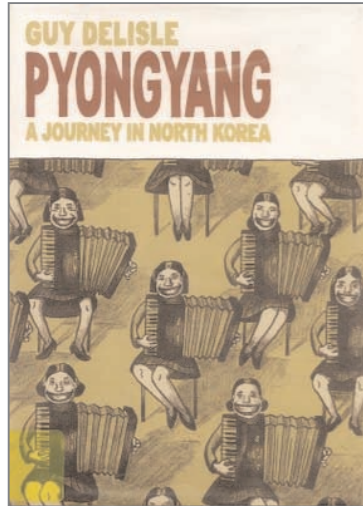


reviews

books & gear



Pyongyang:

Pyongyang – A Journey in North Korea

Guy Delisle.

Random House RRP: £12.99

When you buy books online you don't always get what you expect. I don't know whether my online retailer of choice was lacking information or if I failed to read the description, but when I opened my copy of 'Pyongyang – A Journey in North Korea' I was surprised and, I confess, a little

disappointed to find that it was a graphic novel. I hadn't read anything in comic strip style since the early '90s, but having paid for the book I decided to give it a go. Author Guy Delisle spent two months in the North Korean capital and the result, 176 pages of witty cartoons, is entertaining and insightful. It concentrates on the weird world of North Korea, where foreigners have to be shadowed by their guides from sunrise to sunset. The author muses at the lack of guests in his high rise hotel, dividing his time between aiming paper aeroplanes at the river and marvelling at the occasional fresh melon for breakfast. Ponderings of the bizarre regime are peppered with random thoughts of a mind that was perhaps going slightly nuts in the solitude of the Hermit Kingdom's capital! Despite trying to ration myself, within a couple of hours I'd reached the end of the book. As an introduction to the odd goings on in North Korea, this light hearted paperback is perfect, but even if you're an authority on North Korea, Guy Delisle's cartoons won't fail to raise a titter. And if you're a fan of empty hotels, deserted restaurants and outlandishly large statues you might just find yourself interested in booking a tour...

Lucy Corne



new!
TRAVEL
GEAR RATED

SunBug Pro Packs:

www.sunbugpropacks.com

Available in a variety of combinations that you can tailor to your trip, the SunBug Pro Packs are handy, travel sized packs of protection from the sun, or other nuisances such as insects or poison ivy. Perfect for short trips they provide all you need from protection to sting relief in handy sachets without taking up all the space that large bottles of repellent or sunscreen do. They're compact and lightweight and can even be carried in the pocket if you're travelling really light. Tested on a walking holiday in Wales, the products are pleasant and easy to apply. The great thing is that you can order the combination to suit your trip in a variety of quantities. Available online only, prices vary according to pack size.



 **SunBug Pro Packs**

Our verdict?

Lightweight and compact so particularly convenient short hikes or trips

Louise Alexander

Mountain Hardware Viperine 2:

Mountain Hardware Viperine 2 tent

68D Polyester with PU coating and DWR, 2.27kg

Buying a tent can be a big investment, so thankfully, it's one that I'm convinced I got right this time. The Viperine 2 is an absolute gem of a tent with so many fabulous features that it's hard to know where to start. Probably the best thing about this tent is that the pole system involves just one long pole meaning that putting the tent up is easy, speedy and also very enjoyable. The pole can, however, be a bit lethal when fully connected so, unless you really want to start your camping experience by putting someone into hospital you need to allow a reasonably sized area to put this tent up in! Once you've assembled the pole you simply connect the inner to the pole with external clips, drape over the outer shell and put in the 8 tent pegs to ensure the two layers are not touching. It's possible to have the Viperine 2 up and ready for habitation in under five minutes, which is much quicker than most tents I've experienced. The tent is sold as a two man tent and was extremely comfortable for one tall person and a large rucksack. If you tried to get two people in, storage of luggage might be a problem, although the porch area could easily be used and there are internal pockets for essential night time items. The Viperine 2 is has a unique shape but proved to be completely indestructible in gale force winds in Iceland. Although the winds buffeted from all sides, the tent stood firm, remained completely waterproof and still looked as good as new the next morning. The final plus point is that it is very light weight and can be used without an outer layer in warmer places, minimising the weight even further. In summary, a light-weight, well-designed, easy to assemble and easy to pack tent.

Our verdict?

Brilliantly designed and perfect for one adventurous explorer or two looking for a cosy night's sleep!

Clare Morley

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