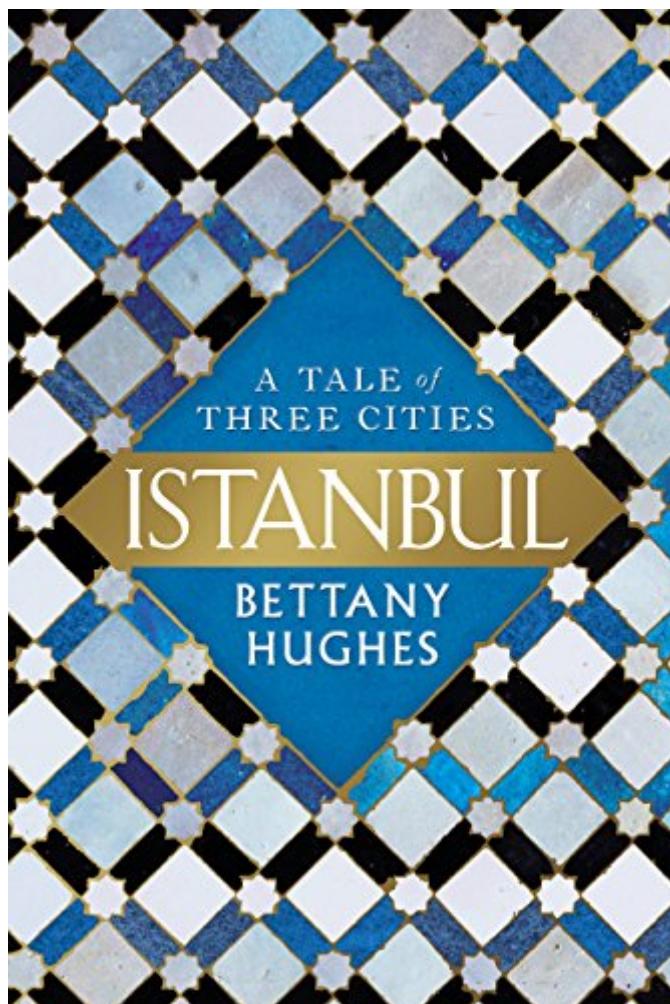


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Istanbul: A Tale Of Three Cities



Synopsis

Istanbul has long been a place where stories and histories collide, where perception is as potent as fact. From the Koran to Shakespeare, this city with three names--Byzantium, Constantinople, Istanbul--resonates as an idea and a place, real and imagined. Standing as the gateway between East and West, North and South, it has been the capital city of the Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman Empires. For much of its history it was the very center of the world, known simply as "The City," but, as Bettany Hughes reveals, Istanbul is not just a city, but a global story. In this epic new biography, Hughes takes us on a dazzling historical journey from the Neolithic to the present, through the many incarnations of one of the world's greatest cities--exploring the ways that Istanbul's influence has spun out to shape the wider world. Hughes investigates what it takes to make a city and tells the story not just of emperors, viziers, caliphs, and sultans, but of the poor and the voiceless, of the women and men whose aspirations and dreams have continuously reinvented Istanbul. Written with energy and animation, award-winning historian Bettany Hughes deftly guides readers through Istanbul's rich layers of history. Based on meticulous research and new archaeological evidence, this captivating portrait of the momentous life of Istanbul is visceral, immediate, and authoritative--narrative history at its finest.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a great admirer of Bettany Hughes video documentaries, I was excited to finally take a go at one of her books about one of my most favorite cities in the world that I am obsessed with- Istanbul. Being that this book wasn't being released in the USA till September, I was delighted to find a seller in Ireland that would ship to me. Ms Hughes, the writer does not disappoint, her writing is easy but covers a wealth of information concerning one of the worlds greatest cities. This is not a light read, the book is massive but well worth it- you can't cram 2000 years of history of such a dynamic city in 200 pages. Again, she is able to bring history to life, but in a style this is not dense and academic. I highly recommend for history buffs, readers that want to know more about how current events came to be.

“Istanbul: A Tale of Three Cities” is a wonderful piece of historic research. Its author, Bettany Hughes, is to be commended. She has brought to life this ancient city where east meets west. I have never been to Istanbul but this one work encourages the travel bug in me. Let me say at the outset that this is no easy book. It is a densely packed 800 pages overladen with facts. It has been meticulously researched and footnoted. Nonetheless, for those with an interest in the history of one of the world’s great cities, this book is brilliant. As its title indicates, Istanbul has been through three main incarnations. Firstly, as Byzantium and its role as the capital of the eastern Roman Empire, then as Constantinople (or even New Rome) from the fall of the empire in Rome until 1453 when it became the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Its name was not changed from Constantinople until 1923 after the fall of the Ottomans and the emergence of the modern Turkish Republic. Regardless of its name, Istanbul is a city that reeks with history. Once a pagan city like the rest of the Roman Empire, Constantine’s self-named city swung to Christianity in the fourth century. In the new millennium, it was touched by the crusades as Christian Europe tried to battle back the rising faith of Islam. Today, of course, it is thoroughly Muslim as the modern republic walks a fine line between faith and the secular state. Although “Istanbul” is no easy read, to the dedicated reader there will be many pleasures. This book is vast in scope with hidden gems. Bettany Hughes has achieved something quite magnificent.

An excellent history, well written with great references. The only problem is that it is too big to carry while walking the streets of Istanbul.

This was a hard read. The history was tediously researched, documented and reported in this

academic tome. The period of the Crusades was not adequately covered. I was very disappointed in this book.

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