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**'READ' list from THE TRAVEL BOOK by country:**

**Afghanistan**

Robert Byron's *The Road to Oxiana* or Eric Newby's *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush*, both all-time travel classics; Idris Shah's *Afghan Caravan* – a compendium of spellbinding Afghan tales, full of heroism, adventure and wisdom

**Albania**

*Broken April* by Albania's best-known contemporary writer, Ismail Kadare, which deals with the blood vendettas of the northern highlands before the 1939 Italian invasion. *Biografi* by Lloyd Jones is a fanciful story set in the immediate post-communist era, involving the search for Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha's alleged double

**Algeria**

*Between Sea and Sahara: An Algerian Journal* by Eugene Fromentin, Blake Robinson and Valeria Orlando, a mix of travel writing and history; or *Nedjma* by the Algerian writer Kateb Yacine, an autobiographical account of childhood, love and Algerian history

**Andorra**

*Andorra* by Peter Cameron, a darkly comic novel set in a fictitious Andorran mountain town. *Approach to the History of Andorra* by Lídia Armengol Vila is a solid work published by the Institut d'Estudis Andorrans.

**Angola**

*Angola Beloved* by T Ernest Wilson, the story of a pioneering Christian missionary's struggle to bring the gospel to an Angola steeped in witchcraft

**Anguilla**

*Green Cane and Juicy Flotsam: Short Stories* by Caribbean Women, or check out the island's history in Donald E Westlake's *Under an English Heaven*

**Antarctica**

Ernest Shackleton's *Aurora Australis*, the only book ever published in Antarctica, and a personal account of Shackleton's 1907-09 *Nimrod* expedition; Nikki Gemmell's *Shiver*, the story of a young journalist who finds love and tragedy on an Antarctic journey

**Antigua & Barbuda**

Jamaica Kincaid's novel *Annie John*, which recounts growing up in Antigua. Desmond Nicholson, president of the Antigua historical society, has published several works on the country's history, including *Antigua, Barbuda and Redonda: A Historical Sketch*

**Argentina**

Patricia Sagastizabal's *A Secret for Julia*, which won Argentina's equivalent to the Pulitzer Prize in 2000. For a humorous account of Buenos Aires life, pick up Miranda France's *Bad Times in Buenos Aires*

**Armenia**

*The Crossing Place* – a thought-provoking journey through the Armenian diaspora

**Aruba & Netherlands Antilles**

*Nights in Aruba* by Andrew Holleran, which tells the story of a gay man who spends his early years on Aruba before heading to the USA

**Australia**

Remembering Babylon by David Malouf, a compelling insight into the social dynamics of early-colonial Australia; Bruce Chatwin's controversial Songlines for a look at the Aboriginal lay of the land

**Austria**

The Left-Handed Woman by Peter Handke; the Nibelungenlied, an epic poem of passion, faithfulness and revenge in the Burgundian court at Worms; or Wittgenstein's Tractatus, a seminal book in the field of linguistic philosophy

**Azerbaijan**

Mehmed bin Suleyman Fuzuli's sensitive rendition of the classic Leyli and Majnun, which influenced many Azeri writers right up to the 19th century

**Bahamas**

Brian Antoni's Paradise Overdose, about the 1980s drug- and sex-addled Bahamian high-life

**Bahrain**

Geoffrey Bibby's Looking for Dilmun, an archaeologist's account of early excavations on Bahrain. It also paints a fascinating picture of life there in the 1950s and 1960s.

**Bangladesh**

Gitanjali by Rabindranath Tagore, the great Bengali poet and winner of the 1913 Nobel Prize for Literature; James J. Novak's Bangladesh: Reflections on the Water, a good all-round introduction to the country

**Barbados**

The acclaimed novel The Castle of My Skin by Bajan author George Lamming, in which he tells what it was like growing up black in colonial Barbados

**Belarus**

Haradsky's Two Souls, a poignant expression of the repressed state of Belarus after WWI

**Belgium**

A Tall Man in a Low Land by Englishman Harry Pearson for a humorous look at the country; Hugo Claus' The Sorrow of Belgium – wartime Belgium through the eyes of a Flemish adolescent

**Belize**

Belizious Cuisine, a collection of 200 dishes that demonstrate the richness of Belize's multicultural past

**Benin**

Bruce Chatwin's The Viceroy of Ouidah, which tells the story of a Brazilian trader stranded on the 'Slave Coast' in the 17th century

**Bermuda**

Bermuda's Story by Terry Tucker, the island's most highly regarded historian

**Bhutan**

A Baby in a Backpack to Bhutan, an engaging, amusing adventure by Bunty Avieson, who quit her job and travelled with her newborn baby to Bhutan

**Bolivia**

The Fat Man from La Paz: Contemporary Fiction from Bolivia, a collection of 20 short stories edited by Rosario Santos. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's memorable The Lost World was inspired by tales of the northeastern Bolivian plateaux.

