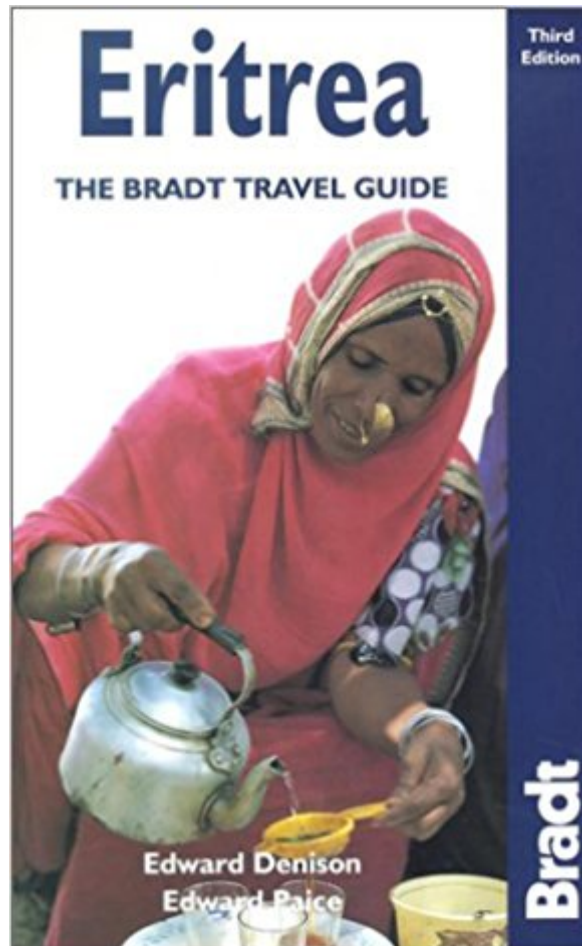




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Eritrea, 3rd: The Bradt Travel Guide



Synopsis

A new edition of the essential guide for independent travelers to this unusual and remarkable African country, which has emerged from its war-torn past to welcome tourists with its reclaimed independence. This update provides the freshest source of information published on a compact and traveler-friendly country that has seen many changes. The Eritreans' overwhelming hospitality makes their country readily explorable with the aid of the maps, notes, and language section in this guide; and the interior, rich in historical remains, is well worth visiting. Its colonial past has stamped the capital, Asmara, with the charm of a southern Italian town, featuring numerous bars, caf  s, pastry shops, broad avenues, and markets, plus a Roman Catholic cathedral. Eritrea's main port, Massawa, is a natural gateway to diving off some of the 350 islands in the Red Sea. The Dahlak Islands are easily accessible from the mainland for travelers and Eritrea provides the background to the natural history of this treasure trove of fish, corals, and shells, and haven for birds, dolphins, turtles, and the rare dugong.

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Customer Reviews

“I was greatly helped by [this] guide.” - George Mandel, Israel (consumer) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Edward Paice, author of the original Bradt Travel Guide to Eritrea, is a full-time author with interests in history, natural history, and Africa. Edward Denison has updated this new edition of Eritrea, having originally visited the country as a student of architecture.

This is one of the poorest guidebooks I have ever used! In strong contrast to Bradt's excellent guide to neighbouring Ethiopia, this guide to Eritrea is so poor it is nearly useless. Even before departure, I found that the book just failed to make Eritrea sound exciting - it made it sound dull. The very weakest points are its maps! Can you believe that a full page regional map of say, Western Eritrea, can have a grand total of four (yes, FOUR!) places in that region marked on it, fewer than are marked on the much smaller map for the entire country, and failing to show even the places that are described in the relevant section of the guide??? The city map for Asmara is a joke (I've uploaded a scanned image of it to see for yourself), with no names marked for most streets, and most of those that are marked being old names that were changed years ago. Things to see & do? Very few described, very poorly. History & politics? These chapters look as if they had been contributed by the propaganda department of the Eritrean government, with glorifying accounts of the heroic fight for freedom and no mentioning of the disgraceful present. Flora & fauna? The author's knowledge seems to end at distinguishing a mammal from a bird - maybe. The bottom line is that until Bradt gets a new author to rewrite this guide completely, you are far better off reading the shorter but much better chapter on this wonderful country in Lonely Planet's Ethiopia & Eritrea guide than wasting your money, like I did, on ordering this book. The 2 stars were only given as an acknowledgement for the publisher's effort to put out a separate guide to this unusual destination, not for the actual value of this book which is closer to zero.

To my knowledge this is the only guidebook in English devoted solely to Eritrea. The closest comparator is the Lonely Planet guide which covers both Ethiopia and Eritrea. As one might expect in a volume devoted purely to Eritrea, this volume has more information and detail (more maps of specific towns, for example) and the historical discussion of the origins of the independence movement is informative. As another reviewer mentioned, successive political regimes have changed the names of streets in downtown Asmara; in my experience, local people are familiar with both the "traditional" and the "official" names, and the use of the maps in this guide was not problematic. The one aspect in which the Lonely Planet guide tops this book is in that book's walking tours which I found quite useful.

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