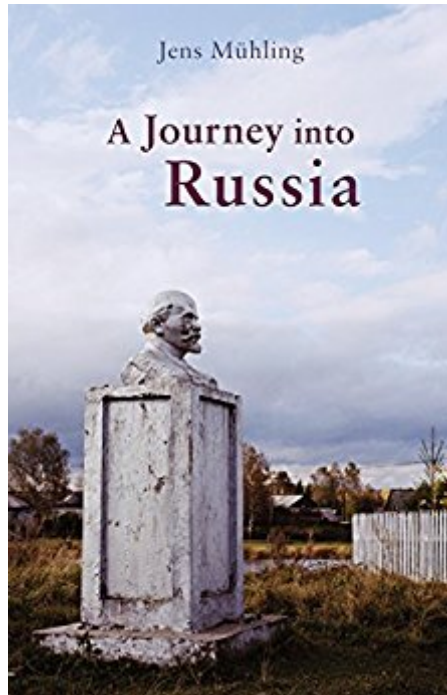




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A Journey Into Russia (Armchair Traveller)



Synopsis

When German journalist Jens Mähling met Juri, a Russian television producer selling stories about his homeland, he was mesmerized by what he heard: the real Russia and Ukraine were more unbelievable than anything he could have invented. The encounter changed Mähling's life, triggering a number of journeys to Ukraine and deep into the Russian heartland on a quest for stories of ordinary and extraordinary people. Away from the bright lights of Moscow, Mähling met and befriended a Dostoevskian cast of characters, including a hermit from Tayga who had only recently discovered the existence of a world beyond the woods, a Ukrainian Cossack who defaced the statue of Lenin in central Kiev, and a priest who insisted on returning to Chernobyl to preach to the stubborn few determined to remain in the exclusion zone. Unveiling a portion of the world whose contradictions, attractions, and absurdities are still largely unknown to people outside its borders, *A Journey into Russia* is a much-needed glimpse into one of today's most significant regions.

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Customer Reviews

The book takes a little to get going, but then it is quite an adventure tale. Muhling is on mission to discover the Old Believers of Russia and to track them down and write down some of their history. He is an intrepid and relentless investigator. There doesn't seem to be any place he won't go or anyone he won't speak to in his quest to tell the story of the Old Believers. He travels from Moscow and St Petersburg to the wilds of the steppe and the uncharted taiga. He meets some wonderful characters along the way and does seem to come to a resolution and a happy outcome in the end. If you are interested in Russian history and also about what is going on in the backstreets and backwoods of today's Russia, this might be of interest to you.

A wonderfully written book about a journey through a place that feels more like a fable than the world just beyond the borders of Europe. A place where beliefs are unhinged, where the present feels like fiction, where messiahs are called for (and appear), and where only the distant past of the Old Believers is firmly anchored to the bedrock of the world. The vast empty steppes and the vodka-soaked river journey near the end of the book reminded me of traveling in Mongolia, another of those places that feel like another planet, so far off the fringes of the maps we inhabit. It's heartening to know that places like this still exist, and that people still want to go there, simply for the sake of learning what they look like and how their people live.

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