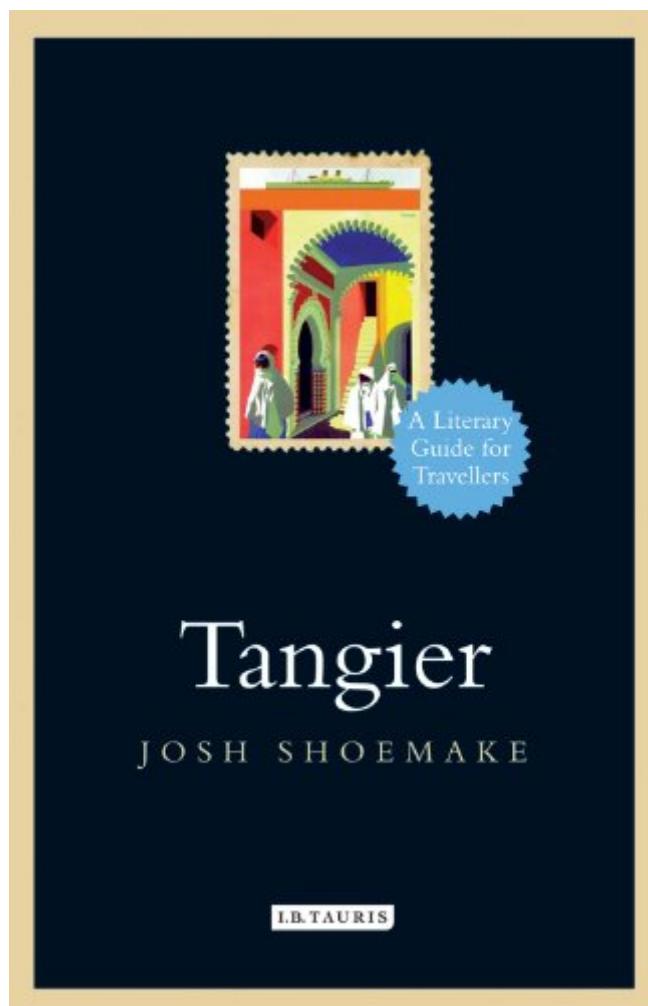


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Tangier: A Literary Guide For Travellers (Literary Guides For Travellers)



Synopsis

An edge city, poised at the northernmost tip of Africa, just nine miles across the Strait of Gibraltar from Europe and overlooking both the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, Tangier is more than a destination, it is an escape, and the Interzone, as William Burroughs called it, has attracted spies, outlaws, outcasts and writers for centuries — men and women working out at the edge of literary forms, breaking through artistic borders. This outlaw originality is what most astonishes when encountering the literary history of Tangier for the first time. Particularly in the past century, the results were some of the most incendiary and influential books of our time, the most prominent being Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* and Paul Bowles' *The Sheltering Sky*. The list of "edge" writers who were drawn to Tangier is long, among them Ibn Battuta, Samuel Pepys, Alexandre Dumas, Mark Twain, Edith Wharton, Walter Harris, Jean Genet, Paul and Jane Bowles, Tennessee Williams, William Burroughs, Brion Gysin, Patricia Highsmith, Jack Kerouac, Truman Capote, Gore Vidal, Allen Ginsberg, Alfred Chester, Joe Orton, and Mohamed Choukri. This enthralling book captures the unconventional, multilayered story of literary Tangier and is a must-have for travellers, armchair adventurers and literature buffs, particularly aficionados of the Beat generation writers and poets who made the city their home.

Book Information

File Size: 1638 KB

Print Length: 288 pages

Publisher: I.B.Tauris; 1 edition (June 26, 2013)

Publication Date: June 26, 2013

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00KGDRRPM

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #404,349 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #18 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Travel > Africa > Morocco #44 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Travel > Specialty Travel > Literary #51 in Kindle Store >

Customer Reviews

Since I have enjoyed traveling to Tangier since 1964 I found this book very interesting and I would recommend to anyone interested in Tangier's recent history.

Eyes wide open, promises kept. After reading Josh Shoemake's debut novel, this reviewer wrote the following: 'The talent inherent in Josh Shoemake is staggering. If this novel PLANET WILLIE is indicative of what we can expect from this young, movie star handsome writer then watch out! The literary world could just be set back on its heels. This is experimental writing at its finest - novel in concept, droll in delivery, packed with double entendres, and yet for all of its literary display of skill it remains a novel that is fascinating as a story - from page one to the end. So what do we know of Josh Shoemake? It is tough to find much biographical information, so that little bit must be quoted: 'Josh Shoemake was a reader in English at Columbia University. He has lived in Morocco since 1996. He spent three years in Tangier, where he taught literature and formed close friendships with Paul Bowles, Mohamed Choukri, and other local artists and writers. He then served for five years as headmaster of The American School of Marrakech and has published stories about Tangier in The Threepenny Review and elsewhere.' Born in Virginia in the United States, Shoemake is making his life along the lines of the other famous ex-pat writers - good company, good experience, good influence, and it definitely shows.' The above bears repeating because this, his second foray into the literary scene, is even more impressive than that first novel. TANGIER: A Literary Guide for Travelers is as fragrant as the lotus blossom that apparently originated in this locale. Shoemake takes us on an imaginary trip of sorts, combining all of the impressive writers and poets who spent time in this exotic Moroccan city that looks from the northern most tip of Africa toward the far different climes of Gibraltar and all of Europe. His characters are drawn from acquaintances and for the powerful and decadent cortège of writers who have Tangier such a seductive locale: Ibn Battuta, Samuel Pepys, Alexandre Dumas, Mark Twain, Edith Wharton, Walter Harris, Jean Genet, Paul and Jane Bowles, Tennessee Williams, William Burroughs, Brion Gysin, Patricia Highsmith, Jack Kerouac, Truman Capote, Gore Vidal, Allen Ginsberg, Alfred Chester, Joe Orton, and Mohamed Choukri. But it is the manner in which Shoemake makes these giants interrelate - his weaving particular places with events and memories or myths that keeps the reader stunned. This is surely one of the best books of the year -at least for readers who thrive on literary history. Josh Shoemake has firmly arrived. Grady Harp, October 13

Shoemake's Tangier came alive for me in this book, which not only made me want to buy a ticket and book a room at the Villa de France but also to go back and reread the writers Shoemake portrays: Burroughs and Brion Gysin and Paul and Jane Bowles, of course, but the list of writers Shoemake knows is comprehensive (the book also includes many Tangerines who never published much but were players, like Joe McPhillips III, the long-time headmaster of the American School in Tangier). Shoemake is definitely the guy you want to show you around this city -as a good guide should, he'll make you feel like an insider. He's companionable, witty, organised, and knows how to present a scene - his enthusiasm is as contagious as his knowledge of Tangier and its writers is encyclopaedic. The book also feels structured like literature (pacing, etc.). So you can relax and enjoy the ride. Terrific!

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