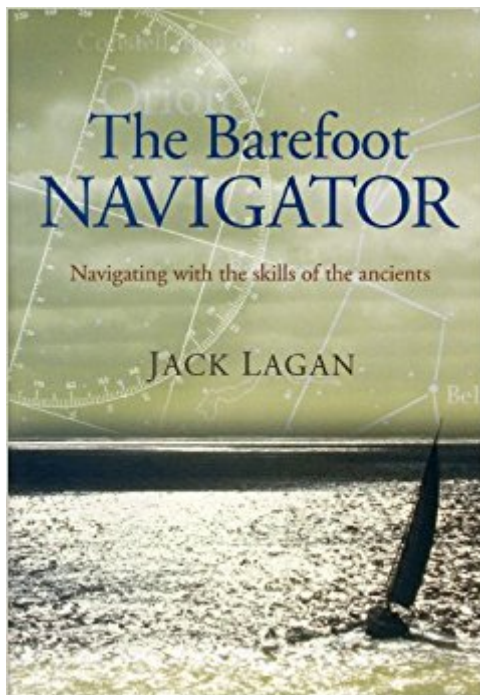


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The Barefoot Navigator



Synopsis

The Barefoot Navigator is the most innovative book about marine navigation for decades. Jack Lagan believes there is nothing so valuable at sea as standing on a deck and just knowing where you are using special knowledge about the sea and the sky and using your senses--in other words, practical technology-free navigation. Part 1 looks at the navigation achievements of the ancient seafarers--the Pacific islanders, the Vikings, the Phoenicians, the Arabs and the Chinese. Just how did the South Pacific islanders manage to populate every habitable island in an area bigger than North America? And did the Phoenicians really circumnavigate Africa 2,000 years before Vasco de Gama? Part 2 explains how to use the wind, swell, sun and stars to estimate position and hold a course. And how sea breezes, isolated clouds and seabirds can make a landfall safer. Part 3. shows how you can use DIY devices to calculate latitude, obtain bearings and estimate longitude. Part 4 describes how all these techniques can be used in survival situations. The Barefoot Navigator is about wayfinding from what you can see around you and what you have in your head. It will fascinate navigators and landlubbers alike.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Barefoot Navigator is a cleverly written little book that combines the history of the ancient art of navigation with the practical application of those techniques today. (Ocean Navigator) Ever wonder how the Polynesians managed to find their way throughout the Pacific? And what about the Vikings? Even if they would have stopped to ask for directions, no one had any. There were no navigation instruments or charts. This book investigates their navigation capabilities and shows you

how practical, technology-free navigation can be used to enhance modern navigation. Interesting stuff! (Latitudes & Attitudes)The navigation skills of the ancients were legendary yet seem to pale in comparison with modern technology and navigation research – but The Barefoot Navigator: Navigating with the Skills of the Ancients offers up an important survey of these early skills, and applies them to modern times. From how to analyze clouds and currents to determine direction to how 21st century sailors can integrate these techniques with modern equipment, any sailor will find The Barefoot Navigator intriguing. (Midwest Book Review)[Lagan's] returned to square one: the skills of the ancients, who found tiny islands hundreds of miles away by discerning the amplitude, wave-length, and direction of the seas; the positions of stars and constellations; the size and behavior of seabirds; and the like. The Barefoot Navigator is an exciting read that makes a compelling argument: To navigate better and with greater satisfaction, sailors must learn more about the sea around them. (Cruising World)

Jack Lagan is about wayfinding from what you can see around you and from what you have in your head. It will fascinate navigators and landlubbers alike.

The book is not usefull for non instrumental navigation.The solar compass is only valid for the Equator (and with some errors within the tropics)The supposed universal star compass is only valid for the Equator.There are other mistakes, like the conversion from time error to Longitude error.If somebody uses the book for non instrumental sailing in temperated latitudes will not succeed at all.

Foundational and fascinating. My navigational world will never be the same.

It's always good to know about history, about how they have done theirs great achievements.Polynesias, Vikings and early navigators when there's no GPS or radio beacons.

