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Moscow 1812: Napoleon's Fatal March



Synopsis

Napoleon dominated nearly all of Europe by 1810, largely succeeding in his aim to reign over the civilized world. But Britain eluded him. To conquer the island nation, he needed Russia's Tsar Alexander's help. The Tsar refused, and Napoleon vowed to teach him a lesson by intimidation and force. The ensuing invasion of Russia, during the frigid winter of 1812, would mark the beginning of the end of Napoleon's empire. Although his army captured Moscow after a brutal march deep into hostile territory, it was a hollow victory for the demoralized troops. Napoleon's men were eventually turned back, and their defeat was a momentous turning point in world affairs. Dramatic, insightful, and enormously absorbing, *Moscow 1812* is a masterful work of history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Adam Zamoyski’s account of the 1812 campaign is so brilliant that it is impossible to put the book aside.” (Michael Burleigh, *The Sunday Times*) “A harrowing account. ... Utterly admirable. It combines clarity of thought and prose with a strong narrative drive.” (Antony Beevor, *The Daily Telegraph*) “Told with vigor, sweep, and insight, *Moscow 1812* brings this epic moment to life in a thoroughly fascinating way.” (Jay Winik, author of *April 1865*) “Zamoyski elegantly delivers gripping storytelling, bold revisionism, and poignant suffering.” (Simon Sebag Montefiore, *The Evening Standard*) “Hundreds of books have been written about Napoleon’s invasion of Russia. *Moscow 1812* is perhaps the best.” (John Lukacs, author of *Five Days in London*) “Powerful. . . . Brilliant. Zamoyski’s exposition of the 1812 campaign is a model of elegant clarity.” (T.J.

Binyon, The Sunday Telegraph) – “A brilliant, chilling account.” (Ed Vulliamy, The Observer)

Adam Zamoyski was born in New York and educated at Oxford. He is the author of *Moscow 1812*. He lives in London.

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 simply 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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