



The World in So Many Words: A Country-by-Country Tour of Words That Have Shaped Our Language

Allan Metcalf

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"Biblically speaking, the first paradise was the Garden of Eden. But linguistically speaking, it was a Persian amusement park. Or, more precisely, it was the walled park of a Persian ruler or noble, observed more than two thousand years ago by a young Greek named Xenophon." Allan A. Metcalf shows us paradise and a whole lot more in his whirlwind tour of languages that have made contributions to our own. Starting in Europe, the original home of English, he takes us around the world, country by country, language by language. We see a geyser in Iceland, take a siesta in Spain, and receive justice in Italy. In Africa we feel the warm harmattan wind, visit an Egyptian oasis, and learn about mysterious voodoo. We travel to northern India, where we seek the elusive goat antelope called the serow; to icy Tibet, where the even more elusive yeti dwells unseen among the rocks; to Tahiti, where we get a tattoo; to Samoa, where we are shown how to cover it up with a lavalava. We encounter buccaneers from Brazil and Paraguay, caciques from Guyana and Surinam, bunyips from Australia, and zombies from Congo. As experienced on Metcalf's tour, the English language is more wonderful and exotic than you've ever imagined -- a truly multicultural language for a multicultural world.

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