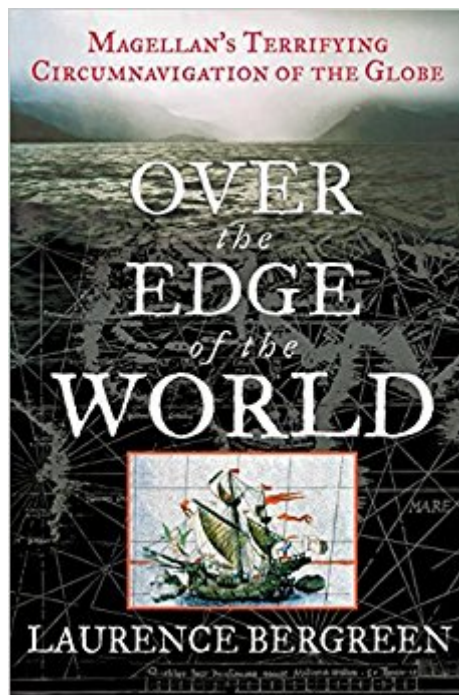




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Over The Edge Of The World: Magellan's Terrifying Circumnavigation Of The Globe



Synopsis

Ferdinand Magellan's daring circumnavigation of the globe in the sixteenth century was a three-year odyssey filled with sex, violence, and amazing adventure. Now in *Over the Edge of the World*, acclaimed author Laurence Bergreen, interweaving a variety of candid, first-person accounts, some previously unavailable in English, brings to life this groundbreaking and majestic tale of discovery that changed many long-held views about the world and the way explorers would henceforth navigate its oceans. In 1519 Magellan and his fleet set sail from Seville, Spain, to find a water route to the Spice Islands in Indonesia, where the most sought-after commodities -- cloves, pepper, and nutmeg -- flourished. Most important, they were looking for a passageway, a strait, through the great landmass of the Americas that would lead them to these fabled islands. Laurence Bergreen takes readers on board with Magellan and his crew as they explore, navigate, mutiny, suffer, and die across the seas. He also recounts the many unusual sexual practices the crew experienced, from orgies in Brazil to bizarre customs in the South Pacific. With a fleet of five ships and more than two hundred men, they had set out in search of the Spice Islands. Three years later they returned with an abundance of spices from their intended destination, but with just one ship carrying eighteen emaciated men. They suffered starvation, disease, and torture, and many died, including Magellan, who was violently killed in a fierce battle. A man of great tenacity, cunning, and courage, Magellan was full of contradictions. He was both heroic and foolish, insightful yet blind, a visionary whose instincts outran his ideals. Ambitious to a fault and not above using torture and murder to maintain control of his ships and sailors, he survived innumerable natural hazards in addition to several violent mutinies aboard his own fleet -- and it took no less than the massed forces of fifteen hundred men to kill him. This is the first time in nearly half a century that anyone has attempted to narrate the complete story of Magellan's unprecedented circumnavigation of the globe -- to tell this truly gripping and profoundly important story of heroism, discovery, and disaster. A voyage into history, a tour of the world emerging from the Middle Ages into the Renaissance, an anthropological account of tribes, languages, and customs unknown to Europeans, and a chronicle of a desperate grab for commercial and political power, *Over the Edge of the World* is a captivating tale that rivals the most exciting thriller fiction.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Journalist Bergreen, who has penned biographies of James Agee, Louis Armstrong, Irving Berlin and Al Capone, superbly recreates Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan's obsessive 16th-century quest, an ill-fated journey that altered Europe's perception of the planet: "It was a dream as old as the imagination: a voyage to the ends of the earth.... Mariners feared they could literally sail over the edge of the world." In 2001, Bergreen traveled the South American strait that bears Magellan's name, and he adds to that firsthand knowledge satellite images of Magellan's route plus international archival research. His day-by-day account incorporates the testimony of sailors, Francisco Albo's pilot's log and the eyewitness accounts of Venetian scholar Antonio Pigafetta, who was on the journey. Magellan's mission for Spain was to find a water route to the fabled Spice Islands, and in 1519, the Armada de Molucca (five ships and some 260 sailors) sailed into the pages of history. Many misfortunes befell the expedition, including the brutal killing of Magellan in the Philippines. Three years later, one weather-beaten ship, "a vessel of desolation and anguish," returned to Spain with a skeleton crew of 18, yet "what a story those few survivors had to tell—a tale of mutiny, of orgies on distant shores, and of the exploration of the entire globe," providing proof that the world was round. Illuminating the Age of Discovery, Bergreen writes this powerful tale of adventure with a strong presence and rich detail. Maps, 16-page color photo insert. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Ferdinand Magellan's ship was the first to circumnavigate the globe. While the accomplishment is recognized as a historic milestone, less known are the details of that voyage around the world. Magellan spent years trying to win the favor of the king of Portugal, and failing that he swore loyalty to the Spanish crown. After finally receiving Spain's backing for a trip to the Spice Islands, the king

