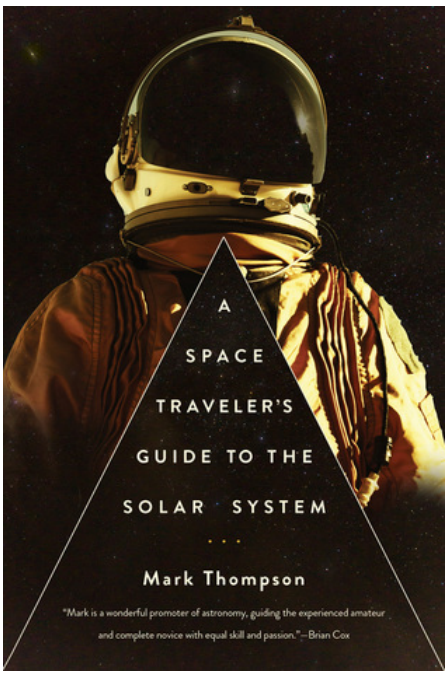

A Space Traveler's Guide to the Solar System

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Have you ever dreamed of being an astronaut, traveling through the universe on your very own space mission? What would it be like to tour the solar system, visiting the sun and the planets, taking in everything from moons to asteroid belts along the way? What would you see, and how would you feel? What would you eat? How would you navigate and produce fuel? How would you survive?

On this epic voyage of discovery, astronomer Mark Thompson takes you on that journey. From how to prepare for take-off and the experience of leaving Earth’s atmosphere, to the reality of living in the confines of a spaceship and the strange sensation of weightlessness, this is an adventure like no other.

Suit up, strap in, and enjoy the ride!

A Space Traveler's Guide to the Solar System Details

Date	:	Published November 8th 2016 by Pegasus Books (first published March 12th 2015)
ISBN	:	9781681772394
Author	:	Mark Thompson
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From Reader Review A Space Traveler's Guide to the Solar System for online ebook

Stephanie says

I got this book from goodreads first reads. It was really great at painting word pictures but it desperately needs picture pictures for it to keep my limited space knowledge afloat. It was witty in parts (like with the song titles in the intro) but very dull in other parts. I really wasn't sure of what audience it was aiming for - it seemed a bit patronizing for adults but too advanced for younger kids perhaps. Some life-in-space asides really caught me off guard ... like the bit on space sex or the crack about horoscopes. Probably my biggest beef with the whole book - and this will be lame for some - was the font....it did some stylistic thing with some of the 'i's at no pattern I could discern that made it jarring and more difficult to read.

David Melbie says

Very essential.

Kristen Thorp says

3.5!

Kelly says

This thin but dense novel about the solar system is the equivalent of The Magic School Bus for adults.

There’s definitely some DRY material here - although that’s purely subjective, as engine and propulsion systems go over my head - but mostly we are approaching the Solar System from the perspective of watching it from the window of an actual ship, which was a fun thought exercise.

I came away from this knowing more about the Oort Cloud, the moons of the gas giants, and the Kuiper Belt. Even though some of the facts were repetitive, I have yet to finish any book about astronomy without renewed appreciation of the vastness of the universe, and how small our part in it really is. It was a lot of information to absorb, but I’m glad to have had the chance to. 3 stars.

Edoardo Albert says

I don't know about you, but I always open a book with the intention to like it (there might have been a slight exception with The Da Vinci Code, but that's the exception that proves only literary incompetence tied to astonishing success will break my general bibliphilic disposition). And I really wanted to like this one: I've read a couple of other, similarly themed but historical books, such as Ian Mortimer's The Time Traveller's

Guide to Medieval England: A Handbook for Visitors to the Fourteenth Century, and really enjoyed them, so I was hoping for something similar from Mark Thompson. What's more, while I read widely about astronomy, planetary and stellar, when I was younger, I've not looked at it much recently, so I expected there to be a huge range of exciting new findings from all the space probes that have visited the solar system's planets and satellites over the last 10-15 years. And there probably is - but I'm afraid, my eyes glazed over and my attention wondered.

