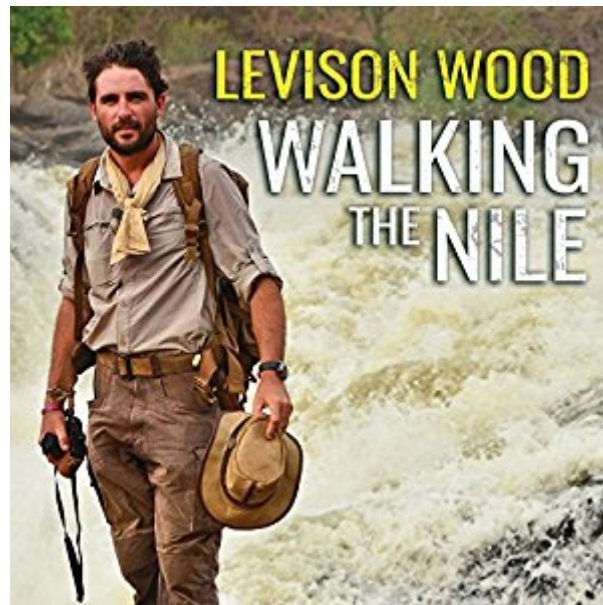


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# Walking The Nile



## Synopsis

Starting in November 2013 in a forest in Rwanda, where a modest spring spouts a trickle of clear, cold water, Levison Wood set forth on foot, aiming to become the first person to walk the entire length of the Nile. He followed the river for nine months, over 4,000 miles, through six nations - Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, South Sudan, the Republic of Sudan, and Egypt - to the Mediterranean coast. Like his predecessors, Wood camped in the wild, foraged for food, and trudged through rainforest, swamp, savannah, and desert, enduring life-threatening conditions at every turn. He traversed sandstorms, flash floods, minefields, and more, becoming a local celebrity in Uganda, where a popular rap song was written about him, and a potential enemy of the state in South Sudan, where he found himself caught in a civil war and detained by the secret police. An inimitable tale of survival, resilience, and sheer willpower, *Walking the Nile* is an inspiring chronicle of an epic journey down the lifeline of civilization in northern Africa.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have been in search of another great travel story since I finished *The Long Way Round* and *The Long Way Down* by Ewan McGregor and Charlie Boorman and this is most definitely it. Levison Wood makes Bear Gryll's look like an amateur with his fantastic story of his trek up the Nile - crocodiles, pythons, close encounters with rebel forces, this book has it all

Levison Wood, right at the beginning of his travelogue, echoing the mountaineer George Mallory's *raison d'être* for climbing Mt. Everest, states that he wanted to walk the length of the Nile

“Because it’s there.” He then amends that statement, saying that he wanted to follow in a great tradition, to achieve something unusual and inspire others, but that much of his motivation was selfish - to go on a great adventure, to test himself. (Kindle location 67) Later he further refines those objectives to a more external, less personal, focus: “to see how [the Nile] shaped lives from the ground, day by day and mile by mile.” (Kindle location 137) He starts his story not at the beginning of his trek, but in the middle as he encounters the front lines of the Sudanese civil war, where he witnesses rocket fire and an angry mob who wants to kill anyone who may be associated with the United Nations (and, as a white Britisher, he could easily be mistaken for one and shot on sight!) The story then moves back in time to the beginning of the trek, in December, 2013, in the Nyungwe Forest in Rwanda, to a tiny spring sprouting a trickle of water from a hole in a rock, claimed by an agent of the National Tourist Board of Rwanda to be the source of the furthest tributary of the Nile. Wood provides a bit of history, linking his forthcoming journey to Alexander the Great and the Roman Emperor Nero, to Stanley and Livingston and Speke, and rooting it in historical and geographic controversy (Lake Victoria is the commonly accepted origin of the White Nile.) And so, Wood sets off, determined to walk every step of the entire 4,250 mile length of the Nile (measured from the Rwandan spring.) We learn quite a bit about the guides and friends who accompany him through different stages of the trek, and the history and details of the living conditions of the villagers and inn-keepers whom he encounters. We learn about the physical difficulties he and his compatriots face - searing heat, blisters, thirst - but actually little about his own personal discomfort. In the manner of the notable British explorers who preceded him, he soldiers on. That doesn’t mean that he isn’t affected by those travails. After all, the group faces many dangerous circumstances, from single-minded crocodiles and hippos in the deep jungle to heat exhaustion in the Sahara Desert to AIDS in the villages to war. Indeed, death does overtake the party, causing some soul-searching in Woods. He wonders if continuing the pursuit of his goal at the risk of the lives of his compatriots is too selfish. While the physical difficulties of the trek are discussed, the majority of the focus is on the societal difficulties Wood faces and that the people met along the way endure - the problems at the borders as he passes through Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, South Sudan, Sudan and Egypt, the collapsing economies and infrastructure, famine, war, and the greed of the police and military personnel. On the 30th of August, 2014, after 271 days of trekking, he reaches the Mediterranean port of Rashid (the place where the Rosetta Stone was discovered), in Egypt. Here the Nile waters complete their long journey and a changed Wood realizes, in contrast to his attitude at the beginning of the venture, that he had only gotten through his journey due to the kindness of strangers, the normal people that he had met day to day - a most