**Bosnia & Hercegovina**

Misha Glenny's The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War, a British journalist's first-hand account of the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia

**Botswana**

Bayeyi & Hambukushu: Tales from the Okavango (edited by Thomas J Larson), a compilation of oral poetry and stories from the Okavango Panhandle region; or Alexander McCall Smith's popular mystery series, The No 1 Ladies' Detective Agency

**Brazil**

The Alchemist by novelist Paulo Coelho, or The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization by Gilberto Freyre, the most famous book on Brazil's colonial past

**Brunei**

Time and the River by Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, penned by the sultan's youngest brother

**Bulgaria**

Bulgarian Rhapsody: The Best of Balkan Cuisine by Linda J. Forristal – an informative cookbook with delicious recipes and snippets of Bulgarian culture and history

**Burkina Faso**

The Maxims, Thoughts and Riddles of the Mossi by Dim-Dolobson Ouedraogo, which offers a glimpse of Burkina Faso barely 30 years after the French colonised it

**Burundi**

Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah's Burundi on the Brink 1993–95, a heart-rending account by the former UN ambassador about his efforts to bring peace

**Cambodia**

The River of Time, by John Swain – a journalistic memoir of the Khmer Rouge and the tragedy of people who find themselves in situations beyond their control

**Cameroon**

The Poor Christ of Bomb, Mongo Beti's cynical recounting of the failure of a missionary to convert the people of a small village, or Kenjo Jumbani's novel The White Man of God, which deals with the country's colonial experience

**Canada**

Margaret Atwood's Booker Prize-winning Blind Assassin, and Michael Ondaatje's In the Skin of a Lion, both set in 1930s Canada

**Cape Verde**

Poet Jorge Barbosa's Arquipélago, which is laden with melancholic reflections on the sea, and longings for liberation

**Cayman Islands**

The Cayman Islands: The Beach and Beyond by Martha K Smith – excellent for those who think being a beach bunny is boring

**Central African Republic**

The Central African Republic: The Continent's Hidden Heart, a social history by Thomas E O'Toole

**Chad**

Chad: A Nation in Search of Its Future by Mario J Azevedo and Emmanuel U Nnadozie, presenting an economic, political and social view of the nation

**Chile & Easter Island**

Isabel Allende's House of the Spirits, the story of a Chilean family depicted with modern-day realism and a dose of the supernatural

**China**

The Search for Modern China by Jonathan D Spence – probably the most readable attempt to encompass Chinese modern history in a single volume; the novels of Pearl S Buck, including The Good Earth and Imperial Woman

**Colombia**

One Hundred Years of Solitude by Nobel prize winner Gabriel García Márquez, or anything by José Asunción Silva, perhaps the country's best poet

**Comoros & Mayotte**

The Comoros Islands: Struggle Against Dependency in the Indian Ocean, by Malyn Newitt, which outlines the turbulent recent history of the region

**Congo, Democratic Republic of (ZAÏRE)**

Read about Mobutu's looting as a form of government in Michaela Wrong's In The Footsteps of Mr Kurtz; or The Catastrophist by Ronan Bennett, a novel built around Patrice Lumumba, the charismatic leader of the fight for independence from Belgium

**Congo, Republic of**

Congo Journey by naturalist Redmond O'Hanlon, who explores the swamplands of the Congo with descriptive style

**Cook Islands**

Island to Oneself, the account of hermit Tom Neale, who lived on Suvarrow Atolls

**Costa Rica**

Costa Rica: A Traveler's Literary Companion, 26 short stories that capture the soul of the county

**Côte d'Ivoire**

Bernard Dadié's Climbié, an autobiographical account of his childhood, or Maurice Bandaman's novel Le Fils de la Femme Mâle

**Croatia**

Rebecca West's Black Lamb and Grey Falcon, a classic account of a 1930s trip through the region; Slavenka Drakulic's Café Europa, an insightful series of essays on Croatia and Eastern Europe

**Cuba**

Trading with the Enemy: A Yankee Travels Through Castro's Cuba by Tom Miller – it's a rich feast of Cuban lore, and a great travel book about Cuba

**Cyprus**

Journey Into Cyprus by Colin Thubron, a classic Cyprus travelogue

**Czech Republic**

Milan Kundera's The Book of Laughter and Forgetting, in which the absurdity of the communist era is deftly woven with themes of love, memory and music; or Bruce Chatwin's Utz, a novella about porcelain and alchemy set in Prague's Jewish quarter

