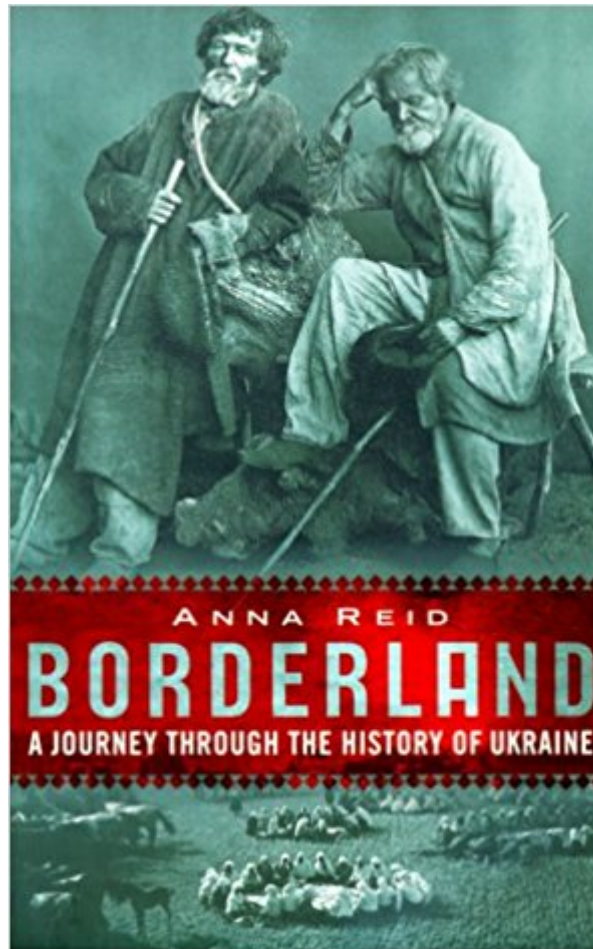




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# Borderland: A Journey Through The History Of Ukraine



## Synopsis

Borderland tells the story of Ukraine. A thousand years ago it was the center of the first great Slav civilization, Kievan Rus. In 1240, the Mongols invaded from the east, and for the next seven centuries, Ukraine was split between warring neighbors: Lithuanians, Poles, Russians, Austrians, and Tatars. Again and again, borderland turned into battlefield: during the Cossack risings of the seventeenth century, Russia's wars with Sweden in the eighteenth, the Civil War of 1918&#150;1920, and under Nazi occupation. Ukraine finally won independence in 1991, with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Bigger than France and as populous as Britain, it has the potential to become one of the most powerful states in Europe. In this finely written and penetrating book, Anna Reid combines research and her own experiences to chart Ukraine's tragic past. Talking to peasants and politicians, rabbis and racketeers, dissidents and paramilitaries, survivors of Stalin's famine and of Nazi labor camps, she reveals the layers of myth and propaganda that wrap this divided land. From the Polish churches of Lviv to the coal mines of the Russian-speaking Donbass, from the Galician shtetlekh to the Tatar shantytowns of Crimea, the book explores Ukraine's struggle to build itself a national identity, and identity that faces up to a bloody past, and embraces all the peoples within its borders.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Borderland tells the story of Ukraine. Centre of the first great Slav civilisation in the tenth century, and divided between warring neighbours for the next thousand years, Ukraine finally won independence with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Bigger than France and as populous as Britain,

it has the potential to become one of the leading states of Europe. Talking to peasants and politicians, rabbis and racketeers, dissidents and paramilitaries, survivors of Stalin's famine and of Nazi death camps, Anna Reid combines historical research and her own experiences to dissect the bloody and controversial past of this little-known land. 'If you think you couldn't be interested in Ukraine - and I thought I couldn't - you should read this book' Matthew Parris, A Good Read, Radio 4 'A beautifully written evocation of Ukraine's brutal past and its shaky efforts to construct a better future' Borderland is a tapestry woven of the stories of all its inhabitants, recording their triumphs and their conflicts with the fairness of a compassionate outsider' Financial Times  
PHOENIX NON-FICTION/HISTORY UK £7.99 CAN \$17.95 Cover photograph: [Details to follow] Isbn: 1 84212 722 5 --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Anna Reid was the Kiev correspondent for The Economist and the Daily Telegraph and has written for the Washington Post, Financial Times, and The Spectator.

