



A World of Curiosities: Surprising, Interesting, and Downright Unbelievable Facts from Every Nation on the Planet

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From Afghanistan to Zimbabwe: everything you never knew you never knew about every country on Earth. A scientist by training and an explorer by passion, Dr. John Oldale has logged half a million miles visiting more than ninety nations. Now, he celebrates our weird and wonderful world in a cornucopia of fascinating facts brought vividly to life through the unexpected stories behind them. Touching on history, travel, politics, natural history and more, he paints a unique portrait of each country from the mightiest to the most miniscule. You won't find the following in your average travel guide:

- Why is kissing on trains banned in France?
- In what country are litigants expected to present their case at court in the form of a poem?
- Which war did women win in 1929 just by sitting down?
- If Panama hats aren't from Panama, where are they from?
- Who eat fresh camel dung as a cure for dysentery (and why does it work)?
- Why were US disk jockeys once told they could play birthday requests on any day except the one requested?
- Which modern dictator banned old age, libraries and gold teeth, and was later replaced by his dentist?
- And 2,000 more funny, trivial, poignant, and telling facts

A must for active and armchair globe-trotters alike, *A World of Curiosities* will engross anyone who is at all curious about the world beyond their door. Explore and enjoy.

A World of Curiosities: Surprising, Interesting, and Downright Unbelievable Facts from Every Nation on the Planet Details

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Unbelievable Facts from Every Nation on the Planet John Oldale**

From Reader Review A World of Curiosities: Surprising, Interesting, and Downright Unbelievable Facts from Every Nation on the Planet for online ebook

Chris says

What a fascinating book. The facts discussed in the book, and the way they are presented are so neat. Visually and factually amazing.

Erikka says

This was really fun! Lots of great facts about every country on earth. I was expecting there would be some facts I'd want to skip or skim through, but no, they were all interesting. I especially liked some of the visuals (timelines, graphs, etc) that made some of the information really palatable and easy to comprehend. I also felt he was incredibly fair to all countries. I recently made an "Around the World in 80 Books" display for my library and worked hard to find books that gave very positive impressions of the nations selected. He did the same thing in this book--everything was very optimistic and focused on the unique aspects of the country instead of messy or negative history. It was sometimes mentioned, but was never the focus.

MaggyGray says

Ein sehr interessantes Buch, das geradezu zum Schmökern einlädt!

Zu nahezu jedem Land der Erde schreibt Oldale kuriozes, wissenswertes, erschreckendes und informatives. Ab und an nerven die ganzen Fußnoten ein bisschen, die den Lesefluss ab und an arg unterbrechen, aber das lässt sich mit ein bisschen Übung hinkriegen. Der Autor regt übrigens an, sein Buch auf dem Klo zu deponieren, um dann immer wieder darin zu schmökern.

Statt einer ausführlichen Beschreibung des Buches greife ich einfach wahllos Länder der Reihe nach auf und schreibe auf, was Oldale zu diesen zu sagen bzw. herausgefunden hat!

Aserbaidshan

... war das erste muslimische Land, das den Frauen das Wahlrecht gewährte (1917) - noch vor den USA und Großbritannien

Belgien

... Belgiens höchster Punkt ist ein Parkplatz mitten im Hochmoor

... interessante Museen: das Chicorée-Museum, das Nest-Museum, das Waschmaschinen-Museum, das Unterhosen-Museum (alle Ausstellungsstücke sind nachweislich getragen), das Kanalisations-Museum

Costa Rica

... die Männchen des Opossums besitzen einen gespaltenen Penis, der die frühen spanischen Naturforscher zu der Vorstellung inspirierte, sie würden sich mit den Zwillingnasenlöcher der Weibchen paaren

Dominikanische Republik

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Interesting, and Downright Unbelievable
Facts from ...