This book is dull. Dull, dull, dull. At best, I'd call the prose workmanlike and clear. As a positive, I now understand the mechanics of using the gravity slingshot to accelerate a spaceship to the outer reaches of the solar system much better. But the rest of it is all so dreary.

Look, here's a telling example. Venus, we've found out, rather than being the planet of love is as near hell as you can get this side of death: crushing surface pressure, hot enough to melt lead, sulphuric acid clouds: anyone on the surface would be crushed, cooked and corroded in seconds.

But if that wasn't enough, there is now evidence that the entire planetary surface, every half billion years or so, dissolves into a molten magma lake. This is because Venus has no volcanoes, so there is no mechanism for the heat at the planetary core to escape, so it builds up and builds up and builds up until, in a truly apocalyptic scene, the whole surface of the planet melts, allowing the pent up heat of 500 million years to escape. Then, slowly, it cools and solidifies, and the whole cycle repeats.

So, something pretty juicy for a science writer to get his words into, you'd think? Think again. Here's Mark Thompson's description of Venerean apocalypse:

> Like all the rocky objects in the Solar System, Venus displays thousands of craters, and the majority of them are still in excellent condition. This suggests that there has been minimal erosion of surface detail. More interestingly, it implies that the surface underwent some kind of global restructuring event around 600 million years ago...In a global event that lasted perhaps up to 100 million years, the entire crust weakened and yielded to the mantle, in effect recycling itself.

There, you see? Thompson takes the most cataclysmic event imaginable and turns it into a bloody Bob the Builder episode (for those who don't have toddlers and thus are unaware, Bob is clean and green, and committed to the three 'Rs': Reduce, Reuse, Recycle).

But if dullness was the only objection, I'd give the book three stars: it's at least reasonably clear; good, stolid sciencey stuff. But why, oh why, oh why do science writers, who would be appalled (justifiably) if someone accused them of mixing their neutrons with their neutrinos, not feel the same obligation to check their historical facts as they do about checking their scientific facts? Thompson, in the laziest way imaginable, rehashes the old, old Galileo Affair story as a conflict between obscurantist Churchmen, wedded to outdated and unobservable models of the universe, and brave, bold Galileo, speaking truth to power come hell or house imprisonment. I mean, this version of events went out fifty years ago: even Wikipedia has caught up with what actual historians think about what happened. For a proper review of the myths and realities of the Galileo Affair, see this article, https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-mos..., by historian Tim O'Neill (and lest I be accused of special pleading, note that O'Neill is an atheist and a sceptic).

The consistency with which science writers regurgitate these old lies makes me wonder, in my more

paranoid moments, whether there really is a hidden agenda. But no. It's far more likely to be the lazy assumptions of unexamined prejudice - something as prevalent among scientists and science writers as any other section of the population. So, for this egregious lapse, I'm knocking an extra star off: two out of five stars for *A Space Traveller's Guide to the Solar System*. Try reading some of Patrick Moore's books about the solar system instead - at least he can write.

William Schram says

A Space Traveler's Guide to The Solar System is pretty much what it sounds like. Using his imagination, Mark Thompson takes us on a tour of the solar system, attempting to confront the problems we would face on such a trip. Now it isn't to say that Thompson completely ignores reality but some of the technology he mentions doesn't seem to be feasible. I suppose in the future the chances of such a journey would be more believable, but when it comes right down to it, Space travel isn't really possible with our current level of technology.

So Thompson starts with the Sun, our own local star, and goes outward from there. So he discusses the problems one would have with going to Mercury, Venus, Mars and other places in our Solar System. For instance, if you were to go to Venus, you wouldn't get a very pleasant welcome, though it would be quite warm. Other planets in the Solar System have their own issues with habitation, but you might already know about those problems. Take Jupiter for instance. As a Gas Giant, you would be hard-pressed to find a surface to land on. It isn't as simple as that though, even though Jupiter is gaseous it isn't like you can fly through it.