I came to this book as a person with a strong interest in history; so I did not care that much how it is done, but what I wanted was an appreciation of how it was done.Going through the book, I found some parts that I found hard to follow. It was clearly written with a person with considerable knowledge of yachting and navigation, something that I do not have. Conversely, the book did describe much, and I could follow much of it.I would have liked a greater study on dead reckoning, something that the ancient navigators used considerably.Furthermore, I found his knowledge of history on the subject extremely good.

I found this book fairly good, but I was a bit disappointed. I thought the author could have done a better job explaining Polar sticks, astolabes, cross-staffs, and backstaffs. He also mentions a knotted rope held in your teeth without complete explanation. Diagrams would have helped. There was a diagram of a Polar stick, but it didn't make sense to me. I had to google those to get a better handle on how they worked. He does a great job with quadrants and sun-shadow boards, including diagrams and instructions on constructing your own. Wish he had done the same for the three I mentioned. He also describes how to calculate your latitude by measuring the altitude of stars as they cross your meridian. He uses Mintaka (a star in the belt of Orion). He says you don't have to worry about declination when it comes to stars. I think the only reason you can ignore declination with Mintaka is because its declination is close to zero (the same way you can ignore the declination of the sun during equinoxes as the declination equals zero). But he suggests you can ignore declination with stars in general when calculating latitude. He writes on page 104, "No, I didn't forget to allow for the declination - that only applies to the sun; consider it a huge bonus for working with the stars." I believe that is just plain wrong. I'm not an expert on Celestial Navigation and if I'm wrong, I'm sure someone will correct me. Also his website no longer exists. The address takes you to a site in Asian lettering that doesn't have anything to do with the author. I tried googling the author Jack Lagan, but it seems that he has dropped off the face of the earth. I hope he is in good health. All in all a fairly good book with, but marred by the issues I described above.

I definitely recommend this book. It will make you a better navigator even if you don't adopt the low-tech navigation solutions he recommends because it will clarify the origins/basis of major navigational concepts, such as latitude and longitude, etc. One thing worthy of note. There are approximately four places where the (nicely printed) text flatly contradicts itself. A diagram will incorrectly refer to the "Southwesterly" trade winds immediately after the text clarifies that they are "Southeasterly." This can raise confusion about the point that section tries to make, which is that winds are named from the direction they come FROM, not the direction they blow TOWARD. The diagram will suggest the opposite (wrong) answer. Elsewhere, there are several contradictions about Zenith Distance being positive or negative. The picture or text will say that ZD is positive, immediately followed by a caption that tells you it is negative, or vice versa. These are small blemishes on an otherwise brilliant and fine book, but the reader should be aware of them. Some of the other moments are tricky to follow, but that is due to the complexity of the subject. Lagan is a good, clear writer. If you read him patiently (and go over difficult concepts a few times), all the

information you need is there. This is a truly fascinating look at pre-technology (and for much of it, pre-compass) navigation. Well worth having on your shelf.

Students of Polynesian history are familiar with tales of sailors crossing vast expanses of the Pacific. Lagan's book, *The Barefoot Navigator* begins with a discussion of their ancient techniques before exploring other ancient navigators; Norse, Chinese, and Arab. Lagan's premise is that modern sailors are too dependent on electronic navigation tools and that those tools are subject to failure. In contrast the movement of sun and stars, ocean currents, and weather patterns have remained consistent for eons. The prudent sailor will know how to use natural patterns to safely navigate when electronics fail. By following the historical development of navigational techniques, Lagan introduces complex topics in a simple, easy to understand manner. Along the way he shows how ancients used primitive navigation tools to find their way across oceans and deserts. Lagan instructs the sailor on building and using these tools built of string, sticks, and hands and fingers. Informative and entertaining, an evening or two spent with *The Barefoot Navigator* will yield a wealth of knowledge of interest to any sailor, knowledge that might just help you reach your destination. Dave Lochner Nautical Reads

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