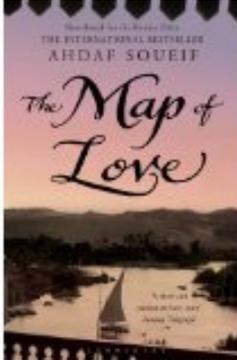
The Last King of Scotland, is none other than Idi Amin, the former dictator of Uganda. Told from the viewpoint of Nicholas Garrigan, Amin's personal physician, the novel chronicles the hell that was Uganda in the 1970s.

'A gripping tale of tropical corruption... This is a wonderful read, beautifully written, every description drenched with a sense of Africa.' --

The Reading Passport

Here are some suggestions for your world trip. Bon Voyage!

African books



Map of love by Ahdaf Soueif

If you love books which give you fascinating insights into other cultures, which incorporate a good deal of history into an exciting and completely developed story line, and which introduce you to a main character so charming and intelligent that you hate to have her disappear at the end of the novel, you will be thoroughly captivated by Map of Love. This Egyptian author succeeds in presenting events from an Arab point of view to a western audience--a view that is culturally honest without being polemical.

When a crocodile eats the sun by Peter Godwin

“Peter Godwin's latest book simply un-putdownable. It is exceptionally well-written and comes straight from the heart. His deeply personal memoir is told with total sincerity and not a trace of self-pity. The way he describes events that would be absurd anywhere else in the world is dead-on. Anyone living in Africa or interested in Africa should read this book - however be warned - it's not for the fainthearted. Thank you Peter for sharing this story, you have a true talent. “

In the country of men by Hisham Matar

It is 1979 and nine-year old Suleiman lives in the brutal police state of Gaddafi's Libya. This is very powerful, poignant story - told through the eyes of a young boy - who struggles to understand the world he is living in. Telling the story of Tripoli, and Suleiman's parents in this way, the reader is drawn right into the heart of this family and the times they live in.

The Poisonwood bible by Barbara Kingsolver

“I finished The Poisonwood Bible about two weeks ago and am still having what can only be described as withdrawal symptoms now. I wanted to re-read this book the moment I finished it. It was a truly absorbing and beautiful journey through an incredibly well written and researched book - a completely plausible story of a family's experiences in the Belgian Congo in a highly political era. “

Twenty chickens for a saddle: The story of an African childhood. By Robyn Scott

“Set in Botswana, this is the author's account of growing up with one of the most wonderfully mad families you are likely to meet, whether in real life or between the covers of a book. She has a remarkable ear for language, and a descriptive prose style that brings the bush country of Botswana, with all its flora, fauna, and people, to magically madcap life. Twenty Chickens for a Saddle brings to mind such authors as James Herriot and Augusten Burroughs.”

The Reading Passport

Here are some suggestions for your world trip. Bon Voyage!

Asian Books



Snow Flower and the secret fan by Lisa See

There are many books about China, but this one is based on a custom rarely heard about, that of two young girls binding themselves to each other for life at a very early age. They communicate using a secret language known only to women and meet only rarely. If you have ever thought your life was difficult, reading this will make you realise how very much more difficult, controlled and full of physical and mental pain were the lives of Chinese women until fairly recently. The final chapters will live with you for a long time.

Bitter sweets by Roopa Farooki

"This is an amazing debut novel - clever, witty and well-written. It's a book that genuinely made me laugh and cry; I highly recommend it. I loved the way it evoked places and people (apparently) effortlessly. There wasn't too much heavy description nor too much excessive detail and yet I felt as though I could visualise and imagine everybody and every place in this book very clearly."

The good Muslim by Tahmima Anam

The Good Muslim is a wonderful story about the birth of the Bangladeshi nation and the suffering endured to bring this about. Beautifully written and covering the pain and bitter sweet aspects of most of our lives as we struggle with terminal illness, broken relationships, the judgement of others and the utter hopelessness felt when governments turn against their own people, Anam still brings us to hope.

A suitable boy by Vikram Seth

This is the rarest of things, a long, literary novel that really delivers and can be enjoyed by anyone who's reasonably literate and has enough time on their hands. Seth portrays India in an endearing and charming way and each character is created brilliantly. Yet the story is basically a love story and set against the backdrop of the politics in India of 1951/2 it is a captivating read. It will appeal to readers of all backgrounds.