So that's pretty much the entirety of the book. It talks about the different things you would see in the Solar System and how you would go and deal with the loneliness and boredom of space travel. It does include a lot of facts that I hadn't heard before about our local space area. The book was quite interesting, but it went from possibility to impossibility at the drop of a hat and I didn't know what to think about that.

Lauren says

Solid 3-stars. Reads denser than it should. It's not quite 300 page book & looks like it should be a quick, fun read. It has some interesting moments and good, solid information, though.

Stacy Schmidt says

I had high hopes for this book. After all, it was about traveling through the Solar System! There were parts that were interesting to me, but overall it felt like the author wrote a rather technical book about the Solar System, and then later decided to go back and make it more appealing to a wider audience by adding in the bits about the reader actually traveling to each of these spots. I also think some of the technical terms could have been explained better (or if not explained better, then omitted entirely). I found myself wondering about a couple of things, while other things I knew about but probably still should have been explained for others who didn't happen to know about them. If you are already extremely interested in the Solar System and are looking for a book to increase your technical knowledge of the Sun and planets (and a few other features), you may enjoy this book. If you are just looking for an interesting book about space travel and have an average interest in the Solar System, this book may not meet your expectations.

Rob says

Reading non-fiction now and again is cool! This book, while filled with amazing and facts, is also really interesting, tangible, and relevant.

Stephanie Snyder says

This book is jam-packed with information about the solar system: interplanetary space, the planets themselves, the moons, the sun, etc.

Martin Wood says

I'm giving this book 4 stars because it was full of science, full of descriptions, full of details, and the imagery of the solar system was illustrated without the author drawing one single line. That is impressive. He did an excellent job taking the reader on a journey of our solar system in a way that is the literary version of the Cosmos mini-series. There was a slight story element, but not so much that it pulled the reader away from the science of astronomy and space exploration. If the title is a subject that is of interest to you, this book is a really good overview of our corner of the galaxy.

Christina Dudley says

A fun book which imagines the reader getting on a spaceship for a tour of the solar system. More scientific and less philosophical than Dava Sobel's THE PLANETS, but a nice complement to it, as well as to ARTEMIS, which I'd just read. Especially since the "tour" begins with a visit to the moon.

My eyes did glaze over during some of the technical bits, and I would have loved some illustrations of things I didn't get, but it was still very worthwhile. My 16YO son is reading it now.

Carlos says

I had difficulty with this book, the idea of being aboard a trip that would take you around our solar system seemed like a good premise to write a book about, but while this book tried to make it work , it failed to make this adventure of a lifetime sound fun at all, I'm thankful of all the introduction of the science needed behind such an enterprise , but at some points the terms became too technical and that made a whole chapter seem boring . The author suffers from a lack of direction, he doesn't know who is his audience, there are aspects that could be written for young adults but then there are terms that only adults or an older audience would catch. The language is dry at most points and this book suffered heavily from a lack of images , (not even one) . While the science behind this book is irrefutable, the reach of this book is dubious. Not an easy read and not an entertaining one given the premise .

Jennifer says

Very informative book, but it often read too much like a textbook, which becomes hard to stay engaged with for any period of time. I've read other non-fiction that managed to convey the same level of technical information but in a much more narrative format. The writing format and grammatical style was at times disappointing and unsophisticated. Overall, I learned some interesting things but didn't find myself very engaged and struggled to find desire to read this, despite being very interested in the subject. On the plus side, it did incorporate very recent discoveries nicely and felt very up-to-date.

Sarah says

I was kind of hoping this would be a bit more introductory, but there were times at which a chapter would fall to just technical terms and scientific concepts. It's been years since I had any chance to study any of this so I did find myself wading through it at times.
I did like the framework, and some of the details and information he put in but the tedium of some of the harder, technical stuff was a bit dragging. I can't be too hard on it, as I did learn somethings though. I think with more introduction on the topic I would have been more at ease.