**Denmark**

Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow by Peter Høeg, a suspense set in Copenhagen; or for a change of pace, Kierkegaard's philosophical works or Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales

**Djibouti**

Khamsine, a collection of lyrical, sometimes semi-erotic, poems by Djiboutian poet William JF Syad

**Dominica**

Voyage in the Dark by Dominica's most celebrated author, Jean Rhys, or Dominica's other noted novelist, Phyllis Shand Allfrey, who is best known for The Orchid House

**Dominican Republic**

Julia Alvarez's In the Time of the Butterflies, the lyrical tale of 1960s political martyrs, the Mirabal sisters; or Feast of the Goat by Mario Vargas Llosa, about the Trujillo regime

**East Timor**

Timothy Mo's The Redundancy of Courage, which uses the fictional country of Danu to depict East Timor's struggle during the Indonesian occupation. Luis Cardoso's Crossing: A Story of East Timor is a memoir of growing up in East Timor under Portuguese and Indonesian rule

### **Ecuador & the Galápagos Islands**

Jorge Icaza's *Huaspungo (The Villagers)*, a naturalistic tale of the miserable conditions experienced on Andean haciendas in the early 20th century. Galápagos by Kurt Vonnegut is a comic, cautionary, evolutionary tale

### **Egypt**

Max Rodenbeck's *Cairo: The City Victorious*, a fascinating history and first-person travelogue. For true insight into Egyptian culture, nothing tops Naguib Mahfouz's epic and sometimes ponderous *The Cairo Trilogy*

### **El Salvador**

*Cuentos de Barro (Tales of Mud)* by Salarrué (one of El Salvador's most famous writers); the poetry of Manlio Argueta and Francisco Rodriguez

### **England**

*The English* by Jeremy Paxman, an exploration of the English psyche by one of the country's toughest TV interviewers

### **Equatorial Guinea**

Mary Kingsley's 1897 classic *Travels in West Africa*, which details her trip spent slogging through the rainforest to gather specimens for a natural history museum

### **Eritrea**

*Eritrea at a Glance*, edited by Mary Houdek and Leonardo Oriolo, for a fantastic introduction to the country, particularly the capital Asmara. For a gripping yarn of the struggle for independence read *Even the Stones Are Burning* by Roy Pateman

### **Estonia**

anything by Lydia Koidula – Estonia's first lady of poetry; or Jaan Kross's *The Czar's Madman*

### **Ethiopia**

Graham Hancock's *The Sign and the Seal*, a fascinating historical detective story which traces the Ark of the Covenant to Ethiopia, while providing an overview of the country's history and culture

### **Falkland Islands**

*The Battle for the Falklands*, a cool assessment of the politics and strategy of the 1982 war by Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins

### **Fiji**

Fiji's most popular coffee-table book, *Children of the Sun*, with photos by Glen Craig and poetry by Bryan McDonald

### **Finland**

Anything by Aleksis Kivi, who founded modern Finnish literature with *Seven Brothers*, a story of brothers who try to escape civilisation in favour of the forest

### **France**

Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, a 19th-century classic about rural life and deluded passions

### **French Guiana**

Henri Charrière's classic *Papillon* for a readable first-person account of the infamous penal colony on Devil's Island

### **Gabon**

*African Silences*, by Peter Matthiessen, which focuses on his journeys through Gabon and other parts of West Africa

### **Gambia**

*Chaff on the Wind* by Gambian author Ebou Dibba, which follows the fortunes of two rural boys who come to work in the city

**Georgia**

Please Don't Call It Soviet Georgia by Mary Russel, an entertaining travelogue describing the period of upheaval leading to independence

**Germany**

Goethe's Faust, which tells of the classic deal with the devil, and Nobel prize-winning author Günther Grass's novel The Tin Drum, which caused an uproar in Germany in the 1950s because of its depiction of the Nazis

**Ghana**

Asante: The Making of a Nation by Nana Otamakuro Adubofour provides an insight into Ashanti history and culture

**Greece**

Zorba the Greek by Nikos Kazantzakis – a tale about living life to the fullest by Greece's most celebrated contemporary author; Captain Corelli's Mandolin by Louis de Bernières – a captivating WW II-era love story set on Kefallonia

**Greenland**

The entertaining account of the country in Last Places – A Journey in the North, by Lawrence Millman

**Grenada**

Native Grenadian Jean Buffong's Under the Silk Cotton Tree: A Novel (Emerging Voices), a portrait of her Grenadian girlhood, religion and culture

**Guadeloupe**

Anabase by local poet Alexis Léger (translated by TS Eliot); The Tree of Life by Maryse Condé, centring around the life of a Guadeloupean family

**Guam & Northern Marianas**

Micronesia: Winds of Change, spanning the history from 1521 to 1951 with accounts of early explorers, missionaries and locals