... die DR ist das einzige Land der Welt, das die Bibel auf seiner Flagge zeigt

Estland

... "Die Esten gehen mit ihren Gefühlen ökonomisch um. Statt oberflächlich höflich zu sein, tragen sie eine unhöfliche Gleichgültigkeit zur Schau." (Estnisches Institut)

Frankreich

... im Ersten Weltkrieg bemalten die Franzosen ihr schweres Kriegsgerät mit Spielplatzgrundfarben. Als Reaktion darauf gestalteten die Deutschen Tarnnetze u. a. in kubistischer Manier, die Briten verschönerten ihre Panzer in rot-grünem Schottenmuster

Griechenland

... während die Gewinner bei den antiken Olympischen Spielen einen Lorbeerkranz bekamen, waren die Preise vor 1904 recht bunt gemischt: 1900 erhielt der Zweite im Stabhochsprung einen Regenschirm

Hongkong

... mit einem durchschnittlichen IQ von 118 sind die Bewohner von Hongkong insgesamt betrachtet das schlaueste Volk der Welt

Irak

... Saddam Hussein besaß 1997 nach eigenen Angaben einen Koran, der mit 27 Litern seines eigenen Blutes geschrieben wurde. Das Buch existiert noch immer, und man fragt sich, was man damit machen soll, da man einen Koran als heiliges Buch nicht zerstören darf.

Japan

... Kingyo-Sukui: Goldfische schaufeln. Das macht man mit Schaufeln aus Papier. Ist aber ganz schön schwierig, denn sobald eine Schaufel bricht, ist man raus!

Kambodscha

... "Dich zu behalten bringt keinen Profit. Dich zu zerstören, ist kein Verlust." Slogan der Rote-Khmer-Regierung

Liechtenstein

... ist der größte Exporteur falscher Zähne in die Welt

Mauritius

... der ausgestorbene Dodo, der auf Mauritius heimisch war, könnte eventuell vielleicht wieder auferstehen, da man aus den Schalen von Eiern (und es sind noch Dodo-Eier erhalten) DNS gewinnen kann

Nepal

... männliche Yaks heißen Yaks, weibliche Nak. Der Schweiß dieser Tiere wird als Volksmedizin verwendet

Österreich

... mit 2,5 Millionen Grabstellen auf dem Zentralfriedhof ist Wien eine Stadt, in der es mehr Tote als Lebende gibt

Paraguay

... 93% aller Gefängnisinsassen warten noch auf ihre Verhandlung

Russland

... Warum kommen KGB-Männer immer zu dritt? - Einer muss einen Bericht schreiben, einer muss ihn lesen

und einer muss die beiden Intellektuellen im Auge behalten

Saudi-Arabien

... Scheich al-Habadan fordert, dass Frauen nur ein einziges Auge zeigen sollen - der Anblick von zwei Augen ist allzu verführerisch

Tadschikistan

..." Im Umgang mit Regierungsbeamten wird üblicherweise ein Bestechungsgeld angeboten. Der Zahlende muss höflich sein, sonst könnte sich der Preis erhöhen." everyculture.com

Ukraine

... Leonid Breschnew verlieh sich selbst so viele Orden, dass bei seiner Beerdigung 44 Soldaten hinter seinem Sarg herlaufen mussten, um diese zu tragen

Vatikan

... die Geldautomaten des Vatikans sind die einzigen der Welt, die ihre Bildschirmanweisungen auf Latein geben

Weissrussland

... fast allen weissrussischen Kindern ist der Blinddarm entfernt worden (ob notwendig oder nicht), weil die OP routinemäßig als praktische Übung für die Medizinstudenten des Landes angesetzt wird

Zypern

...die älteste Hauskatze der Welt wurde in einem Grab auf Zypern gefunden - die Beisetzung fand vor ca. 9500 Jahren statt

Sooo, das war mal ein klitzekleiner Abriss der Daten und Fakten in diesem Buch. Wirklich ein tolles Lesevergnügen und zum Schmökern immer wieder interessant!
Eine klare Empfehlung von mir.

Bill says

A trivia lovers joy, absolutley fascinating, useless information, the kind of stuff I love.

