

Synopsis

In the great tradition of the American almanac, *The Areas of My Expertise* is a brilliant and hilarious compendium of handy reference tables, fascinating trivia, and sage wisdom on all topics large and small. Although best sellers such as *Poor Richard's Almanack* and *The Book of Lists* were certainly valuable, they also were largely true. Here is a different kind of handy desk reference, one in which all of the historical oddities and amazing true facts are sifted through the singular, illuminating imagination of John Hodgman, which is the nice way of saying: He made it all up.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"An almanac of random, fascinating and utterly unreliable information -- Hodgman has the gift of being outrageously but quietly convincing. He begins at the absolute outer edge of credibility and, as if he is holding your hand, walks you over the edge into a very funny mix of reality and nonsense. Take hobos, for instance -- or as Hodgman refers to it, the "hobo movement in the United States." He discusses at length hobo hieroglyphics, the only hobo Cabinet member in U.S. history and Walker Evans, who Hodgman describes as being a secret agent posing as a photographer in order to assassinate prominent hobo leaders." NPRJohn Hodgman tells us that there has only been one murder in the history of the space shuttle. This took place in 1984. The astronaut, the planner, the engineer, the cocktail waitress and the librarian were all suspects. I cannot tell you who did commit the murder, but it is well known. He discusses hunting and cooking your own polar bear steaks. Julia Child knew this subject well. Also a chapter on Daves Ultra Hot Hot Hot Sauce-which are packaged in little coffins and promises your death. These little known and untrue facts are yours for the asking. These and so many other subjects that would take me all day to discuss are told in

amazing detail by John Hodgman. Each chapter has its own charm, or well, its own place. This is not a book for children. There are obscene words and stories and facts that children would not understand. In fact, there were some parts of this book I did not understand, but, all in all, it had me in stitches from one chapter to the next. The author works for television "The Daily Show" and appears on NPR's "This American Life". John Hodgman is a graduate of Yale, and is a former literary agent.

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