imposed numerous stipulations that would affect Magellan's crew and his authority over them. Once his fleet finally embarked, he had to contend with violent storms, mutinous crewmembers, and hostile natives. Bergreen tells a well-rounded story of Magellan, not just that of the romanticized hero but also that of the explorer's darker side. He also puts the voyage into its historical context, going into detail about what was known of the world at the time (and what was still uncharted), the rivalry between Portugal and Spain, and the church's attempt to divide up the New World between them. Fascinating reading for history buffs, and a great story that rivals any seagoing adventure.

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The first half of the book is a lot better than the second half. It starts off fast, crisp, ready to set sail and boogie but then it sort of dies out on the open sea and by the time you are through the "Strait" the sails are limp and the wind has died down. By the time you make it towards the end you almost feel like you could have taken the actual journey faster. Seems like the author was sort of looking for something to write about and just happened to go with this story. No real heart to it. Definitely no guts. Words are words and you can string them almost anywhere you want to go, but the journey is the thing, and this one lost it's way...

This is a fascinating and richly researched account of the remarkable odyssey endured by Ferdinand Magellan and his fleet of five ships and 260 sailors who set off in August of 1519 to discover a water route to the Spice Islands. The amount and quality of primary source material in this account is extraordinary, and yet the story unfolds almost like fiction in its colorful descriptions and character development. The author positions us squarely in the center of a totally different worldview, allowing us to deeply experience both the horror and thrills of circumnavigating an uncharted ocean expanse and enduring a 60,000-mile voyage across that expanse. This book is utterly fascinating and thrilling.

A pioneering 60k mile ocean journey chock full of the highs and lows of life itself. Brought to us by meticulous 16th century record-keeping, and a talented 21st century writer. A page turner --whether you're a connoisseur of history, science and anthropology, or you're just a casual reader of quests for riches and glory, violent mutinies, tropical sexcapades, European/Islander encounters, maritime superpower clashes, and all-around high seas adventures.

Excellent read: adventurous, insightful, revealing. It is so eye-opening to finally read the real details

behind those glittering generalities we learned in school, even university. And this author explains everything - before you ask. What were the times like in 1521? What spices? Where is it on the map? Why'd they do that? Why did the guns kill almost as many of them as the enemy? When did we finally understand scurvy and ascorbic acid? I noticed: little island kingdoms will always offer allegiance to the country with latest boat full of cannons and gunpowder. It is quite natural to have a king, someone who gets a lot of bennies, but also a lot of friggin' headaches. Full cooperation is rare - cooperation is found at many different possible levels. Magellan was amazing. His feat was not duplicated for a long while afterwards. As all characters in the book, he had his strengths and, like all of us, too, he also had his weaknesses. After doing so much so well for so long, he began to see himself as special and protected by God. He was killed almost single-handedly attacking a tribe of angry primitives in the Philippines (which he named for King Phillip of Spain - why they still keep that meaningless name is unknown to me). Magellan and the Age of Discovery comes alive in this book - God, gold, glory!

I love reading about history! This book delivers so much information about Magellan's voyage and the surrounding political machinations and difficulties. There was so much additional information that I now want to visit Patagonia and go through Magellan Strait.

This is a book to be savored and then re-read. Imagine a real life story that involves not only the world's very first circumnavigation of the globe, but also of politics (not too different from ours today), personalities, ego's, high adventure, suffering, murder, stubborn determination, torture, deceit, mutiny, lying, redemption and discovery. Clearly the author worked hard on deep and detailed research, for the reader is left with no questions. Histories regarding the players, political backgrounds, and all other details involved in this environment are broadly discussed and one can only be left breathless by the sheer tenacity and instinctual knowledge that Magellan was endowed with. Ultimately, his ego failed him and the reader is carried to the conclusion of this incredible saga. Once again, we remind ourselves of the awful role Europeans have played in the interaction with indigenous peoples. This book is also a grand plus in that it also includes an interview with the author about the subject, as well as a timeline for Magellan's fantastic voyage. The Notes on Sources is also fascinating reading. Even if one doesn't care too much for history, this book is a must to read.

A excellent account of the amazing and admittedly terrifying travels of one of histories most

misunderstood mariners. I love books in this genre and feel this book does well to explain the travels and suffering of the explorers.

Reading about a man whose name I have been hearing for a lifetime but really knew nothing about, other than he was an explorer, was an interesting and surprising read for me. Well written, enjoyable read.

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