Meaghan says

This is a very impressive collection! I have long been a compiler of useless facts and trivia and I've seen it all before, so to speak, but 95% of the information in this book was entirely new to me. (Did you know Genghis Khan was a redhead? That Switzerland "accidentally" invaded Luxembourg with a force of 200 soldiers in 2007 and nobody in Luxembourg noticed? That the Hungarian language has 18 cases, 72 verb forms and no word for "to have"?) This would make good toilet and/or bedside reading, since the entries are short, and there are illustrations.

My only complaint is that I think the book could have been more democratic in terms of page space. The majority of countries got one page, but some got three or four, and in some cases he crammed several countries (almost all the Pacific island nations, for example, like Kiribati and Micronesia) into one or two

pages. It would have been nice if each country got equal coverage. I understand that, say, Vanuatu, is not as significant as Japan or the United States, but surely Oldale could have come up with enough facts about it to cover a single page.

Lindsay L. Martin says

Follow my book review blog!

<http://bibliofreaker.blogspot.com/201...>

Eva says

Awesome book, so full of useful and useless trivia; it was such an entertaining pleasure to read; it's funny, weird and shocking!

Only disadvantage is that it's printed so small that reading it probably ruined by eyesight even more. But it was worth it!

Alison says

I loved this book, but then again I am a dork when it comes to useless trivia. Let me tell you this book is FULL of it!

It is not a book you would typically sit down & read cover to cover (unless you're a trivia buff like me of course!) It is designed similar to an encyclopedia. The countries of the world are listed in alphabetical order & there are strange facts about each country. The listing for each country also lists how to say hello & good-bye in the native language, World Heritage Sites, etc. There is a map at the back too which shows you where the countries are located.

All in all it was an enjoyable, fascinating read, though I doubt it would be something everyone could really sink their teeth into.

Aimee says

I eat this kind of trivia for breakfast. My only complaint was that some countries got hardly any attention at all; come on, surely every country on earth is packed with interesting and unusual information!

Nancy says

Head and shoulders above what you expect from a country-trivia book, this is non-stop info-tainment. The writing is punchy (and British), the facts appear to be solid, the content is driven by a healthy sense of weird, and there are a zillion footnotes, which are so fun you read every one.

Every time someone mentioned a country, I read that page. It took me 4 months and probably 100 bowls of

popcorn but I think I read them all.

Aries Eroles says

Not a single book can ever be written to contain all the curiosities of the world. But John Oldale gives a wonderful try for providing shocking, hard facts from each country (and territories, dependencies, etc.) throughout the world.

Much for entertainment, each page is filled with hard-hitting facts that most are weird, or a curiosity.

Detailed graphs are presented for some facts that are visually nice and aid for better comparison and pictures and images are never lacking. This is a must for bored readers who wanted to be surprised and amused.

When you start reading this book, prepare to travel the globe for the surprising, interesting, and unbelievable facts from every nation across the planet.

A five star entertainment.

Okay, here is a sample:

Gates is a convenient measure of extreme wealth with 1 Gate equals to the wealth of Bill Gates. Andrew Carnegie have a peak wealth of 6 Gates and in 1898, he tried to buy the Philippines (he failed, of course).

Edric Subur says

Discovered interesting facts from familiar places but especially from so many nations which name I've never even heard of. Some of my favorite:

1. Kissing on trains was banned in France to stop incessant delays caused by parting lovers
2. 50% of children in Luxembourg fail school because proficiency in all 3 languages (Luxembourgish, German and French) is required to pass secondary school

3. Ear cleaning with a partner is a well-recognized sensual experience in East Asia; Unfortunately Europeans are excluded from the fun because their gene makes their earwax wet and sticky and unsuitable for extraction

4. Shell accounts for 90% of the GDP in Brunei and provides free education, healthcare and subsidized housing in exchange for monopolizing oil and gas

5. Igbo women won the Women's War in 1929 by 'sitting' - 10,000 women simply invaded the personal space of the colonial officers until they could bear it no more

Bonus: some ATMs in South Africa are weaponized - if tampering is detected, they fire pepper spray into your eyes

Alia says

SO I totally drove my family nuts with the trivia from this book. I loved it.

