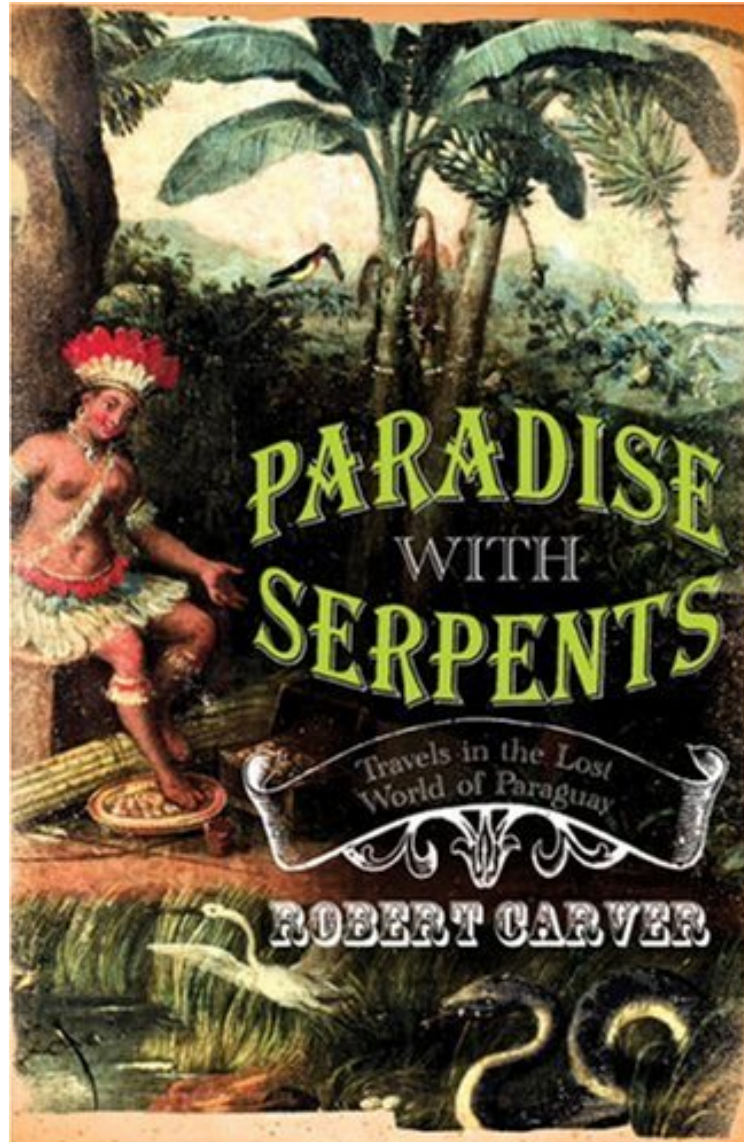


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Paradise with Serpents: Travels in the Lost World of Paraguay

Robert Carver

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Robert Carver : Paradise with Serpents: Travels in the Lost World of Paraguay before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Paradise with Serpents: Travels in the Lost World of Paraguay:

4 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Paradise with serpents IndeedBy Jeremiah Smith Interesting travel account. He did it so we do not have to. From my brief travels in Paraguay I can say any of this is believable. Yes it can happen. The Gran Hotel is as described.5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. garbageBy AliBIf I

