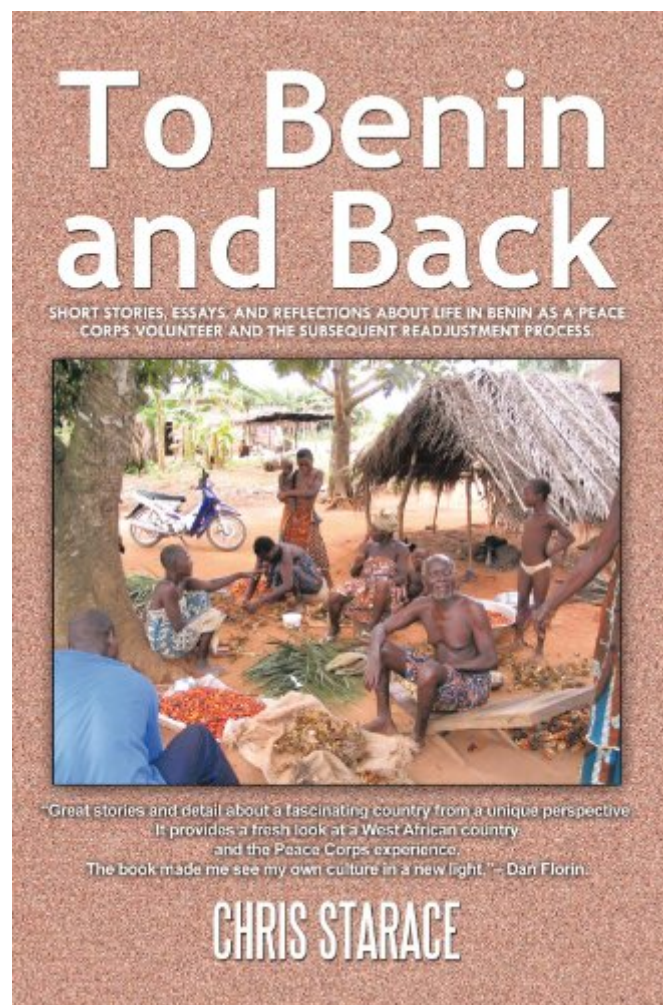


The book was found

To Benin And Back: Short Stories, Essays, And Reflections About Life In Benin As A Peace Corps Volunteer And The Subsequent Readjustment Process.





Synopsis

Just out of college seeking the adventure of his life and an opportunity to do good, Chris Starace joined the Peace Corps and was sent to Benin, West Africa for two years from 1995 to 1997. The challenge was great, and he was pushed to the limit in adapting to a starkly different culture while living on a meager \$6 a day. He made many discoveries about himself, as well as an exotic land. Delving into the culture and creating strong relationships with the people led him to appreciate numerous aspects of Benin, while many outsiders are unable to see past its shortcomings.

"To Benin and Back" recounts a variety of unique experiences from an insider's perspective such as living in a remote village, exploring the regional market, harrowing bush taxi rides, odd encounters with Voodoo, having a strange illness diagnosed by a very imaginative traditional healer, being stuck in a sandstorm in the Sahara desert, and humorous anecdotes about adapting to the Beninese culture, insects, snakes, domestic animals and children. When he returned to the United States, he was forced to reevaluate his own culture while dealing with severe reverse culture shock. Traveling back to Benin seven years later allowed him to relive, reexamine and assess his long-term contribution.

Book Information

File Size: 5425 KB

Print Length: 313 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publisher: iUniverse (September 16, 2011)

Publication Date: September 16, 2011

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B005XHO4ZW

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #1,325,633 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #86

in Books > Travel > Africa > Coastal West Africa #839 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks >

Customer Reviews

This is a great book. I am preparing to go to Benin and a Peace Corps volunteer and I am so happy I found it. I read other reviews and some say that Chris seems narcissistic...hey guys - did you notice this book is like a memoir with diary entries? I think that being said, it is obvious why the book is from his personal point of view and experience! Read this book. There is so much heart and Chris is honest about his experience. I look forward to using this book over the next two years and beyond.

It is a pretty rare event when both my wife and I become engrossed in a book simultaneously - I on the Kindle and her with the printed copy - but this was one! Mr. Starace has written a highly enlightening and entertaining book. It is filled with detailed stories that are at turns insightful, humorous, and thought provoking. I have traveled extensively in my career, but this is the type of cross-cultural experience that we should all hope to have at some point yet few of us ever achieve as business travelers and tourists. Excellent!

A thought-provoking look at a very different culture that can teach US a thing or two about what is really important in life. Starace's journey is filled with insight, self-discovery, and good humor. I also purchased the companion video (mainly because I wanted to hear the "Yovo Song," and I was DELIGHTED that it was there!) I HIGHLY recommend both the book and the video - I guarantee you will discover a thing or two about yourself - I know I did!

This book shares a very personal view of living in a Third World country. I appreciated the daily diary style, which made the events seem so immediate and engrossing. I also enjoyed all the photos, which you don't often find in a book like this. The one of the roadside vendors of bushrat is priceless!

Poor narrative full of common places. Does not provide any new insights about the local culture.

simply written, easy to read;

Very good on describing events -- i.e. taxi trips, voodoo ceremony -- but poor on development of

characters. Useful in getting a feel for the logistics of Benin.

A wonderful, account of life in Benin as a Peace Corp volunteer. Mr. Starace has wonderful insight and tells his tales with a deep understanding a humor. He does a good job of putting his experiences into the context of a young American and reflects on the differences in the two worlds that he calls home. I thoroughly enjoyed this book. I laughed out loud at times and couldn't put it down.

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