FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Travel

India Exposed: The Subcontinent AZ
Clive Limpkin
Clive Limpkin, photographer
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In 2005 retired photojournalist Clive Limpkin traveled to India with his wife for a surprise birthday party. Having heard endless stories about the overwhelming poverty glacial bureaucracy and hygienic horrors what he didnt expect was for the country to surprise him with utter delight. Within twelve hours of landing he writes in the introduction he and his wife were "hooked" and spent the next three years crisscrossing the continent. Questions from friends back home got them started on how to define the country. Yes it was "overloaded overpopulated overcooked." There was the garbage the begging the red tape. But for all that there were one billion great reasons to visit: the people. As Limpkin writes "It was not the scenery nor the wildlife nor the colors nor the anarchistic madness than made us fall for the country but the number of Indians who with little to their name still smile in greeting."

Limpkin won the Robert Capa Gold Medal from *Life* magazine in 1972 for reporting on the fighting in Northern Ireland. Even with that background India knocked him over with its "jaw-dropping frequency of unbelievable sights." Putting all that wonder into something readable must have seemed daunting and thats why the ABC organization of the book makes sense. Corruption cremation crocodiles. The captions and short essays are very literate and very very funny. How about Driving: "As for night driving Ive never been so scared outside a combat zone. Indian night driving actually is a combat zone-if you cant get a bed for the night find a ditch cover yourself with leaves and wait for dawn." Or under Army "think the Rockettes meet John Cleese."

The entries-tea telephones temples turbans-can be informative: how marrying a banana tree can solve problems when youre not born in compatible houses; dromedary camels tolerate body temperatures from 93-106 degrees; the state of rural and urban infrastructure; how 300 plastic bags reside in the stomach of an average Indian cow; hockey is the national sport;

lunchbox distribution in Mumbai has the worlds highest business efficiency rating given by *Forbes* even though the distributors are mostly illiterate; and seven percent of the total population is nomadic. Theres ahead-of-the-curve tourist information like that the glaciers feeding the Ganges may dry up by 2030 and that hookahs come in Pepsi-flavor. And philosophy like this bit under pace: “A first impression of India might be of many spare people waiting around for something to happen. That might also be the last impression as there are times when the pace in the subcontinent can drop to a gear so unknown to the West it becomes therapeutic to watch.”

One of the best things about *India Exposed* is its manageable size-a square 8 x 8 . What that means is that this book wont need to sit like a white elephant on coffee tables; it can travel and will and invites you to. As Limpkin says “If all you want to see on vacation is your toes at the end of a chaise lounge then stick to Florida but if the real world beckons the unbelievable real world then I hope this book might encourage you to consider India-love it or loathe it.” Includes an index.