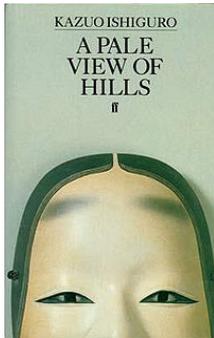
The inheritance of loss by Kiran Desai

Recovering from flu, I was given this book and wondered whether I had any energy to read.. I began it, and without interruption, read it right through in two days. I emerged into a wintry British landscape with my mind swirling with pictures of Kanchenjunga, the jungles of bamboo and sunlight, and the lives of people I had not met, yet who seemed to be more real than anyone else for several succeeding days. The language is often quite extraordinarily beautiful; phrases and concepts which cling in the memory. Kiran Desai writes with such perception, and such a quality of observation, it is a constant delight.

The Reading Passport

Here are some suggestions for your world trip. Bon Voyage!

Asian Books



A pale view of hills by Kazuo Ishiguro

It's the story of Etsuko, a middle-aged Japanese woman living alone in England. The story is a suggestive and disturbing one, dwelling on themes of loss, guilt and responsibility. It examines what we know, what we tell, and what we deny about the truth of our own history. This was Ishiguro's first novel, which won the 1982 Winifred Holtby Memorial Prize.

Norwegian Wood by Haruki Murakami

Norwegian Wood is a nostalgic story of loss and sexuality. The story's protagonist and narrator is Toru Watanabe, who looks back on his days as a college student living in Tokyo during the late 1960s, a time when Japanese students, like those of many other nations, were protesting against the established order. It was hugely popular with Japanese youth and made Murakami somewhat of a superstar in his native country (apparently much to his dismay at the time).

Shalimar the clown by Salman Rushdie

"Beautiful, touching, tragic, magical, and breathtaking, this novel is a tale of love and revenge, of paradise torn asunder and a cultural lesson on Kashmir. When it picks up speed during the second half of the book, it is captivating, and the final pages are impossible to put down. A worthy read."

A case of exploding mangoes by Mohammed Hanif

"Irreverent and slightly surreal, A Case of Exploding Mangoes takes a real-life mystery and creates from it a weird and wonderful tale. The plot centres on the air accident which killed Pakistan's leader General Zia and several other dignitaries in 1988, which has never been conclusively explained. The writing is full of wry humour and very readable, and there is a lightness of touch despite the gritty subject matter. I found this a really enjoyable read and refreshingly different."

The Buddha of suburbia by Hanif Kureishi

A great comic novel set in the 1970s, The Buddha of Suburbia is a coming-of-age story centred on Karim. As a teenager, desperate to escape suburbia. His chance comes when his father reinvents himself as an unlikely new-age guru and runs off with another woman.

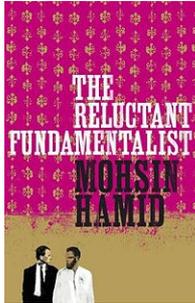
The case of the missing servant by Tarquin Hall

"I enjoyed this book immensely, so much so, that I unselfishly gave my copy away at random on the bus! Be transported to a modern India, with its vast cities and all the hustle and bustle, smells and sights and characters that entails. Vish Puri runs a detective agency but throw in some villainous enemies and an interfering mother and life is far from humdrum!"

The Reading Passport

Here are some suggestions for your world trip. Bon Voyage!

Asian Books



The reluctant fundamentalist by Mohsin Hamid

"I read The Reluctant Fundamentalist with increasing admiration. The author has managed to tighten the screw of suspense almost without our being aware it is happening, and the result is a tale of enormous tension. This is more exciting than any thriller I've read for a long time, as well as being a subtle and elegant analysis of the state of our world today. I was enormously impressed"

Sea of poppies by Amitav Ghosh

An energetic, ambitious and immensely moving book. In Sea of Poppies we discover a disparate group of characters who all find themselves aboard the Ibis as she sails from the Hoogly River in Calcutta to Mauritius in the 1830s. Much of the dialogue is bold and bawdy and uses lots of Anglo-Indian and Hindustani terms. This added to the rich brew of this novel although I can understand that others may find it irritating.

Shantaram by Gregory Gworge Roberts

"Have you ever been browsing in a bookstore, picked up something you liked the look of, read the first page and been unable to leave without buying it? That is how I stumbled across Shantaram, one of the most compelling books I have ever read. Based on a specific period of the author's life, we follow the author as he establishes a free health clinic in a slum, does time in an Indian jail, and goes to war in Afghanistan. At a little over 900 pages it may look like a long hard slog but I promise that from the first page you'll be desperate to keep going."

Last man in Tower by Aravind Adiga

Sometimes a book is so good it's hard to do justice to it in a review. This is one of those books. Set in Bombay, it is the story of how the promise of wealth changes and corrupts a community. But it's also so much more than that.. With humanity and humour the author paints a picture of the friendships, favours and shared histories that bind a community together; and then shows how small envies and old grievances are magnified when that community is divided.

