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1812: Napoleon's Fatal March On Moscow

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1812

NAPOLEON'S
FATAL MARCH ON MOSCOW

ADAM ZAMOYSKI

"So brilliant that it is impossible to put the book aside ...
A master craftsman at work" MICHAEL BURLEIGH, *Sunday Times*



Synopsis

Adam Zamoyskiâ™s bestselling account of Napoleonâ™s invasion of Russia and his catastrophic retreat from Moscow, events that had a profound effect on European history. In 1812 the most powerful man in the world assembled the largest army in history and marched on Moscow with the intention of consolidating his dominion. But within months, Napoleonâ™s invasion of Russia â“ historyâ™s first example of total war â“ had turned into an epic military disaster. Over 400,000 French and Allied troops perished and Napoleon was forced to retreat. Adam Zamoyskiâ™s masterful work draws on the harrowing first-hand accounts of soldiers and civilians on both sides of the conflict. The result takes the reader beyond the invasion of Russia to present both a poignant tale of the individual foot soldier and a sweeping history of a turbulent time.

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Customer Reviews

While I've read a bit about Napoleon and about his invasion of Russia, this book really made the war come alive...rather than simply seeing the troop movements and various casualties on the page, this author does a great job of finding a vast quantity of first-hand accounts by participants on both sides--French and Russian of course, but also many Germans (on both sides), Poles, Italians,

etc. Although written more than two hundred years ago, these accounts feel very contemporary and do a great job of describing the horrors of this war in a very personal manner which sometimes made me feel like I was there--generally much to my discomfort! Besides these excellent first-hand accounts, the author does an excellent job of describing Napoleon's dithering and misjudgments during the campaign, as well as the political infighting, disunity of command, and Kutuzov's inertia on the Russian side. The author does a commendable job of trying to answer the question "What was he thinking?" about many strange and fateful decisions by various commanders on both sides during this war. Another point worth mentioning, even if not critical, is the bargain price of this (kindle) book: right now only \$6 vs \$45 and \$18 for kindle versions of other books on this campaign. Overall, a highly recommended read, especially for those thinking about invading Russia!

Great book. I had known that Napoleon invaded Russia with disastrous results but didn't know much more than that. This book gave me a detailed knowledge. It was very well written and very readable. I never got bored with it. I would have given it 5 stars but there seems to be some anti-Russian bias as well as some unwarranted Napoleon worship. Understandable in light of the author's heritage and not enough to seriously damage the book. But it is there and kept niggling at me as I read the book. Still, I highly recommend it.

I don't think my review is worth much since I am not a historian nor an expert on the early 19th century. I just wanted the opportunity to give it 5 stars because it was a spellbinding read. On the down side, some of the description of the harsh conditions was repetitive. Also, a minor point, I don't think Napoleon was short as stated in the book.

I enjoyed this book! It is well researched, well written, and a very compelling read. A talented writer and historian, Zamoyski tackles French and Russian sources to weave an interesting and insightful narrative. First person perspectives of the conflict are particularly appreciated. This book is recommended for those interested in the Napoleonic Wars and Napoleon's disastrous Russian Campaign of 1812.

Before reading this book I had a very simple understanding of the events: Napoleon invaded Russia then the winter came and so, despite the strategical genius of Napoleon and his troops, everything was lost. In reality the process was much more complex and I did not know that the winter in fact came later than the occupation of Moscow. The outcome was the inevitable result of bad planning,

bad execution and terrible weather. Maybe the book tends to rely more on eye witness reports than to analyse the strategy but it adds a lot of human touch to this tragedy.

I've never had much interest in Napoleon. My interests lie with World War II and the classical world. That's changed after reading "1812." I just put a hold on "War and Peace" at the library! It's distressing to realize how much European history kept repeating itself over the centuries, Napoleon through Hitler. Zamoyski presents history at the human level. It's enthralling and informative. There are enough maps and they are helpful. The illustrations are terrific, a real insight to everyday life for the soldiers. This is history the way it should be done and seldom is. Excellent. Highly readable for history buffs and anyone looking for a good read.

Very long and detailed micro history of Napoleon's march to and from Moscow. Very intimate and detailed. Horrifying. Much knowledge of diaries and histories of little people. Learned a lot; more than I wanted to know. A bit over-the-top sometimes. At one point I was surprised that anyone at all survived, though the story was bad for the Russians too.

I read this after re-reading Tolstoy's War and Peace. This book put the campaign in excellent context. The troubles the French had from the beginning if the campaign are well categorized. And Kutuzov's handling of the campaign for the Russians finally made sense. The scale of this fight is hard to imagine, Zamoyski does a good job of explaining it.

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