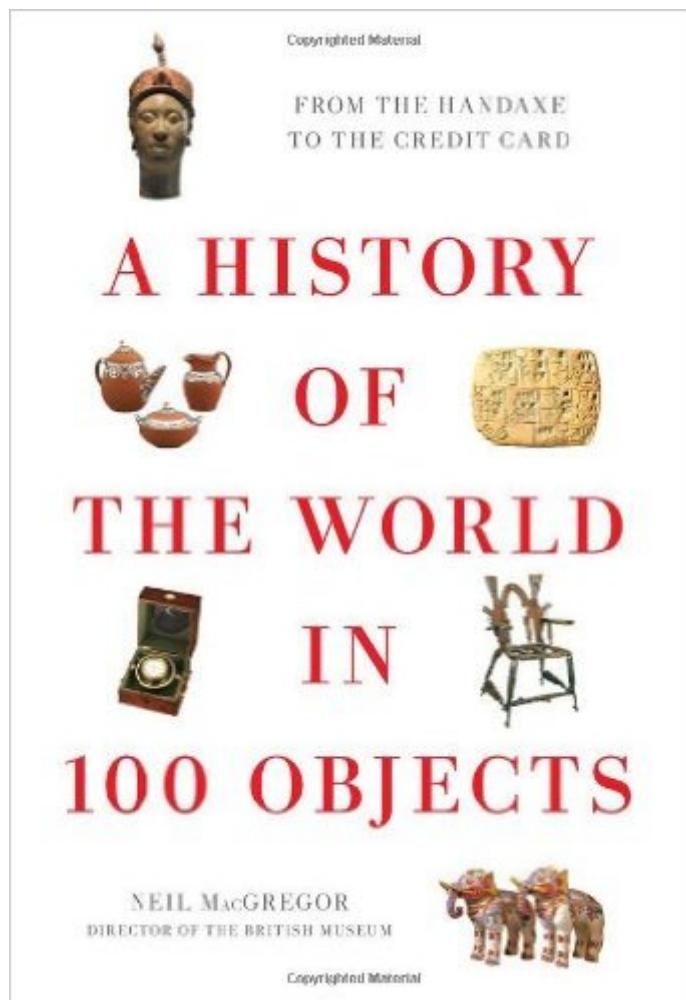


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A History Of The World In 100 Objects



Synopsis

From the renowned director of the British Museum, a kaleidoscopic history of humanity told through things we have made. When did people first start to wear jewelry or play music? When were cows domesticated and why do we feed their milk to our children? Where were the first cities and what made them succeed? Who invented math-or came up with money?The history of humanity is a history of invention and innovation, as we have continually created new items to use, to admire, or to leave our mark on the world. In this original and thought-provoking book, Neil MacGregor, director of the British Museum, has selected one hundred man-made artifacts, each of which gives us an intimate glimpse of an unexpected turning point in human civilization. A History of the World in 100 Objects stretches back two million years and covers the globe. From the very first hand axe to the ubiquitous credit card, each item has a story to tell; together they relate the larger history of mankind-revealing who we are by looking at what we have made.Handsomely designed, with more than 150 color photographs throughout the text, A History of the World in 100 Objects is a gorgeous reading book and makes a great gift for anyone interested in history.

Book Information

Hardcover: 736 pages

Publisher: Viking (October 27, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0670022705

ISBN-13: 978-0670022700

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 2 x 9.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (188 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

"A History of the World in 100 Objects" began with a BBC Radio 4 program that described 100 striking objects housed in the British Museum in London. I encountered the "100 Objects" while visiting the museum in the summer of 2010, and I was delighted to learn several months later that the original radio scripts were being adapted into a book.The result, as author Neil MacGregor

reminds us, is simply "a" history of the world rather than "the" history. Each chapter tells the story of a unique object or set of objects, ranging from a hand axe and chopping tools that are more than a million years old through the modern credit card and a solar-powered lamp and charger. Some of the objects are famous, some are obscure, but each inspires its own intriguing story. Chapter by brief chapter, the book carefully and clearly describes each object, places it in its historical context, and explains what it meant (or may have meant) to the people who created, used or admired it. The UK edition of the book is quite elegant--nearly 700 pages of high-quality paper with numerous striking color photographs showing each object from multiple vantage points. It makes a fine gift for friends and family who appreciate art, or history, or both, and it deserves pride of place on any bookshelf. As an aside, for those interested in the original BBC Channel 4 Radio program that inspired the book, you can download each of the 100 original broadcasts on iTunes. They make a marvelous companion to the book.

