

Meander: East To West, Indirectly, Along A Turkish River - Jeremy Seal

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The Meander is a river so famously winding that its name has long since come to signify the frustrations and the virtues of the indirect approach; an approach that the author makes use of while traveling the length of the river alone and by kayak. Jeremy Seal, a natural raconteur, takes readers from the Meander's source in the uplands of Central Turkey to its mouth on the Aegean, with as many historical, cultural, and personal asides as there are bends in the river. The river itself has largely been forgotten, but the Meander was the original conduit by which the cultures of Europe and Asia first met, then clashed. The city at the river's mouth saw the first great flowering of western philosophical thought, 2500 years ago. The city at the river's source commanded the mountain pass that carried the world's earliest roads leading to Mesopotamia and on to India. All manner of legendary adventurers, soldiers, and visionaries passed through: the Persian King Xerxes on his way to defeat at Salamis, Alexander the Great en route to his conquest of Asia, and St. Paul establishing the earliest of the Christian churches, to name just a few. Today the Meander valley is the home to an extraordinary mix of people, some ethnic Turks but many others, too, who were resettled during times of Ottoman upheaval. Although the river hasn't ferried goods or people (due to too many twists and turns), its shores are home to fishermen and farmers, bandits and classicists, a group as varied and interesting as the river's storied past. Present day will sit beside past, ideas will give way to anecdote, and characters will abound in this atmospheric, incident-rich, and free-flowing portrayal of the essential meeting point between East and West. Author: Seal, Jeremy
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