unselfish understanding born out from all of the events experienced in his story. I received a free copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

The experts say Africa is where life started. The Nile River has throughout time held the amazement and fascination of everyone who has witnessed its power as it is the Nile that transformed the way humans came together. Africa as seen through the eyes of the west is often portrayed as one big hopeless mess of a continent. And in many ways it is. Countries that were colonies of the major European powers were handed back to the people with little or no guidance on how to run a country. The governments of these countries are busy doing one or two things almost exclusively; looting and pillaging every last cent whether from money from the West or selling out any natural resources they have to the highest bidder. Or they are imprisoning, and killing their rivals. Now Africa has a new problem to add to those already listed. Religion. The upper portion of the continent is Muslim the lower portion Christian and a variety of other religions, only the Muslim religion of 2016 and beyond is not the old one that allowed people of other faiths. No this new version is, death to anyone who doesn't see things and do things our way. But what about the people? *Walking the Nile* in many ways answers the question what about the people. Throughout the authors trek from a burbling spring in a forest in Rwanda to where the Nile empties into the Mediterranean, the people by and large are just doing whatever they need to survive. And continue to go out of their way to help this walking explorer on his quest, to walk the length of the Nile. 1. Rwanda, a country who will forever be known for one of the worst genocides of its people ever committed. 2. Uganda a country still remembered for its dictator of the late 20th century Idi Amin, and all of the atrocities he committed. 3. South Sudan- barely a country before it broke down into a massive civil war. 4. Sudan the beginning of Islam as far as the trek of the Nile is concerned. A country whose people constantly outdo one another in showing their kindness and generosity, while having to contend with a government who trusts no one. 5. Egypt. A country who goes from good to bad to worse consistently throughout history and currently is in a very bad way. A police state, who doesn't trust its people or foreigners. And it is the people who suffer the most. Reading *Walking The Nile*, you get all of this, along with humor, human insights, history, some hope for the peoples of Africa, and a negative view of their governments. This is a fantastic book.

"*Walking the Nile*" describes Levison Wood's journey of walking the length of the Nile from December 2013 to August 2014. We learn about the author's walk, past explorers who walked the Nile, the history of the countries he walks through (Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, South Sudan,

Sudan, Egypt), and the people that he encountered along his walk. In Rwanda, we see how the genocide impacted their society. In South Sudan, Lev brings the war vividly alive with his descriptions. We meet people like a man who runs an orphanage for children whose parents died of AIDs and a Coptic Christian that was severely beaten and left for dead simply for being a Christian. Of course, there were tales about wildlife encounters, a dangerous desert crossing, difficulties in finding porters, and other difficulties, sorrows, and joys of his travels. The story flowed well and engaged my attention from start to finish. It's worth reading simply for the information about the people and cultures Lev encountered, but it's also a tale of adventure. I'd highly recommend this book. I received an ebook review copy of this book from the publisher through NetGalley.

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