

The Trivia Lover's Guide to the World: Geography for the Lost and Found

Gary Fuller

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When asked after which animal the Canary Islands were named, most people would groan and say, “The canary, of course.” However, they were in fact named after the dog—canis is Latin for dog, from which the word “canine” is also derived—and it was the bird which received its name from the island.

Facts like these make *The Trivia Lover's Guide to the World* an intriguing read, but it is also the author's voice, informative yet entertaining, that will appeal to fact collectors and geography lovers. Fuller opens each chapter with a question or two, to which the reader may feel confident they know the answer, but by the end of the three-page chapter he has both provided an answer that surprises the reader and included half a dozen other interesting facts and historical anecdotes that help to enforce remembering the answer. The book is organized into forty-five short chapters to keep the reader engaged, and to prevent a factual overload.

The Trivia Lover's Guide to the World encapsulates the Earth's geographical history from before the tectonic plates created the seven continents, through the wartime period of ever-changing country borders, and to the present day, where Maine is not the northernmost state in the US—it's Minnesota—and if one were to go straight south from Detroit, the first foreign country one would come across is Canada, not Mexico. In demystifying the geographical myths that many people have come to believe, Fuller expands the reader's desire to learn about the world.

Packed with simple and understandable maps and diagrams to complement the text, the book encourages a love of learning and a development of logical thinking. Fuller's thirty-five years of experience as a professor at the University of Hawaii are evident, and his writing style gives an idea of his lecture style: engaging, enlightening, and fun. He received a PhD in geography from Penn State and has been a winning contestant on *Jeopardy!* Though he says himself that “trivia, by definition, is unimportant,” his passion for the subject is marked.

AIMEE JODOIN (August 30, 2012)

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