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Venice From The Ground Up



Synopsis

Venice came to life on mudflats at the edge of the habitable world. Protected in a tidal estuary from invaders and Byzantine overlords, the fishermen and traders who settled there crafted a way of life unlike anything the Roman Empire had ever known. In an astonishing feat of narrative history, James H. S. McGregor recreates this world, with its waterways rather than roads and its livelihood harvested from the sea. The narrative follows both a chronological and geographical organization, so that readers can trace the city's evolution by chapter and visitors can explore it by district on foot and by boat.

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Customer Reviews

Published in 2005 (the paperback I bought), this is a great read about the Venetian lagoon area, including of course Venice itself, including a lot of historical information. This is not a picture book or history book, though there are pictures and some history. The chapters are topical; e.g., "The Lagoon," "St. Mark's Basilica," "Company Town," "Merchants and Mariners," etc. The book is very readable for those seriously interested in the background of Venice and its development over more than a thousand years, but is not a typical, chronologically-oriented historical textbook. I read it in

connection with an upcoming trip to Venice, to gain perspective on what I will be seeing while on tour in the area over a period of three days. It has more than done that. I wanted to read more than just the typical travel or touring books. I had already done that. The book is fully indexed and contains several great maps, including breaking Venice down into its various sections. If you scan them and enlarge them, they could be used to help negotiate your way around the Venetian islands. Reproductions of a couple historical and conjectural maps dated 1500 and 1729 (before airplanes and hot air balloons), are also included.

This trip was our fourth to Venice. The five stars applies to people who are staying more than a couple of days, like to wander where tourists rarely go, and have some interest in Venetian architecture and history. Using it you will find the one or two remaining stone faces with slots for mouths. People used them to make anonymous denunciations to the inquisition. Or the last remaining wooden gondola workshop. This is not a guide book. In it you find no listings for restaurants or hotels. As to guide books we found Rough Guide to be best, especially if you are traveling to Padova, Verona, or one of the hill towns as well as to Venice.

I, like others, thought this would be really great to take with me on my Kindle. The hardcover is lovely, fascinating, informative and all good things. But the Kindle edition has no pictures. I should have read the other comments before I ordered the Kindle version. I have returned it. I will stick with reading the hardcover but will not taking it to Venice with me.

a-ok

Being an artist I was prompted by the cover for my library as well as the content. All exceed my expectations. Get this book. I've been to Venice twice! (a professional watercolourist)

This is a beautifully written and illustrated book for the Veneice lover. Nice mix of history and building descriptions.

This is an excellent book in hard copy. The kindle edition does not contain the illustrations or maps, telling you to view the hard copy to see them! The only way to know this before purchasing is to read buyer's comments. This is why the review is headed "A bit of a con". I wanted the text to take to Venice for our fourth trip, but didn't want the weight, so I have bought the Kindle edition, but I will

need to copy some of the illustrations from the hard copy and take the copies as well. Why does do such silly things?

Don't purchase the Kindle Edition of this book. It is an excellent book, but you won't have any of the illustrations or pictures that are a crucial part of the text.

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