**Guatemala**

Hombres De Maíz, by Miguel Ángel Asturias, the Nobel Prize-winning author and long-time exile who combines Mayan mysticism and social consciousness to deliver an indictment of dictatorial rule

**Guinea**

L'Enfant Noir by Guinean writer Camara Laye, full of fascinating insights into traditional daily life

**Guinea-Bissau**

Susan Lowerre's Under the Neem Tree, which tells a vivid story of a Peace Corps volunteer's experiences in the region

**Guyana**

The country's best known work of literature, ER Braithwaite's To Sir With Love; or Ninety-Two Days which Evelyn Waugh wheezed his way through Guyana's rugged interior to write

**Haiti**

Beast of the Haitian Hills by Pierre Marcelin and Philippe Thoby Marcelin, a novel about life in the Haitian countryside; the historical novel All Souls' Rising by Madison Smartt Bell

**Honduras**

El Gran Hotel by Guillermo Yuscarán (one of Honduras' most celebrated writers) or The Soccer War by Ryszard Kapuscinski, which is about the 100-hour war between Honduras and El Salvador known as the Guerra de Fútbol (the Football War)

**Hong Kong**

An Insular Possession by Timothy Mo – a novel set in pre-colonial Hong Kong; Fragrant Harbour by John Lanchester – set in the more recent past

## **Hungary**

Fateless, by Imre Kertész, an autobiographical novel about the author's experiences in concentration camps in WWII; Eclipse of the Crescent Moon, by Géza Gárdonyi, a tale set in the 16th century during the Turkish siege

## **Iceland**

Independent People by Halldór Laxness, one of half a dozen brilliant novels by the Nobel Prize winner, or the comic drama Angels of the Universe, by Einar Már Gudmundsson

## **India**

Jawaharlal Nehru's Discovery of India, tales from the Vedic era to WWII, or V S Naipaul's India: A Million Mutinies Now, a Trinidadian's take on India's tribulations and triumphs

## **Indonesia**

Pramoedya Ananta Toer's The Fugitive, by the leader of a failed nationalist revolt against Japanese occupation during WWII. Ayu Utami's Saman is a story of political repression, extramarital sex and religious intolerance.

## **Iran**

Moonlight on the Avenue of Faith by Gina Nahai – magic realism set amongst the Jewish community of Tehran; Persian Pilgrimages by Afshin Molavi, an expat Iranian journalist who explores both history and current issues, by speaking to locals

## **Ireland**

McCarthy's Bar, a terrifically funny account of the author's quest to explore his cultural heritage

## **Israel**

The meditations of Israeli novelist, Amoz Oz, on his country and culture

## **Italy**

Umberto Eco's masterful The Name of the Rose, a medieval whodunit with a difference. Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's The Leopard charts the demise of Sicilian royalty and rise of Italian nationhood

## **Jamaica**

Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea, a sultry tale of post-emancipation Jamaica

## **Japan**

Inside Japan by Peter Tasker, a fascinating foray into Japanese culture, society and the economy. Kitchen by Banana Yoshimoto is a hauntingly beautiful story set in contemporary Tokyo that shows a side of Japan not often seen.

## **Jordan**

Seven Pillars of Wisdom by TE Lawrence – it's Lawrence of Arabia straight from the camel's mouth

## **Kazakhstan**

The Silk Road: A History by Irene Frank and David Brownstone, a richly illustrated and mapped history of the legendary caravan routes

## **Kenya**

Isak Dinesen's epic settler account, Out of Africa

## **Kiribati**

Gavin Bell's In Search of Tusitala: Travels in the Pacific after Robert Louis Stevenson, which follows Robert Louis Stevenson through Kiribati

## **Korea, North**

Read widely – there's not a lot of factual material in print or on the web, and people are rarely ambivalent about North Korea

**Korea, South**

Yi Sang's *Wings*, an allegory of adultery, colonialism and the absurdity of life; Rhie Won-Bok's *Korea Unmasked*, which details Korean history, culture and sociology

**Kuwait**

Thomas Friedman's *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, an excellent read for anyone wishing to more fully understand the causes and effects of the region's strife

**Kyrgyzstan**

Chinghiz Aitmatov's novel *Djamila*, which tells of Kyrgyz life and culture

**Laos**

*Bamboo Palace* by Christopher Kremmer – part travelogue, part mystery, it chronicles the lost dynasty of Laos

**Latvia**

Latvia's national epic, *Lacplesis (The Bear Slayer)*, written by Andrejs Pumpurs in the mid-19th century and based on traditional Latvian folk stories

**Lebanon**

William Dalrymple's *From the Holy Mountain*, a funny, thought-provoking account of the author's journey in the footsteps of a 6th-century monk