Good Women of China: Hidden Voices by Xinran

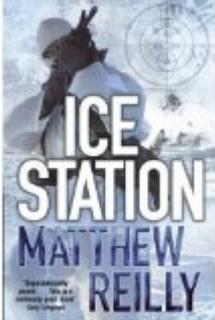
An utterly compelling book, of the experiences of Chinese women, during the cultural revolution of China. No feminist ear bashing, the author communicates with incredible depth and clarity of feeling, the experiences of the women she knew. Not for the feint hearted, this book will stir deep emotion in you. The best book I have read in 20 years.

The Reading Passport

Here are some suggestions for your world trip. Bon Voyage!

Antarctica books

Ice Station by Matthew Reilly



What appears to be a spaceship is found buried deep in the Antarctic ice. US Marine Shane Schofield and his team are sent to the Wilkes ice station and face various enemies who are after the discovery.

"Ice Station" is one of the most over-the-top, unbelievable books I've ever read. And it's very entertaining. Reilly has an incredibly vivid imagination and keeps the action going almost non-stop for nearly 700 pages."

No horizon is so far by Arnesen, Liv

In February 2001, former schoolteachers Ann Bancroft and Liv Arnesen became the first women to cross the Antarctic continent on foot. Against all odds, they walked, skied, or ice-sailed for nearly three months in temperatures as cold as -35F, towing their 250-pound supply sledges across 1700 miles of terrain riddled with rotten ice and deadly, hidden crevasses.

Marshall, James Vance White-out

"As one who enjoys reading stories of extreme survival, I found this novel a really gripping read. It is a story of one man's experiences in Antarctica during the second World War, and involves top secret, undercover work disguised as weather forecasting. James Lockwood's experiences and the way this story is told meant that I was totally focused from beginning to end. I highly recommend this book."

Captain Scott by Ranulph Fiennes.

Sir Ranulph Fiennes is uniquely qualified to write a new biography of Captain Scott. This is the first biography of Scott by someone who has experienced the deprivations, the stress and the sheer physical pain that Scott lived through; he has suffered all but the final tragedy endured by the much maligned Scott. He is determined to put the record straight.

I May Be Some Time: Ice and the English Imagination by Francis Spufford

"This book contains some of the most beautiful writing I've ever read. The last chapter (towards which the book builds) steps out of fact and into speculative fiction so linguistically perfect and poetical that, on public transport, the pounding of your heart will seriously disturb fellow passengers. Read it. It's wonderful."

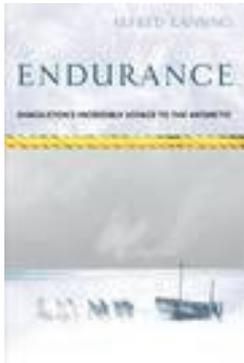
Death on the Ice by Rob Ryan

If you like tales of derring-do and flag-waving heroism, then Ryan is your man. His characters, in this fictionalised account of Scott's 1901 + 1911 expeditions to the South Pole, say things like: 'What an echo they'll leave on this world ... they died doing something great. An intriguing read.

The Reading Passport

Here are some suggestions for your world trip. Bon Voyage!

Antarctica Books



Endurance by Alfred Lansing.

You can't really fail with a book about the *Endurance*. Although Ernest Shackleton's attempt to make the first Trans-Antarctic crossing barely made it out of base camp, his expedition has gone into the history books as one of the great epics of polar travel. Shackleton's outstanding leadership and his loyalty to his men meant that, miraculously, all 28 of his men survived shipwreck, starvation and cold.

Cold Skin by Albert Sanchez.

"This novel reads like a sinister version of a Boy's Own survival adventure and I read it all in one sitting so that's got to be a good sign. I loved the character's isolation. The story focused more on his relationship with the other human than it did on the monstrous presence, but it did not disappoint, it had a sinister theme about humans and how we perceive anything alien. A good read!"

Target Antarctica by Hammond Innes

How would you like to buy a Hercules for a paltry 10K? This one is rather awkwardly placed - on an iceberg. So it may cost you your life. EX-RAF pilot Edwin Cruse takes the chance, and in doing so meets La Belle Phuket. A cracking old fashioned thriller from the author of "The Lonely Skier" and "The White South".

Race to the pole by James Cracknell and Ben Fogle.

"For 3 nights I stayed up far too late to reach the South Pole with Ed, James and Ben whilst in the comfort of my own bed and was genuinely amazed in the sportsmanship, team dynamics and sheer bravery of these 3 guys. A must read for all armchair travellers, wannabe explorers and dreamers alike...!"

