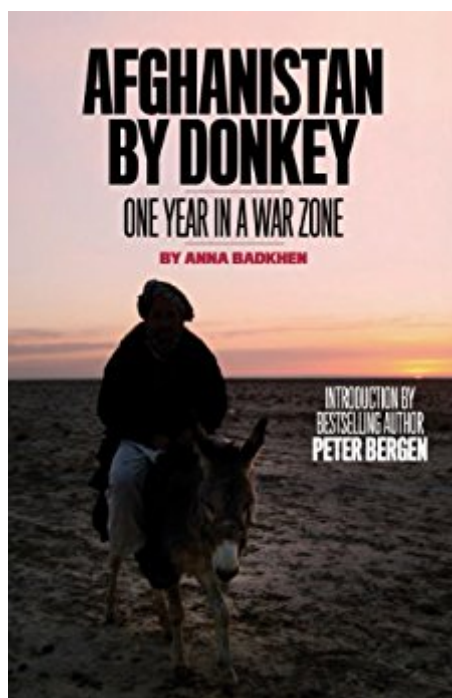


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Afghanistan By Donkey: A Year In A War Zone



Synopsis

Want to understand the disaster that is the war in Afghanistan? Anna Badkhen's extraordinary account of a year in Northern Afghanistan is a travel guide to a conflict that has raged for the last decade, with little end in sight. Badkhen, a courageous war correspondent, decided to embed not with American troops but with the Afghan people in 2011. Throughout the year, she returns again and again to the country, traveling by foot, by taxi – and even by donkey – to the remote villages and hamlets of the Afghan North, reporting as the Taliban take over large swaths of territory and also on the unimaginable daily hardships of life in a place where even such basics as water, electricity, a doctor, and a working school are impossible luxuries. It's a place so remote that even the death of Osama bin Laden barely registers, where war is taken as a fact of life, along with the rituals of mourning and celebration that Badkhen is allowed to witness up close. As bestselling author Peter Bergen says in the accompanying introduction to the ebook, a special collaboration of Foreign Policy magazine and the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, it is "a bleak tale told by an expert storyteller." This is the story of her year, a year in the life of a war that will not die.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is an astonishingly fine piece of reporting, about the war as seen in the isolated villages of northern Afghanistan. The author has a gift for language like no other journalist I have ever read--well, perhaps the young Hemingway. The people and the landscape rise from the page in front of my eyes. It's a short book, an easy read, but one you will never forget. It's based on her dispatches, mostly written in 2011, so there is duplication, but so well phrased that it never becomes tiresome. Blue skies! -- Dan Ford

Our son served in Iraq and Afghanistan as EOD, consequently I spent many hours learning about the places, but rarely felt as if the information was what I could relate to with real emotion. It was Anna's journalistic eye and elegant prose that finally put me "in country", with a jolt! I highly recommend this book. Perhaps I still haven't figured out why our country is there, people have been trashing the place for 2800 years now, but it brings a disturbing yet important perspective on the difficulties of the peoples of Afghanistan. It is piercing, it is puzzling, maddening even. There's even a strong lurking suspicion that the western world had better consider our own ethics, morals and judgments lest we deteriorate further and further.

A rather short book that felt more like a series of columns, with quite a few facts being mentioned repeatedly (NATO money doesn't make it to little villages in Northern Afghanistan, got it). The material was compelling but also heartbreaking and more than a little depressing, since it makes the case that with or without NATO's "assistance" the people of Northern Afghanistan are pretty much up a creek without a paddle. For anyone who wants a better understanding of how this country functions at the village level, this is a great place to start.

This book gives a great portrait of life in Afghanistan. Badkhen is an excellent writer with astute powers of observation. Her love of Afghanistan and its people gives significance and authority to her work. Because she travels and resides in Northern Afghanistan she shares insights into a way of life seldom observed by outsiders who write primarily about life close to the cities. Although the book paints a rather grim portrait of what the citizens of Afghanistan face every day, I found her book to be consistent with my understanding of life in Afghanistan.

This book felt like it was padded with repetition. That which was new could have been done in a pamphlet.

Book provides a real life account of the people of Afghanistan, their aspirations and sufferings. It is an authoritative insight into the gap between the promise and actual delivery. It realistically portrays the danger of Talibanisation of Northern Afghanistan which otherwise is believed to be relatively normal. Many a times the book brings reader to tears, feeling the pain and hardship of simple people who have suffered a great deal and will continue to suffer unless things improve dramatically in their favour. A great book a primary source for a researcher.

Enjoyed the journey. Insight into the lives of common Afghan people and a knowledge that with or without the help or hindrance of outsiders, the country is destined to remain unchanged. Afghanistan's potential for greatness will never be realized due to ignorance of the masses. Ann Badkhen paints an interesting and insightful picture. Often her flaunting of '\$50 dollar' words took away from the pace of the read.

Excellent window into the lives of Afghanistan people whom we seldom hear about in the press and how the war affects their lives. The author demonstrates wonderful empathy, courage, and insight into an ancient culture barren of all the modern conveniences that can be taken for granted. She also illustrates the tremendous amount of suffering that war rains down on people just trying to live a day at a time in their remote villages.

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