I'm afraid I must respectfully disagree with other customers in the review section. For the price, this is a FIVE-STAR book. It is illustrated beautifully with full color photographs. I have the hard-copy and not the Kindle version (though I do own a Kindle). My guess is that the pages would present stunningly on the Kindle for iPad or Kindle for Mac. I also have a Kindle E-ink reader. I doubt it would show well on that last device. I noticed one of the reviewers criticized the photo quality. I must disagree. I find it to be top notch. It is presented in a matte format rather than glossy print.. so my guess is the reviewer would have preferred the glossy versions. I, on the other hand, love the matte finishes on all the photographs which are nicely crisp and detailed. EXCELLENT book for the price. A perfect gift for a history buff. I love it and I bought it here on .

One of the joys of being resident in the UK is the presence of the wonderful BBC Radio 4 a channel with which listeners have a true lifelong love affair. To Dear American chums a quick scan across the internet to the BBC "i" player will find this rich source and life will be all the better for it. Radio 4 challenges, it provokes and gets as near to that much sought after but rarely achieved quality "the heart of the matter" as is humanly possible (the probing questions of presenters on the Today programme makes me think that democracy still has a fighting chance). The channel also carries many brilliant series of which "A History of the World in 100 Objects" by Neil MacGregor is a prime example, even the trailers leading up to its broadcast in January this year were great. What a pleasure therefore to have copy in the written word of this weighty book (738 pages) to accompany the series and to revisit the passion and authority of Neil MacGregor, director of the British Museum

and cultivator of fabulous facts. The whole premise underpinning this epic journey was predicated on a wicked idea conceived by Mark Damazer, then head of Radio 4 to challenge our hugely knowledgeable boids at the British Museum to undertake a somewhat mischievous and loaded exercise. Indeed on the surface any attempt to tell a rather large tale like the history of the world over a modest 2 million years in this manner seems like a piece of First Class honours inspired lunacy. "Baby and bathwater" is the phrase that comes to mind and even if the radio series and the following book were outright bilge you would at least have to give Neil MacGregor three stars for accepting the challenge and embracing with gusto the humongous concept. Yet he succeeds triumphantly and as the BBC blurb states he sets out in copious detail the sheer importance of "A chipped stone that was one of the first things ever made by human hands; a clay tablet telling the story of the great flood centuries before the Bible; a broken hunter's spear dropped by one of the earliest settlers in America; a hoard of gold abandoned in the Wars of the Roses ... every object tells a story" The use of this quote shows just how bloody difficult it is to summarize the sheer diversity of the subject matter and scale of the challenge that the author faced. I frankly remain in awe of his herculean task not least of all for his chapter on the English pepper pot dating from 350 BC which should be required reading for every child of school age. Most of all he understands the true value of encyclopaedic knowledge, in short the ability to illuminate through a fine selection of the facts while at the same time employing the skills of the story teller and then re-connecting his narratives with the present. Certainly it is true that the hugely hyped and momentous unveiling of THE one object that defines the modern age was somewhat of a disappointment (I will not spoil it - read the book). That said you suspect that MacGregor probably faced the same horrific challenge as Douglas Adams encountered in "The Hitch-hikers guide to the galaxy" coming up with something simple but clever enough to answer the Ultimate Question. Anyway give him a break since he was probably in need of a rest by this time. To his eternal credit it is understood that as a result of the radio series and now this book, citizens of our curious nation have been flocking to Bloomsbury to seek out the hereto unknown treasures/pleasures of the British Museum and examine for themselves the Mexican ceremonial ballgame belt (AD100-500) and yes the good old pepperpot. Satisfying the other key factor of the whole exercise is that some of more obvious choices that he could have gone for are ignored at the expense of the more quirky but equally illustrative. This then is a wonderful book, full of lavish illustrations and crystal clear maps. And yes I know that times are hard and deep cuts stalk the land but "A History of the World in 100 Objects" by Neil MacGregor is a fairly priced volume full of unparalleled treasure and should be included on all lists heading up the chimney to Santa in the next few months.

The book is extremely well written but not concise -- think of it as musings over the evolution of human civilization rather than as a history book. It is broken down into short 100 chapters making it ideal to as a relaxing read before bedtime. Only wish I would have thought to gotten the videos.

I picked up this book when visiting the British Museum in July 2011. Now I wish I had waited and bought it form instead of lugging it around! Truly happy to see it for sale in the U.S. I am recommending it to my friends. Each chapter highlights a different item from the museum's collection. The chapters are quick reads. I find it fun to pick it up and read a chapter at random. A nice book to leave hanging around for guests to browse through as well. It is thick, though, not a big coffee table book. Generally, a nice collection of writings on a broad range of interesting museum pieces.

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