could give this book no stars I would. What a piece of trash. My husband bought this book because he thought it would be an interesting read. Both my parents are from Paraguay and I've been back every year since I was 6 years old. What I want to know is has the author ever even traveled there? He complains that it is a hideous dirty hell hole filled with guns guns and more guns. That is just insanity, I know at least 100 people family and friends, and not a single one owns a gun. The only person I ever knew to own a gun was my late grandmother's second husband, and it was from the Chaco war (in the 1930's)! Of course Paraguay has many of the problems that he sites, poverty, corruption. But the people are among the most generous, kind and helpful in the world! This guy was totally delusional and is a terrible writer to boot. Some of his sentences were so obnoxious and I'm just so irritated that I even bothered reading part of this book. Do not waste your time and money on this pack of lies. 27 of 29 people found the following review helpful. Lies all lies! By Are you serious? I've lived in Paraguay since 2002, am married to a Paraguayan, have a Paraguayan son and am the author of the Rough Guide and Lonely Planet for Paraguay, so I feel quite qualified in stating categorically that this book is a pile of not very well written (and not very believable!) lies. It is written with a sort of condescending paranoia that distances any right minded person from the author almost from the start and frankly more often than not crosses the line into outright racism eg "My race, my pale skin made me an intruder" - would be funny if it wasn't offensive, wouldn't it?!. His constant unfounded fear of being mugged, raped, stabbed you name it prevents him from making even the most base level connection with the country or its people, and as a result what it means to be a Paraguayan or in Paraguay completely passes him by. Paraguayans are, quite contrary to the national character assassination forwarded in this book, an extremely friendly, upbeat and proud nation of people, not the savage band of corrupt, barely human criminals that he would have us believe!. Equally worrying is a sort of cultural superiority complex which he possesses that seems to infest everything that he does, thinks, says and writes, as though he is worshipped and revered on account of his white skin and English nationality - give me a break, it's in your head!! Many of the things that happened to him in his presumably brief time in the country I seriously doubt ever happened at all but were included to make what was presumably a run of the mill visit to a perfectly normal South American country sound that bit more interesting. To cite a couple of the more stupid examples of this "treating the reader like a fool". The customs supposedly mistook him for the British Ambassador on arrival because the country doesn't see many tourists - I don't think so, but neatly illustrates what I mean about his superiority complex! He had a colony of vampire bats on hotel ceilings in the centre of Asuncion - what hotel in the world would have a colony of bats on the ceiling?, I mean come on! Besides is the author qualified to distinguish a vampire bat from any other? Or is the supposed danger posed by vampires just another attempt to "beef up" the story and make the author look big and brave? The savage attack on both Paraguay and Paraguayans is not only unmerited and unfair, but factually inaccurate REPEATEDLY. The history is wrong, his grasp of the language is laughable to the point where you wonder where his information came from (what is an indigeno? or chantar?, these are nearly words that he has presumably made up or heard something similar and had a guess at both the spelling and the meaning!), his geography suggests he didn't visit half the places he claims to, and the sad obsession with supposed enclaves of holed up Nazis in Paraguay is so cliched now that is boring even when it is much more well written than this. My advice to anybody even contemplating reading this pile of nonsense is go to Paraguay and then (if you must!) read the book afterwards so you can share in just how bad it is (get it out the library, you'll regret putting money in the author's pocket if you buy it!). The other way round and you will mentally place Paraguay in the same band of current "stay-away" countries as Rwanda, the Congo and other war-torn areas that you would avoid like the plague, not to mention buying into the fantasy world of the author where he paints himself as an adventurous roving journalist visiting the most dangerous corners of the planet. He isn't! Come to Paraguay and see for yourself! And if you want to read a prejudiced, 19th Century, upper class "roving adventurer" type fiction novel then get something that was written by a Victorian colonial author. At least the bigotry and ignorance shown in those can be excused on account of the unenlightened time in which they were written!

In 1537 a group of Europeans founded Asuncion on the banks of the Paran River in modern day Paraguay where they were enthusiastically welcomed by the Gurani people. An extraordinary fusion of New World and Old was created, a place where magnificent baroque cathedrals were built of carved stone in the heart of the jungle, and solemn Catholic masses were performed on European instruments by Gurani Indians and their Jesuit mentors. Today Paraguay is the only South American country which is truly bilingual: Spanish and Gurani are both spoken and every citizen is proud of his or her dual heritage. Long fascinated by Paraguay due to childhood stories of his great-uncle Charliewho vanished into the Amazonian jungle of old north Paraguay in search of Inca silver Carver Robert Carver travels into this forbidden lost world in search of his own golden city of outlandish experience in this enrapturing travelogue. The physically reckless journey takes him from mule trains high in frozen mountains to steamers up remote rivers in dense tropical jungles. Fascinating and original, this is first-hand look at one of South America's most unique and engrossing nations.

'[Carver] writes with colour and intelligence, and is a first-rate travel writer.' Sunday Telegraph`Carver's vision of the Old World seen from the New puts this book into a mould-breaking category. His insights into spiraling state control

and individual alienation back home owe everything to the immense gulf separating Paraguay's anarchy from Europe's control-freakery.' *Independent* 'Like the best kind of person, it is at once intelligent, charming, funny, entertaining, quirky, inconsistent, flawed, infuriating and above all deeply human. I loved it.' *Guardian* 'Carver's descriptions of this marvelous, seriously dangerous place are vivid, and set the scene for a piece of writing that fascinates to the very end.' *Waterstone's Books Quarterly* 'Carver proves both funny and talented as he deftly links political history with local colour. And, while retaining a strong narrative voice, he never steals the limelight from the real hero of the book: Paraguay itself.' *Financial Times* 'With this informed, thoughtful, closely observed, unsparingly funny and elegantly crafted book, Carver has helped ensure that at least one country will remain free of the package-holiday crowds.' *The Tablet* About the Author Robert Carver has written for *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Observer*, and *The Sunday Times* and is the author of *The Accursed Mountains*.