

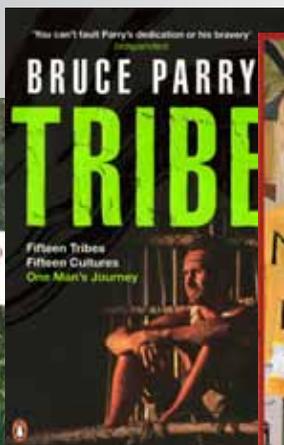
Skyline to Skyline

MUST-READ TRAVEL YARNS FROM ACROSS ASIA



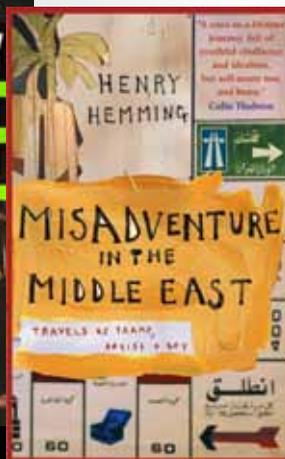
**THE MALAY
ARCHELAGO**
Alfred Russel Wallace
(Periplus Classics)

With all the recent celebrations of Darwin's bicentenary, you probably now know that Alfred Wallace was the British naturalist who reached parallel conclusions about the evolution of species – but published *second*. What you maybe didn't realise is that this book represents some of the most fascinating and readable early travel writing out there. Wallace's insightful descriptions of the wildlife, cultures and geography of Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia in the mid-1800s are matched only by his charming and colourful anecdotes of his travels.



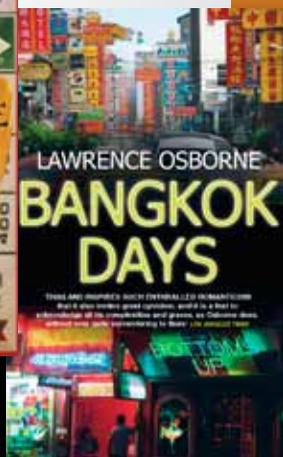
TRIBE
Bruce Parry (Penguin)

In a life-changing trip spanning four years, British former Royal Marines officer Bruce Parry spends month-long stints with 15 different tribal cultures around the world, including Siberian nomads, jungle-dwellers in Sarawak, and the horse masters of Mongolia. While the tales accompany the acclaimed BBC TV series of the same name, they complement it nicely and work on their own even if you haven't watched the DVDs. Though he fearlessly tries his hand at every tribal ritual imaginable (like attempting to invert his penis according to Papua New Guinea's Kombai custom), the writing somehow never loses its sensitivity, charm and reporter's objectivity.



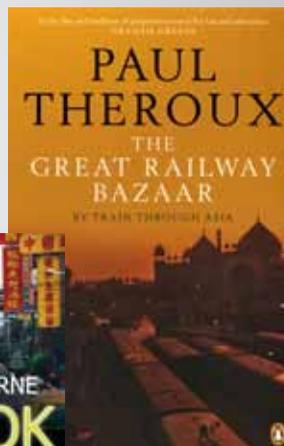
**MISADVENTURE IN
THE MIDDLE EAST**
Henry Hemming
(Nicholas Brealey)

Travelling around the Middle East whilst the Iraq war looms, and then rages, Henry Hemming goes on a gripping and often hilarious journey that takes him from the region's mosques, souks and beaches to its police cells, torture chambers and brothels – ultimately to try and uncover the artistic renaissance that he's heard about taking place in Baghdad. Crammed with amusing encounters and unexpected incidents, Hemming's evocative writing reveals a vital, but conflicted, Middle East that is a world away from that of popular misconception.



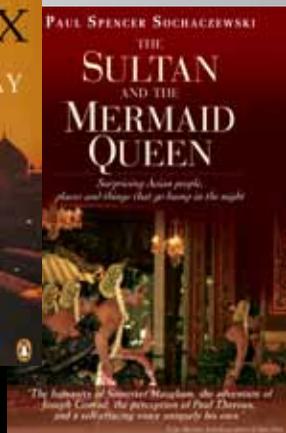
BANGKOK DAYS
Lawrence Osborne
(Harvill Secker)

Accompanied by a ragtag band of aging Spanish, British and Australian expatriates, Lawrence Osborne uses his considerable story-telling talents to deconstruct one of Asia's most notorious and misunderstood capitals. As the title suggests, he ventures beyond the seedy nightlife so commonly portrayed – though there's plenty of that too – and discovers history and spirituality in unusual corners of the city. If you've only ever scratched the surface of Bangkok as a tourist, Osborne's insider's wisdom and skilful humour will have you rapt.



**THE GREAT RAILWAY
BAZAAR**
Paul Theroux
(Penguin Classics)

Master of the railway narrative Paul Theroux whisks readers along for an unforgettable ride on one of the most compelling journeys in contemporary travel literature in this 30-year-old classic. Traversing the continent on Asia's legendary trains – from the Orient Express to the Mandalay Express and Trans-Siberian – Theroux uses his grouchy novelist's touch to describe an epic string of strange and colourful experiences and encounters on the iron rails.



**THE SULTAN AND THE
MERMAID QUEEN**
Paul Spencer
Sochaczewski
(Editions Didier Millet)

Over several decades of travelling the continent, Paul Sochaczewski has amassed an astonishingly rich collection of exotic, insightful and quirky stories that manage to be hugely entertaining, unsentimentally enlightening and deeply sensitive all at once. Real-life hobbits, acrobatic cats, Zen-inspired golfing monks – Sochaczewski has an extraordinary gift for tracking down curious but sympathetic characters in far-flung places. This would be an excellent book to dip into occasionally when your spirits need lifting – if only these intoxicating tales didn't keep you excitedly turning the pages.