**Lesotho**

*Stories By and About Women in Lesotho*, edited by K Limakatso Kendall, containing tales told orally by Southern Sotho women and providing insights into women's thoughts and decision-making processes in Lesotho

**Liberia**

*Liberia: Portrait of a Failed State* by John-Peter Pham, a sensitive, factual account of African politics and Western intervention

**Libya**

Libyan-born and American-raised Khaled Mattawa's *Ismailia Eclipse*, poetry that speaks across both cultural and political borders

**Liechtenstein**

*Secrets of the Seven Smallest States of Europe: Andorra, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, San Marino and Vatican City* by Thomas Ecchardt, which outs Liechtenstein from its historical closet

**Lithuania**

Antanas Skma's semi-autobiographical novel *Balta drobule*, which pioneered the use of stream of consciousness in Lithuanian literature

**Luxembourg**

*How to Remain What You Are*, a humorous look at Luxembourg ways by George Müller, a local psychologist and writer

**Macau**

Austin Coates' *City of Broken Promises* – a fictionalised account of the life of 18th-century Macanese trader Martha Merop

**Macedonia**

*Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* by Rebecca West, a between-the-wars Balkan travelogue

**Madagascar**

*Madagascar, Island of the Ancestors* by John Mack, a superb ethnographic overview of Malagasy culture

**Malawi**

Malawian poet Steve Chimombo's highly acclaimed *The Rainmaker*, or Paul Theroux's *Jungle Lovers*, a light and humorous take on 1960s Malawi culture and politics



**Malaysia**

Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* – adventure on the South China Seas and the real-life story of Raja Brooke of Sarawak; *The Return* by KS Maniam – contemporary Malaysian fiction exploring the Indian Malaysian experience

**Maldives**

*Mysticism in the Maldives*, which documents Maldivian myths and stories

**Mali**

*The Unveiling of Timbuctoo: The Astounding Adventures of Caillie* by Gailbraith Welch, an account of the first Western explorer to both reach and return from Timbuktu

**Malta**

Francis Ebejer's *For Rozina... A Husband*, based on Maltese village life and comprising a collection of short stories; *The Kappilan of Malta* by Nicolas Monserrat tells of a priest's experiences during WWII

**Marshall Islands**

*Man This Reef* by Gerald Knight – translated legends of an elderly Marshallese storyteller

**Martinique**

*The Collected Poetry of Aimé Césaire*, the force behind the Black Pride phenomenon known as *négritude*; *Texaco* by Patrick Chamoiseau and *Malemort* by Edouard Glissant are also excellent reads

**Mauritania**

Michael Asher's recounting of the first west-to-east camel crossing of the Sahara in *Impossible Journey: Two Against the Sahara*

**Mauritius**

The romantic novel *Paul et Virginie* by Bernardin de St Pierre, or *Petrusmok* by well-known author Malcolm de Chazal

**Mexico**

Eyewitness accounts of the Spanish arrival in the 'new world' such as *History of the Conquest of New Spain* by Bernal Díaz del Castillo; *The Labyrinth of Solitude* by Octavio Paz is a poetic exploration of Mexican myths and identity

**Micronesia, Federated States of**

*Islands Islands: A Special Good*, by Bernadette V Wehrly – a collection of poems, songs and legends

**Moldova**

Tony Hawkes' travelogue *Playing the Moldovans at Tennis*, the product of an unlikely bet involving the Moldovan football team; for a deeper cultural perspective read Charles King's *The Moldovans: Romania, Russia and the Politics of Culture*

**Monaco**

Peter Mayle's *Anything Considered*, a novel about Monaco featuring monks, crime and truffles; *The Bridesmaids: Grace Kelly and six intimate friends*, in which Judith Balaban Quine persuades Grace's best buddies to spill the beans

**Mongolia**

*The Secret History of the Mongols*, recording the life and deeds of Genghis Khan

**Morocco**

*Year of the Elephant* by Leila Abouzeid, or Leonora Peet's *Women of Marrakesh*, in which Peet gets about as close as a non-Muslim can to the lives of local women

**Mozambique**

*Dumba-Nengue – Histórias trágicas do Banditismo* by politician, journalist and environmentalist Lina Magaia

**Myanmar**

Freedom from Fear & Other Writings – essays by and about Aung San Suu Kyi; George Orwell's Burmese Days – the classic novel of British colonialism; Paul Theroux's The Great Railway Bazaar – a funny account of the author's train trip through 1970s Burma

**Namibia**

Born of the Sun, the largely autobiographical first novel by local author Joseph Diescho

**Nauru**

Nauru: Phosphate and Political Progress by Nancy Viviani, an authoritative history of the mining that has crippled the island