Cherry : a life of Apsley Cherry-Garrard by Sara Wheeler

A gripping story of a very interesting life. Because of her own knowledge of the Antarctic, the author has managed to combine biography with adventure story. Through the gripping narrative, Apsley becomes a real person and his plight comes to life on every page.

Antarctica: the blue continent by David McGonigal

This is a comprehensive book that covers a wide range of Antarctic related topics in just the right amount of depth, well supported by excellent photographs and drawings/diagrams/maps, making it very accessible. It presents a lot of information about the region's geography, geology, wildlife, the history of exploration and current issues that will amply satisfy the armchair explorer and is a must for anyone contemplating, or preparing for, a visit.

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Antarctic Books



Skating to Antarctica by Jenny Diski

Skating To Antarctica goes to many places but the journey is far more about the journey than the destination. Mental health, depression, childhood, writing: these are Diski's subjects. But do not be fooled by the reviews below; Diski is a very conscientious writer that deconstructs autobiography as she writes it. Her intimacy is balanced by a dark humour that draws laughter from the more savvy reader, in the most unexpected of places.

Sea of glory: the epic South Seas Expedition, 1838-1842 by Nathaniel Philbrick

Philbrick's source has been little-known 19th century journals and letters, detailing the astonishing story of a nautical odyssey that traversed the Pacific Ocean and opened up the new continent of Antarctica.

'A stirring yarn, a satisfying lump of cultural history, and a thoughtful moral fable.'

The Birthday Boys by Beryl Bainbridge

This is another fictionalised version of the ill-fated Polar expedition led by Scott. Each chapter is narrated by a different member of the team. Knowing from the outset that these were the ones who died making the final journey to the South Pole made it all the more poignant. It is a beautifully written book which makes all the characters come alive.

Call of the white : eight women, one unique expedition to the South Pole by Felicity Aston.

"I was hooked after the first page, and I read it straight through in two days. Aston's writing is so good I even devoured the long list of final thanks at the end. I couldn't let the epic finish. There are lots of moments where I laughed out loud with the girls, and moments that had me in tears (although it pains me to admit it). It is such a great adventure and accomplishment, and Aston has created a beautifully crafted record of it in this book."

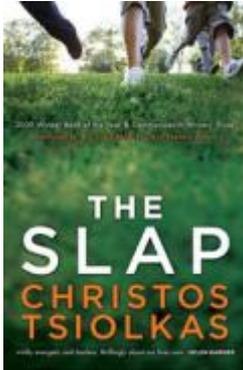
Journals : Captain Scott's last expedition by Robert Falcon Scott

This book was a very interesting read but evoked feelings of deep sadness knowing the ultimate outcome. Scott's personality comes through his writing and left me rather disillusioned, however, the bravery and forbearance of his team was incredible. The lives the dogs and horses from the start to their end was heartbreaking. All in all a tragic story but enlightening.

The Reading Passport

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Australian Books



The Slap by Christos Tsiolkas

To smack or not to smack is the question that reverberates through the interconnected lives dissected in Christos Tsiolkas' award-winning novel, now in paperback. At a suburban barbecue, a man slaps a child who is not his own. It is a single act, but the slap reverberates through the lives of everyone who witnesses it. Whose side are you on?

Jasper Jones by Craig Silvey

Late on a hot summer night in the tail end of 1965, Charlie Bucktin, a precocious and bookish boy of thirteen, is startled by an urgent knock on the window of his sleep-out. His visitor is Jasper Jones, an outcast in the regional mining town of Corrigan. Rebellious, mixed-race and solitary, Jasper is a distant figure of danger and intrigue for Charlie. So when Jasper begs for his help, Charlie eagerly steals into the night by his side, terribly afraid but desperate to impress.

Ten Pound Pom by Niall Griffiths

“Enjoyable, immensely readable, highly entertaining look at Australia, its people and their lifestyle 30 years ago, Niall Griffiths' parents took up the offer of a ten pound ticket to migrate to Australia but they only stayed 3 years. Griffiths compares his recollections of that time with the place he discovers today. Sometimes funny, sometimes moving - it made me realise that Oz may be quite a different place to the one seen on the TV/cinema screen.”

Shiralee by Darcy Niland

Everyone has their cross to bear – their swag, their shiralee – and for Macauley, walking across New South Wales in search of work, it is his young daughter who has to suffer his resentment at having her in tow. But then, he discovers that the ties that bind can be as much a comfort as a burden, and what he thought of as his Shiralee could be the one thing that will save him from himself.

