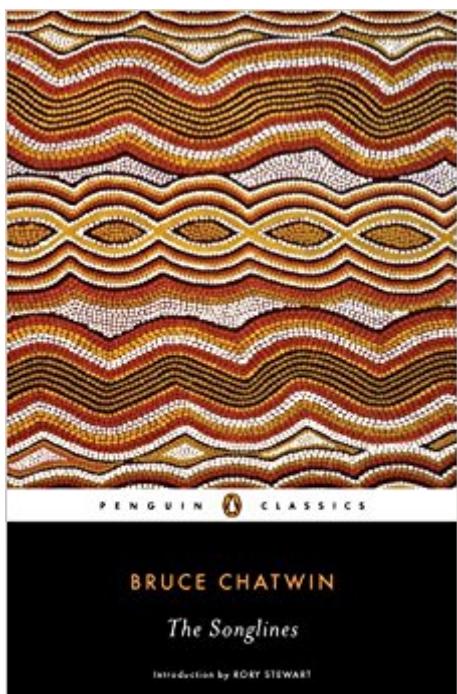


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# The Songlines (Penguin Classics)



## Synopsis

For its twenty-fifth anniversary, a new edition of Bruce Chatwin's classic work with a new introduction by Rory Stewart. Part adventure, part novel of ideas, part spiritual autobiography, *The Songlines* is one of Bruce Chatwin's most famous books. Set in the desolate lands of the Australian Outback, it tells the story of Chatwin's search for the source and meaning of the ancient "dreaming tracks" of the Aborigines— "the labyrinth of invisible pathways by which their ancestors "sang" the world into existence. This singular book, which was a *New York Times* bestseller when it was published in 1987, engages all of Chatwin's lifelong passions, including his obsession with travel, his interest in the nomadic way of life, and his hunger to understand man's origins and nature. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A blend of travelogue, memoir, history, philosophy, science, meditation, and commonplace book...Chatwin's astonishing style captures the metamorphoses of his own 'Walkabout'....He takes

the travel genre beyond exoticism and the simple picturesque into the metaphysical." "The Boston GlobeThe riches of The Songlines are varied and artfully stashed. Chatwin's physical journey over Australia's parched hide corresponds to his intellectual excursions, which are full of surprising turns." "Time" "No ordinary book ever issues from Bruce Chatwin. Each bears the imprint of a dazzlingly original mind." "Newsday

Bruce Chatwin (1940-1989) was the author of *In Patagonia*, *The Viceroy of Ouidah*, *On the Black Hill*, *The Songlines*, and *Utz*. His other books are *What Am I Doing Here* and *Anatomy of Restlessness*, posthumous anthologies of shorter works, and *Far Journeys*, a collection of his photographs that also includes selections from his travel notebooks. Rory Stewart is the author of *The Prince of the Marshes* and *The Places in Between*.

A superb reflection on man's innate need to make connections with his landscape and give them enduring meaning. I read this book more than twenty years ago and again now and it has lost nothing of its original resonance

The Aboriginal people of Australia and their culture never cease to be amazing! Imagine navigating the terrain by the means of rhythm, song, and onomatopoeia as direction? The Aboriginal people have learned to do this as passed down generation to generation.

great quality - quick shipping

A writer with a curious mind like Bruce Chatwin doesn't come our way very often. The book centers on his investigation into the "songlines" of the native Australian cultures. Songlines are mystical pathways by which the ancient ones "sang" the world into existence [taken from the back cover]. Chatwin has a keen eye for detail and his curiosity leads him into many adventures. The book was published in 1987, so I would suspect that his ruminations on early human fossils, myth and the nature of violence in human culture may be a bit outdated when one considers that theories of human evolution are changing with every new discovery. I especially liked his entries about the nature of travel and movement in human nature. His digression on the moleskin notebook is amusing, especially considering the fact that the moleskin is my notebook of choice. For those interested in deep history of Australia, the human need to keep on the move and peculiar characters found in and around Alice Springs, this is a must read.

It's interesting to read about Chatwins life and understand how this book did bring together many of his passions. The book is unusual. Part story of his travel into the outback with a Russian expert in aboriginal language and sacred sites, Arkady, and a cast of aboriginal and other characters that they meet in the course of Arkady's work. Then also part anecdotes from other adventures of Chatwin's that explore nomadic lifestyles around the world, particularly in Africa, and sections with references to discussions and quotations from scientists and others on anthropology, mythology, the nomadic lifestyle and the origin of man. These sections are interspersed as chapters of quotes and references and notes from discussions that Chatwin has had, throughout the book. And then of course the mythological songlines of the aborigines are brought to us by the main story line. It's a fascinating weave of story, anthropology, anecdotes and scientific ideas. And it goes into my top ten books.

This book is full of facts, history and cultural knowledge of the lands in the Australian Outback and the Aboriginal culture.

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