Mike says

The best parts of Wikipedia concerning every country in the world, distilled into a single reference. It has a permanent place on my coffee table.

Kristin King says

If my copy wasn't from the library, I would keep this by the dinner table and read something from it every time a different country is in the news. This really is what the subtitle bills; 'Surprising, Interesting, and Downright Unbelievable Facts from Every Nation on the Planet.' If you already know some of these tidbits, then this makes makes you feel well informed for it. Did you know Polar Bear livers are poisonous? (in 30-90 gram portions) The process of dying from this poison is what I still can't believe.

Highly recommend for homeschoolers, other educators, parents who like to entice children with learning and folks who want to show off the strange but true things they know.

Devi says

Geballtes Wissen, absolut sympathisch und kurzweilig zwischen zwei Buchdeckel gepackt und vor allem auch noch zwischen zwei richtig schöne Buchdeckel. Dieses Nachschlagewerk, was ich wie einen Roman gelesen habe, ist das schönste Nachschlagewerk seit Ewigkeiten gewesen. Es sind nicht nur sture Fakten zu lesen, sondern kleine Anekdoten, wunderbare erklärende Graphiken dazwischen, Zitate und eben auch Dinge, die man nicht mal in einem Nachschlagewerk zu suchen, glauben wagen würde. (War das jetzt richtig?!) Anyway, I was slightly amused. Und ich kann dieses Buch mit ganzem Herzen weiterempfehlen.

Mycala says

Oh, this is good stuff. It's all so interesting! Customs, laws, trivia... my favorite remains the man who "died of laughter while watching a kilted Scotsman using bagpipes to do battle against a black pudding." I honestly can't think of a better way to go. Even imagining this spectacle gives me a fit of the giggles, and those who know me well know I can really wind up beside myself once I start laughing hard enough, so perhaps it's best I not see a re-enactment unless I'm ready to depart this world.

Lynne Cosmano says

Learned a lot about many countries but did not like all the facts and figures along the margins of the pages...made it difficult to read. Don't know how the author ever decided what to feature for each nation..politics, environment, quirky customs, despots and kosmokrators.....

Eustacia Tan says

World of Curiosities sums up each nation covered at least one page (with Hong Kong/Macau and Taiwan getting their own pages), though which countries get an in-depth report seems to be arbitrarily decided. While I have no idea if this really covered every country on the planet, it did cover a lot of them. And it was a fact book, so it took me some time to finish (never mind how interesting the facts were).

Of course, Singapore is mentioned:

(First country I turned to too).

The Singapore section was a little disappointing, though. I mean, the 'Disneyland with the Death Penalty' quote is just so overused. (At least be creative and rephrase as USS with the death penalty or something). Besides, it sort of uses the same old stereotype. Then again, Cambodia's quote wasn't very flattering either. It seems like some of the entries focus too much on one aspect of a country and don't provide a balanced picture (countries that get more than one page don't tend to suffer from this).

And while some of the entries were interesting, I can't believe not a single thing about food was mentioned. Our Bak Kwa is famous, at least in Asia.

My disgruntlement arising from my own admittedly strong bias towards my home country aside, this book was pretty fun to read. I chuckled a few times (especially at the footnotes) and learnt a lot. If you have to get this book, I'd say buy a paperback copy because you want to be able to flip through it, and you won't want to have to rush through it, like a library book.

By the way, I found this in the section on Austria (page 19). It took me a while to realise eye = mata and then it all made sense.

This review was first posted at Inside the mind of a Bibliophile

Your Friend says

YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT JOHN OLDALE HAS BEEN ARRESTED BY THE FBI FOR 30 COUNTS IN THE PRODUCTION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY. HE IS A DISGUSTING AND REPREHENSIBLE HUMAN BEING. (less)
