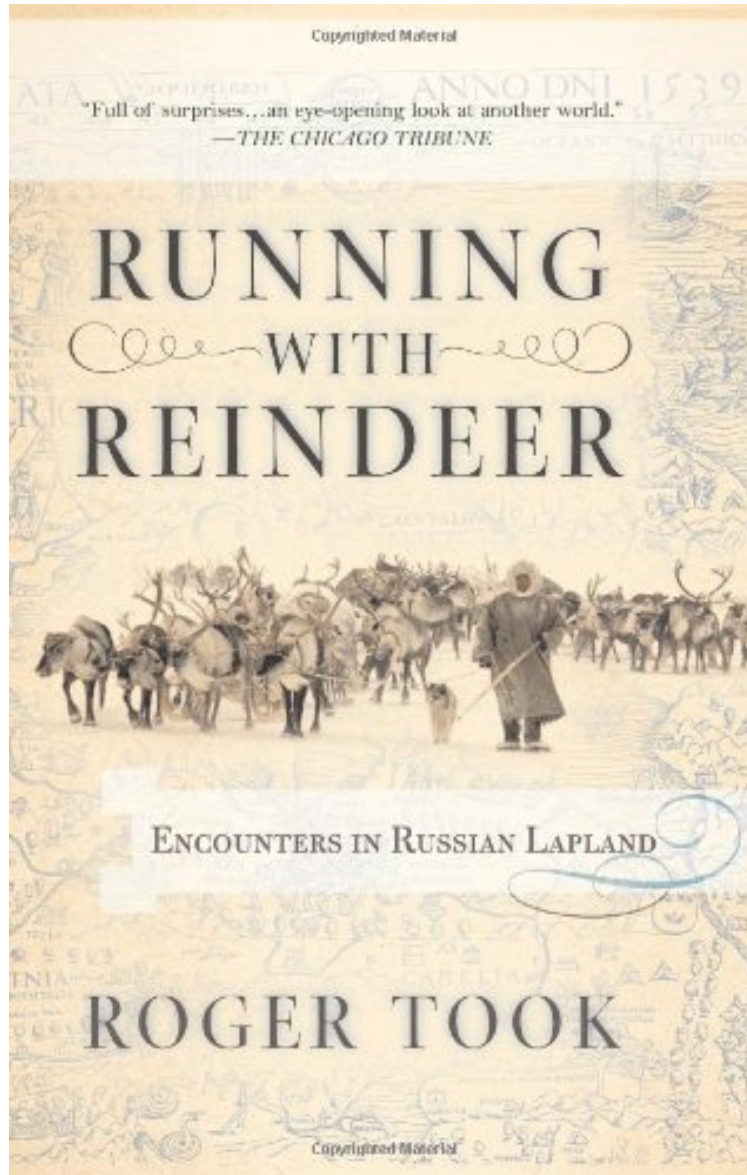


## Running With Reindeer: Encounters In Russian Lapland

*Roger Took*

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**Roger Took : Running With Reindeer: Encounters In Russian Lapland** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Running With Reindeer: Encounters In Russian Lapland:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Well written book about most interesting times! By Beatrice Roger Took's background, conviction and subsequent suicide aside, this is a wonderful book filled with information of a kind that is difficult to find. I mean, I'm sure no other criminal in history has ever written a book... hopefully he will never

profit from the sale of his books... \*rolling eyes\* As research for a novel I'm writing, his recounting of his travels is invaluable and it is written in an easy to read, engaging style with keen observations on both the Native culture and the systematic upheaval of the Old Russian, then Soviet way of life. Yes, much has probably changed since he was there last, but then again, probably not. He went to very remote regions where people have a habit of surviving that which city dwellers often have hardship with. Reading it is an adventure in a land we can barely understand (if you live in the US) and is such a window into history - history many of us lived through, but rarely understood. Then again, some of what the Soviets did back then is much like the US is doing now with all their asset seizures, Eminent Domain and other abuses. So maybe it's a very current lesson.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A surprising story of Russian Lapland  
By Colin Denny  
In 'Running with Reindeer' Roger Took provides an insight into the fascinating social, economic and political history of the Kola Peninsula. At one time the wilderness area was occupied solely by reindeer herding and hunting families and the fur traders with whom they dealt. Eventually local Saami people were oppressed by the growth of the aggressive Soviet mining and military economy. The decline in Russian military power and the decay in the region are all described making this an essential book for those planning to travel in the Barents Sea and the White Sea area. Roger Took brings to life a little known part of the world, much of which has been hidden from western eyes.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Not much about Saami people  
By Mary L. Montoya  
I was looking for a book about the Saami people. The title of the book implied it was about them. This book provided limited information about them and mostly information about the political history of northwestern Russia.

