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Along The River That Flows Uphill - From The Orinoco To The



Synopsis

'Along the River that Flows Uphill' is a travel book with a difference. It weaves the story of an journey with science, math and reason to explore the risks that are inherent in any adventurous travel. One recent summer, authors Richard Starks and Miriam Murcutt were commissioned by 'Geographical' - the magazine of the Royal Geographical Society in London - to travel the length of a strange river in Venezuela called the Casiquiare. This river - once the source of great controversy - is like no other, since it joins two otherwise-separate river systems, the Orinoco and the Amazon, by apparently flowing up and over the watershed that divides them. Rivers should not be able to do that. In their book, the authors recount the story of their journey on the Casiquiare, including a brush with a tribe of Yanomami Indians and a confrontation with FARC guerrillas. Along the way, they also explore thoughts and ideas - both humorous and serious - that relate to the thrills and stresses of off-the-map travel.

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Customer Reviews

great read about the area as little is known about these tribes. Sorry to see the bible bangers are

still at it never giving up since Pizarro and the Spanish and Portuguese conquests. Do they really need to be saved? So little was known about this river that the learned men of the early 17th century dismissed the claims that this river even existed. He (Stark) and his wife were very lucky to escape capture.

Very interesting! I enjoyed the authors accounts of traveling up the Casiquiare River in Venezuela, South America and their self discovery along the way. Looking forward to more armchair traveling with their other books.

This low-budget journey along the Casiquiare River in Venezuela should be called a *Quest* rather than a *Vacation*, since it involved not only a goal, but also a fair amount of unpleasantness, such as an attempted kidnapping by the FARC guerillas. Richard Starks and Miriam Murcutt were commissioned by "Geographical," the magazine of the Royal Geographical Society in London to explore a river that joins two great South American river systems, the Orinoco and the Amazon, by apparently flowing uphill over the watershed that divides them. Most of the journey is by boat, so there is plenty of time for reading and musing. I was especially fond of the author's riff on the creation myths of the Yanomami Indians versus the Old Testament versus the latest cosmological Big Bang. Stanley's journey through Africa to find Dr. Livingstone (who didn't really want to be found, most especially not by an American journalist) is interwoven with the authors' own journey up the Casiquiare River. There are also up-close and personal encounters with the Yanomami, one of whom nocks an arrow at the author while he is taking photographs. In common with many Stone Age people, the Yanomami believe cameras are soul-stealing devices. Or possibly, the guy with the bow happened to be in a bad mood on that particular day. The Yanomami don't lead very easy lives, especially the women. However, the misery of the Yanomami women still contrasts favorably to the lives of the FARC kidnap victims, some of whom have been captives in the Columbian jungles for over a decade. The operations of the FARC guerillas are funded by kidnap for ransom, illegal mining, extortion and the production and distribution of illegal drugs. The authors were very fortunate to escape from these narco-terrorists, and write vividly and indignantly of the treatment of those who currently languish in captivity. *Along the River that Flows Uphill* is adventure-travel writing in the grandly eccentric British tradition: a horrid climate and high adventure, laced throughout with acute observations on geopolitics, anthropology, and geography. ***review copy supplied by authors***

I was particularly interested in this book as I'm in the early stages of writing an adventure novel set in the same area. *Along the River That Flows Uphill* provided valuable insight into the people, culture, geography, history and dangers of Venezuela's as backcountry. Especially interesting was the information about the Yanomami. Having researched this people myself, I am familiar with Napoleon Chagnon. This book gave some background information about the anthropologist's work that I didn't know. For another perspective, I'd also recommend Kenneth Good's *Into the Heart*. My own novel, *Mountains of the Macaw*, should be ready sometime in 2016. - Ken Wallin, author of *Passport to Adventure* and the upcoming *Falling to Eden*.

This book piqued my interest in several different topics including but not limited to history, anthropology, science, and religion. I understood the premise of the book was for the author to explore the risk assessment associated with travel. I was more impressed and more interested in his account of all the various people and places they visited. I also appreciated references to Stanley and other explorers. This book provides an excellent overview of many aspects of a trip you would expect to encounter when venturing out as an explorer in unknown territory.*I received a free kindle copy of this book in exchange for an honest review, however, this has not influenced my review in any way.

I enjoyed this book a lot - it fulfilled all of my criteria for interesting travel stories: an "everyman" traveler, interesting and thoughtful perspective, interesting situations (including scary ones!), and it left me wanting to learn more about this river and the people. As well, it left me wanting to read their other books!

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