It is interesting that in my opinion the other Reviewer's view points are both to some extent equally correct- the book is interesting but superficial. I find the author overall presents an interesting and readable book. However, anecdotal stories can only take you so far for reasons that are obvious. If you happen to visit a certain place or speak to a certain person at a particular time, you will get one viewpoint and talk to someone else you may and probably will get a different story or outlook.. After all, that is human nature. Ask yourself how different a book about the United States would be depending on whether you "met" and spoke to a Upper East Side New Yorker, a rancher from Texas, a Latino from L.A. or an African American from Mississippi. I think the stories and impressions would be quite different- not wrong, but different. In the case of Anna Reid's book, my only objection is to the use of the term "History" in the title of the book (probably the editor's choice) because she truly writes about her journey through Ukraine and not its history. As such, her book is both informative and interesting but needs to be read and understood in that context.

My family and I wanted to prepare for an upcoming trip to the Ukraine and ordered this book because it was said to be an interesting combination of history and travel. The history is written very well and explains the complicated story of the Ukraine. From time to time, a site is mentioned briefly, but this book is not a travel book. However, it did pique our interest and as a result we have read many related articles.

This book provides a decent overview, but was not as developed as I had expected, a bit too conversational and breezy, lacking necessary depth. Thus, the author leaves the geographical space of what constitutes "Ukraine" too vague. National boundaries are especially political here in this crossover region through which various ethnicities have passed, co-mingled and settled, but have too often lived in conflict, as is happening here now. That Ukraine is a Borderland is suggested by the title, but the book's discussion falls short conceptually. While readers will gain some understanding of the area's history, they will not be engaged to think about the more complex issues affecting this culturally rich but troubled country.

Anna Reid gives a thorough but concise history of Ukraine from it's founding in medieval times to the present. Especially interesting is her addendum bringing the 1990s edition into the current eastern war. This brought back all the "ukrainoznavstvo" lessons of my youth. More than ever I want to go there.

I bought this book for my husband who's family came from the Ukraine. He started reading it and did not want to put it down. He loves it. It is thorough, interesting, and human. An excellent read and an excellent purchase.

Very informative and well researched

Very well written !

After reading many history books including this one, I have come to the conclusion that I am part of the "Ukrainian Diaspora". I say this up front so that the reader of this review can determine my 'bias' on the subject. My credentials are impeccable: Grandparents born in Ukraine towns, ending up in Germany after the war, displaced persons camps, eventually the U.S., etc. A few quick impressions of this book: \* I have not read a book in recent times that was in such dire need of an addendum or afterward... something. I was in Ukraine in 2008 and can barely relate to what Anna Reid experienced. Don't get me wrong, I can visualize it. But her experiences were definitely not my experiences by any stretch. I was in many cities including Kiev, Sevastopol, Simferopol, Melitopol, and smaller villages as well. Orange Revolution anyone? \* It is amazing to read a book where I kept waiting for the crescendo of some fantastic point but only to find the chapter ending. Seriously. Is this something they teach in Journalism School? I was left to make my own conclusions, which

based on her facts always seem to be: "Oh you silly Uke's. You don't have any real history, what are you getting so uptight about?" With that being said, I really think Anna Reid did a fantastic job discussing Communism: the Kulak purges, the political famine, etc. If she is giving the 'Russian' version of events she doesn't seem to have a problem throwing the commies under the bus. At times it was hard to read because it churned my stomach. I feel fortunate to be able to trace my family tree and not find it ending in some Siberian gulag or a mass grave in a forest. The World War II section was illuminating as well. Ms. Reid has some interesting historical stuff regarding the German attitudes towards the peasantry. As the Grandson of an 'Ostarbeiter' I felt like she was talking about my Grandma; anti-semitism and all. She does seem to gloss over the Cossacks. After just finishing *The Black Sea: A History* it is hard to believe that this book doesn't give them short shrift. Here is my bottom line: I would not give this book to a friend travelling to the Ukraine for the first time. I would rather they experience the hustle and bustle of Kiev. The warm breezes of Sevastopol along the Black Sea. Picking cherries near the sea of Azov. Upon returning they can read this book and compare it to their own experiences and flesh out their understanding of the region. Certain parts of this book serve as a decent historical reference. Ms. Reid's commentary on the other hand... well it seems to be stuck in the past while Ukraine moves forward.

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