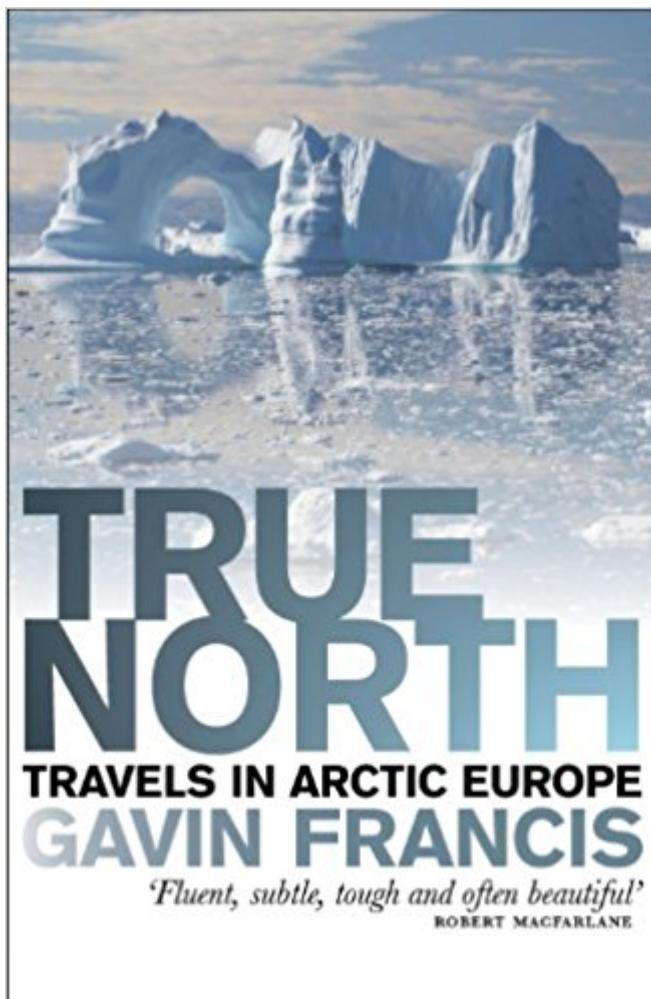


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True North: Travels In Arctic Europe



Synopsis

The stark, vast beauty of the remote Arctic Europe landscape has been the focus of human exploration for thousands of years. In this striking blend of travel writing, history and mythology, Gavin Francis offers a unique portrait of the northern fringes of Europe. His journey begins in the Shetland Isles, takes him to the Faroes, Iceland, Greenland, Svalbard and on to Lapland. Following in the footsteps of the region's early pioneers, Francis observes how the region has adapted to the 21st century, giving an observed insight into the lives of people he encounters along the way. As with all the best travel writing, *True North* is an engaging, compassionate tale of self-discovery, whilst blending historical and contemporary narratives in the tradition of Bruce Chatwin and Robert Macfarlane.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

'A great web of interconnecting sagas' --The Scotsman

Gavin Francis was born in Fife and currently lives in Edinburgh. His interest in history and travel has seen him pass through Europe, India, Africa and South America as well as spending a year on a remote base in Antarctica. His latest travel plan is to travel by motorbike from Edinburgh to New Zealand with his wife.

On time and as promised

Great book, I enjoyed it.

This book needs many more maps and I am disappointed there was really no mention of Orkney, so it just misses getting five stars. However, it filled many gaps in my knowledge of the area - much of which I have visited - and I am happy to add it to my collection of books. I would strongly recommend it to anyone with an interest in all or some of the countries he covers.

Arctic Europe is a region few travel writers have been willing to freeze their butts through in order to tell the world what it's like. This is a pity, because Iceland, Greenland, Svalbard and the northern bits of Norway are places that should attract many more visitors than they currently do. The scenery is incredible, and the history of the region contains a great many interesting tales that you can still connect with, as the north changes much slower than the rest of the world does. Gavin Francis has succeeded in weaving many stories of the north together into an enjoyable account of his spring-to-autumn tour across mainly empty spaces connected by a few dots populated by true northerners. He doesn't make himself sound like a pretentious explorer, a trap it's all too easy to fall into. Traveling in the Arctic north is really easy, as long as you're willing to endure some harsh weather and dress appropriately. This book should convince you that it's something you can do, and maybe also that it's something you should do, just to see something that is quite different from continental Europe. There are a few minor bugs in the book, like naming Finland as part of Scandinavia, and some faulty spellings of the names of some of the places, but all in all the book seems well investigated, and written with a most open and tolerant view of everything the writer encounters on his way. It's well written and quite informative, a great start if you're considering traveling to this part of the world, but you don't really know anything about it just yet.

I'm a fan of Paul Theroux travel writing and found Gavin Francis' style similar (sans trains). Recommended read for an intro to the North if your geography's as fuzzy there as mine-- but it's much more enjoyable if you have an atlas beside you to get the big picture, as the simple line drawings in the book are dull.

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