**Nepal**

Tenzing and the Sherpas of Everest by Judy and Tashi Tenzing, a compelling tale about Nepal's national hero

**Netherlands**

The Diary of Anne Frank, a moving journal that describes her life in hiding in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam; The Fall by Albert Camus, an existential monologue that uses Amsterdam's canal system as an analogy for the rings of Hell

**New Caledonia**

Jean-Marie Tjibao's Kanaké – the Melanesian Way, an insight into Kanak culture featuring colour photographs, poems and legends

**New Zealand**

Witi Ihimaera's The Whale Rider – a moving insight into the spirituality, tradition, and culture of the Maori people

**Nicaragua**

Rubén Darío's Stories and Poems – masterpieces by the founder of Spanish modernism; Salman Rushdie's The Jaguar Smile: A Nicaraguan Journey – revealing personal experiences of a visit

**Niger**

In Sorcery's Shadow: A Memoir of Apprenticeship Among the Songhay of Niger by Paul Stoller – a very readable, often humorous, and detailed account of his fieldwork among the Songhay of Niger

**Nigeria**

Anything by Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka, internationally acclaimed writer Chinua Achebe or Ben Okri, a crowd-pulling favourite on the Western literary circuit

**Norway**

A Doll's House by quintessential Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen, or Jostein Gaarder's bestseller Sophie's World

**Oman**

Phillip Ward's Travels in Oman: On the track of the Early Explorer, a combination of modern travelogue and historical traveller accounts

**Pakistan**

Pakistan: The Eye of the Storm, by former BBC correspondent Owen Bennett-Jones; Salman Rushdie's Shame, whose characters are a metaphor for Pakistan

**Palau**

Arnold H Leibowitz's Embattled Island: Palau's Struggle for Independence, a US-friendly take on Palau's postwar political history

**Palestine**

Gaza: Legacy of an Occupation by Dick Doughty and Mohammed El-Aydi, which gives an emotive, gritty view of Palestinian life in the Strip. And of course, the Bible is an informative travelogue

**Panama**

When New Flowers Bloomed, a collection of stories by women writers from Panama and Costa Rica. Tekkin' a Waalk by Peter Ford includes a stroll along Panama's Caribbean coast.

**Papua New Guinea**

Biologist Tim Flannery's Throwim Way Leg, an account of his many field trips into the interior's remotest parts in search of tree-kangaroos

**Paraguay**

Augusto Roa Bastos' Son of Man, which ties together several episodes of Paraguayan history, or for travel literature try At the Tomb of the Inflatable Pig: Travels Through Paraguay by John Gimlette

**Peru**

The Bridge of San Luis Rey, by Thornton Wilder, an examination of 18th-century colonial Peru

**Philippines**

Great Philippine Jungle Energy Cafe, a magical novel by the multi-award-winning Alfred A Yuson, or Pico Iyer's bitter-sweet insights in the Philippines chapter of his travelogue Video Nights in Kathmandu

**Pitcairn Islands**

Fragile Paradise by Glynn Christian (Fletcher's great-great-great-great-grandson), an investigation of the mutiny and the mutineers' fate on Pitcairn

**Poland**

The Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland by Norman Davies, a readable, fascinating insight into the development of the nation

**Portugal**

Fernando Pessoa & Co: Selected Poems by Fernando Pessoa, a collection of work by Portugal's greatest poet. Nobel Prize winner José Saramago's O Evangelho segundo Jesus Cristo (The Gospel According to Jesus Christ) is a unique reinterpretation of the biblical gospels.

**Puerto Rico**

Rosario Ferre's revisionist stories in Sweet Diamond Dust. Christina Duffy Burnett's Foreign in a Domestic Sense is an examination of American imperialism.

**Qatar**

Arabian Time Machine: Self-Portrait of an Oil State by Helga Graham, a collection of interviews with Qataris about their lives, culture and traditions

**Réunion**

Catherine Lavaux's La Réunion: Du Battant des Lames au Sommet des Montagnes

**Romania**

Norman Manea's The Hooligan's Return: A Memoir, relating the return of this accomplished author to his homeland in the late 1990s

**Russian Federation**

Tolstoy's War and Peace, if you're feeling brave; otherwise have a go at Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment

**Rwanda**

We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families by Phillip Gourevitch, a brilliant account of the killings and how the international community failed Rwanda in 1994 and beyond

**Saint Kitts & Nevis**

Historic Basseterre: The Story of its Growth by Sir Probyn Inniss recounts the growth of the capital. Read Sir Fred Phillips' memoirs Caribbean Life and Culture: A Citizen Reflects for a more personal account.