Russian Lapland, a region of amazing contrasts. Here lies the last true wilderness of Europe, a rich and pristine ecosystem teeming with bird and animal life. But here too lie the dark, satanic mills of the former Soviet Union and the rotting remnants of nuclear submarines. *Running with Reindeer* is the first account in over a century to describe life in this harsh but beautiful land. Living among remote reindeer-herding and hunting families, Roger Took spends a decade following the lives and traditions of the indigenous Lapps, or Saami. He meets pioneering villagers descended from medieval Novgorod fur-traders who are now learning to cope with the new economy, and the men and women originally forced north to mine Russian Lapland's fabulous mineral wealth but are now unemployed and stranded. Avoiding the still vigilant security services, he explores the naval bases where nuclear-powered submarines are lying dangerously neglected. His encounters with the land and its inhabitants are dramatic and comical as well as emotionally disturbing and physically dangerous. Moving between the lines of the official histories, coping with arduous Arctic conditions, he writes compellingly, offering a vivid account of a unique part of Europe.

From Publishers Weekly  
Wanting to explore Europe's last wilderness, Took, an art historian and museum curator, made numerous trips during the 1990s to the far northwest corner of the Russian Federation and evocatively recounts his journey. Traveling alone, he camped, stayed in deplorable hotels and lived with the few people in Russian Lapland who would invite a stranger into their homes. First he went to the interior to find the Saami, the indigenous people who have herded reindeer for thousands of years in a region that is still rich with wildlife. Then, ignoring warnings that the area was too dangerous, he went to the northern coast, a restricted military zone. Although he was not always successful at evading the patrols and border guards, he managed to see some of the decaying nuclear-powered submarines and nuclear reactors that are rotting along the grim coast of the Barents Sea. He also visited Monchegorsk, home to nickel-processing plants that have polluted thousands of square kilometers as far away as Finland, Sweden and Norway, and went on an expedition with an organization doing research on Soviet forced labor camps. His wide-ranging book encompasses thousands of years of Russian Lapland's history, from the time when the Saami lived in harmony with nature to today, when a region whose traditional ways were devastated by Soviet collectivism is now succumbing to the economic problems that beset modern Russia. This is a fascinating, albeit bleak, portrait of a largely unknown part of the world. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Booklist  
This is the first detailed description of life on Russia's Kola Peninsula in nearly 100 years. After the fall of Communism, the author, a British art historian and museum curator, read an article that described Russian Lapland (also known as the Murmansk Region) as a vast, uninterrupted, natural landscape. "I was hooked," Took writes. Armed with a crash course in Russian and some self-preservation training--he learned, among other things, "about killing people before they could kill me"--he set off into a region where there were few roads and where he knew no one, traveling alone in a military zone. Combining traditional travelogue with history, Took brings this little-known piece of Russia vividly to life, placing it in its political and social context. Lapland is a region struggling to enter the twenty-first century, with naval bases housing decrepit nuclear submarines, with villagers descended from medieval traders. Recommend this one more to readers of politics and history than to fans of lighthearted travel memoirs, although there are moments here that will appeal to the latter. David Pitt  
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'A compelling story of adventure spent with the reindeer-herding and hunting community that exists on the fringes of the modern world' -- Daily Express, BOOK OF THE WEEK 2003  
201 'Like most visitors to Russia, Roger Took finds warmth, humour and generosity. He gives an entertaining account of his experiences in a region that remains, despite salmon, apatite and the Northern Fleet, one of the uttermost parts of the earth' -- Independent on

Sunday 20030302 'Pure adventure ... A fascinating and convincing picture of one of the most inhospitable and inaccessible corners of the world' -- TLS 20030509 'An absorbing and almost encyclopaedic account of northern travels ... Out of Roger Took's story emerges the beauty of the land, the well-observed character and comedy of the people, the smells of food and smoky tents' -- Trevor Fishlock, Daily Telegraph 20030222 'Gripping ... Full of information about historical sideshows, the book also charts the changes that have taken place in the last decade. It presents a picture of an utterly unfamiliar corner of the last Russian empire -- remote, troubled and run-down' -- Justin Cartwright, Sunday Telegraph 20030222 'Enthralling ! as we ride with Roger, wrapped in deerskins, through a frosty forest, on a reindeer sledge' -- Wanderlust 20030222 'Roger Took has style, and his elegantly written and sometimes nicely self-deprecating prose makes his book quite exceptional in recent travel writing on Russia' -- East-West 20030222 'One of those rare, remarkable books that leave the reader with a vivid sense of a part of world he is unlikely to visit ! Took's curiosity and gently self-deprecating style make him the perfect guide to this fascinating land' -- Mail on Sunday 20040201 'What a superb Reindeer book! It's now tempting me to read not only at bed-time, when reading for fun is allowed, but at intervals during the day when I should be writing.' -- Dervla Murphy 20040201 'Fascinating ... a remarkable image of this little-known region' -- Sunday Times 20040912