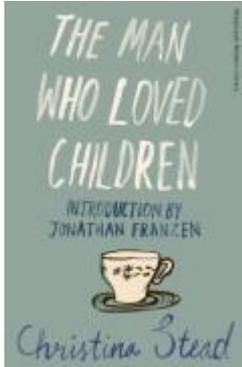
A Pom Down Under by Peter Knight.

Peter Knight spent seven weeks travelling round Australia, following the 2010 Ashes Tournament. Up the coast, across the outback and through the desert, by car, train and aeroplane, the full richness of his tour is recaptured here, punctuated by sharp accounts of Ashes combat. A Pom Down Under is one man's small picture of a very large island.

The Reading Passport

Here are some suggestions for your world trip. Bon Voyage!

Australian Books



The Man Who Loved Children by Christina Stead

Christina Stead's masterpiece about family life. Sam and Henny Pollit are a warring husband and wife, he a fully blown narcissist and she spoiled and prone to fits of despair. Their hatred, aggravated by too little money and too many children, lies at the centre of this chilling and brilliantly observed novel about relations between parents and children, husbands and wives.

True History of the Kelly Gang by Peter Carey

'I lost my own father at 12 yr. of age and know what it is to be raised on lies and silences my dear daughter you are presently too young to understand a word I write but this history is for you and will contain no single lie may I burn in Hell if I speak false.'

The Broken Shore by Peter Temple

Peter Temple's gift for compelling plots and evocative, compassionately drawn characters has earned him a reputation as the grand master of Australian crime writing

Prominent local Charles Bourgoyne is bashed and left for dead. Everything seems to point to three boys from the nearby Aboriginal community; everyone seems to want it to. But Jo Cashin is unconvinced. And as tragedy unfolds relentlessly into tragedy, he finds himself holding onto something that might be better let go.

Handling Edna : the unauthorised biography by Barry Humphries

"This is a rip-roaring yarn that has countless laugh-out loud moments, but also some surprisingly quiet interludes of genuine depth, as Humphries (acting as the "agent" to his doughty Dame) relates historical and geographical details of antipodean culture, all of which drip with a knowing and self-deprecating satire."

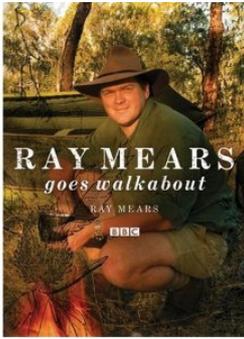
The Secret River by Kate Grenville

In 1806 William Thornhill, a man of quick temper and deep feelings, is transported from the slums of London to New South Wales for the term of his natural life. With his wife Sal and their children he arrives in a harsh land he cannot understand. But the colony can turn a convict into a free man. Eight years later Thornhill sails up the Hawkesbury to claim a hundred acres for himself.

The Reading Passport

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Australian Books



Ray Mears Goes Walkabout by Raymond Mears

Ray goes walkabout through Australia meeting the indigenous people, experiencing their culture & the wildlife around. Its about Ray's journey through the landscape and his experiences encountered there, a book on the Australian outback with just a slant toward survival methods.

Voss by Patrick White

This epic about a man's journey into the heart of the Australian desert and into his own heart and mind is a classic of modern literature. Set in nineteenth-century Australia, "Voss" is Nobel Laureate White's best-known book, a sweeping novel about a secret passion between the explorer Voss and the young orphan Laura.

The Story of Danny Dunn by Bryce Courtenay

"What a brilliant read. Bryce Courtenay does his research very well and writes about his subjects with great confidence. Before reading this book I knew very little about the War in the Southern Hemisphere with Japan and just how it affected Australia and its people. I am now educated. Danny seemed at first to be a Golden Boy, had it all but his demons affected those he loved most and in the end destroyed him. So true to life."

A Fraction of the Whole by Steve Toltz

An impossible, brilliant, restless man, Martin Dean just wanted the world to listen to him – and the trouble started when the world did. Meanwhile Terry Dean has become Australia's favourite criminal, making up for injustice on the field with this own version of justice off it.

Diamond Dove by Adrian Hylands

'Diamond Dove is a great fun read, a crime novel with a true larrikin spirit. That means it has real wit; dry, earthy and with no bullshit. Hyland quizzes the fraught, complex world of the outback with a critical eye but he also paints with rare clarity a picture of both black and white lives that is filled with compassion and affection. It's invigorating.'

Cloudstreet by Tim Winton

From separate catastrophes two rural families flee to the city and find themselves sharing a great, breathing, shuddering joint called Cloudstreet, where they begin their lives again from scratch.