**Saint Lucia**

Derek Walcott's Collected Poems, 1948-1984, an anthology by St Lucia's favourite son and Nobel prize winner

**Saint Vincent & the Grenadines**

The history of St Vincent's Black Caribs in Wild Majesty: Encounters with Caribs from Columbus to the Present Day by Peter Hulme and Neil Whitehead

**Samoa**

Where We Once Belonged by Sia Figiel, a local author's first novel about dispossession in modern Samoa

**San Marino**

Secrets of the Seven Smallest States of Europe: Andorra, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, San Marino and Vatican City by Thomas Ecchardt

**São Tomé & Príncipe**

Former Portuguese Colonies by Herb Boyd, which includes an historical overview of São Tomé and Príncipe

**Saudi Arabia**

Sandstorms, Days and Nights in Arabia, Peter Theroux's memoir of the Middle East, or the delightful coffee-table book The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**Scotland**

Anything by Robert Burns, or Trainspotting by Irvine Welsh, for an incomparable but often incomprehensible insight into Scotland

**Senegal**

God's Bits of Wood by Senegalese writer Sembene Ousmane, the story of adversity faced by strikers on the Dakar-Niger train line in the 1940s

**Serbia & Montenegro**

Tim Judah's The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia, a comprehensive and thoroughly readable account of Serbia's part in Yugoslavia's demise. Ivo Andric's novel Bridge on the Drina foresaw the region's disasters of the 1990s

**Seychelles**

Aldabra Alone by Tony Beamish, which looks at life among the giant tortoises during an expedition to the Aldabra group

**Sierra Leone**

Blood Diamonds: Tracing the Deadly Path of the World's Most Precious Stones by Greg Campbell

**Singapore**

Foreign Bodies and Mammon Inc by Hwee Hwee Tan – two modern morality tales about Singaporean youth. Suchen Christine Lim's Fistful of Colours captures the tensions between modern and traditional Singapore

**Slovakia**

The brilliant village tales of Bozena Slancikova and the poetry of Ivan Krasko

**Slovenia**

Questions about Slovenia by Matja\_ Chvatal – this explains the differences between Slovenia, Slovakia and Slavonia, describes what kolone (pig-slaughters) are, and pinpoints the things that make Slovenes laugh.

**Solomon Islands**

Ples Bilong lumi – The Solomon Islands, the Past Four Thousand Years by Sam Alasia et al. Lightning Meets the West Wind – The Malaita Massacre by Keesing & Corris relates the story of a district officer's killing by Kaiwo tribesmen in 1927.

**Somalia**

Aman: The Story of a Somali Girl by Janice Boddy and Virginia Lee Barnes, a first-person account of the story of a Somalian girl's life

**South Africa**

Nelson Mandela's autobiography, Long Walk to Freedom. A truly compelling book, and a compulsory read of the epic life story of the man who won freedom for his people

**Spain**

The 17th-century novel Don Quijote de la Mancha by Miguel de Cervantes, or For Whom the Bell Tolls, a terse tale of civil war by Ernest Hemingway

**Sri Lanka**

Michael Ondaatje's Running in the Family, a humorous account of returning to Sri Lanka after growing up there in the 1940s and '50s

**Sudan**

Tayeb Salih's Season of Migration to the North, a compelling tale of a Sudanese man torn between the West and his homeland; or Emma's War by Deborah Scroggins, the true and moving story of a British aid-worker who married a Sudanese warlord

**Suriname**

Tales of a Shaman's Apprentice by Mark Plotkin, or Suriname: Politics, Economics & Society by Henk E Chin and Hans Buddingh

**Swaziland**

The Kingdom of Swaziland by D Hugh Gillis, a history of the kingdom

**Sweden**

Charlotte Rosen Svensson's Culture shock! Sweden: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette for an accurate guide to Swedish cultural behaviour

**Switzerland**

Johanna Spyri's Heidi – the classic children's story of an orphan girl living in the Swiss Alps, and Anita Brookner's Hotel du Lac – a novel centred on a group of out-of-season hotel guests around Lake Geneva

**Syria**

Agatha Christie's Come Tell Me How You Live – a light-hearted picture of archaeology and life in the desert in the mid-20th century

**Tahiti & French Polynesia**

The Marriage of Loti, by Pierre Loti, a romance that reinforced the romantic myth of Tahiti.

**Taiwan**

Harmony in Conflict by Richard Hartzell, an often-recommended primer for Westerners thinking about living in Taiwan

**Tajikistan**

Works by Tajikistan's most popular living writer, Taimur Zulfikarov, or Kim by Rudyard Kipling – the story of the Raj during the 19th-century cold war between Russia and Britain in which the region became embroiled

**Tanzania**

Emily Said-Ruete's Memoirs of an Arabian Princess – an autobiographical glimpse into the life of a Zanzibari princess who eloped to Europe

**Thailand**

Chart Kobjitti's Pan Ma Ba (Mad Dog & Co) – an account of Thailand's farang (foreigner) scene. Stir-fry up a storm with David Thompson's sumptuous Thai Food.

**Tibet**

Mary Craig's *Tears of Blood: A Cry for Tibet*, a riveting account of Tibet since the Chinese takeover; or Heinrich Harrer's *Seven Years in Tibet*, an engaging account of Harrer's sojourn in Tibet during the mid-20th century

**Togo**

the autobiography *An African in Greenland* by Tété-Michel Kpomassie, who was raised in a traditional Togolese family

**Tonga**

Tonga Islands: *William Mariner's Account* by Dr John Martin, published in 1817 and still one of the best books on pre-Christian Tonga

**Trinidad & Tobago**

*A House for Mr Biswas* by VS Naipaul – dig deep into the country's multi-ethnic culture by reading this vivid portrait of life as an East Indian in Trinidad

**Tunisia**

Mustapha Tlili's novel *Lion Mountain, or Pillar of Salt* by Albert Memmi

**Turkey**

Irfan Orga's *Portrait of a Turkish Family*, which tells of a family struggling to survive the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the birth of the Turkish Republic

**Turkmenistan**

Works by Turkmen poet Magtymguly Feraghy. *Sacred Horses: The Life of a Turkmen Cowboy* by Jonathon Maslow is a good, if abrasive, account of this naturalist's visits to the Karakum desert

**Turks & Caicos**

J Dennis Harris's *A Summer on the Borders of the Caribbean Sea*, a classic 19th-century travelogue. *Water and Light* by Stephen Harrigan is a splendid memoir by a Texan about diving off Grand Turk.

**Tuvalu**

*The People's Lawyer* by Philip Ells – an amusing and insightful account of a young Voluntary Service Overseas lawyer's spell in Tuvalu, or *The Happy Isles of Oceania – Paddling the Pacific*, by the notorious Paul Theroux

**Uganda**

*The Last King of Scotland* by Giles Foden, a page-turner chronicling the experience of Idi Amin's personal doctor-turned-confidant; or *The Abyssinian Chronicles* by Ugandan Moses Isegawa, a coming of age story of a boy and of a country during Idi Amin's dark reign and its chaotic aftermath

**Ukraine**

*Everything Is Illuminated* by Jonathan Safran Foer which recounts this American author's journey to find his family in the Ukraine

**United Arab Emirates**

*Arabic Short Stories*, translated by Denys Johnson-Davies, an excellent primer with tales from all over the Middle East

**United States of America**

Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, the classic Beat Generation paean to restless roadtripping; Don DeLillo's *Underworld*, an ambitious and broad-ranging novel of the Cold War and American culture

**Uruguay**

Juan Carlos Onetti's *Tierra de Nadie (No Man's Land)*

**Uzbekistan**

Tom Bissell's *Chasing the Sea* – a journey to the Aral Sea and an insightful look at modern Uzbekistan, or *The Ruba'iyat of Omar Khayyam* – penned by a one-time resident of Samarkand

**Vanuatu**

Jeremy McClancy's *To Kill a Bird with Two Stones* – an exceptional history of Vanuatu right up to its independence in 1980

**Vatican City**

Robert J Hutchinson's *When in Rome: A Journal of Life in Vatican City* for an in-depth look at Vatican nitty gritty. Thomas J Reese's *Inside the Vatican: The Politics and Organization of the Catholic Church*; *The Sistine Chapel* by Fabrizio Mancinelli is an illustrated guide charting the history of the chapel's great artworks.

**Venezuela**

Doña Bárbara by internationally renowned author Rómulo Gallegos

**Vietnam**

*The Sorrow of War* by Vietnamese writer Bao Ninh. Flogged on every street corner of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, this cynical take on the Vietnam War won a literature prize in Vietnam in 1993.

**Virgin Islands**

Martha Gellhorn's *Travels with Myself and Another*, observing the changes between her two visits in 1942 and 1977 to the British Virgin Islands

**Wales**

Dannie Abse's *Journals from the Antheap*, a humorous account of his trips through Wales or the novel *Work, Sex and Rugby* by Lewis Davies

**Yemen**

Tim Mackintosh-Smith's *Yemen, Travels in Dictionary Land* – wry observations of Yemeni life from a long-time San'a resident

**Zambia**

The collection of home-grown short stories in *A Point of No Return* by Fawanyanga Mulikita or writer-politician Dominic Mulaisho's *The Tongue of the Dumb* and *The Smoke That Thunders*

**Zimbabwe**

Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*, a critique of race relations in Rhodesia