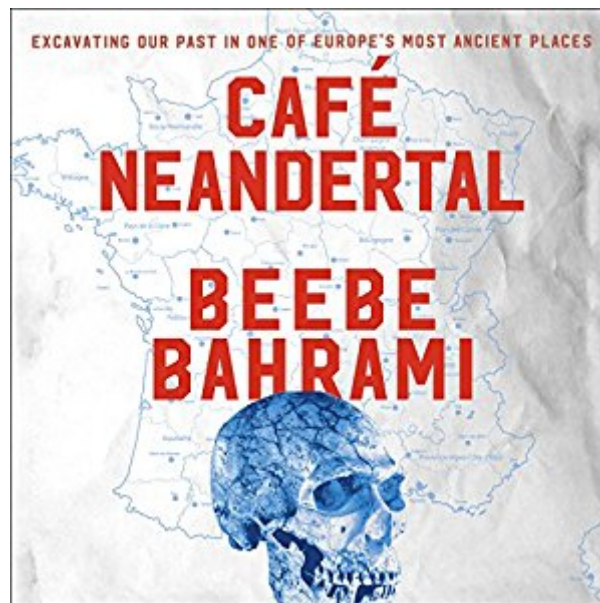




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Cafe Neandertal: Excavating Our Past In One Of Europe's Most Ancient Places



Synopsis

Centered in the Dordogne region of Southwestern France, one of Europe's most concentrated regions for Neandertal and early modern human occupations, writer Beebe Bahrami follows and participates in the work of archaeologists who are doing some of the most comprehensive and global work to date on the research, exploration, and recovery of our ancient ancestors. From this prehistoric perch, Bahrami gets to know firsthand the Neandertals and the people who love them - those who have devoted their lives to them. She is thrown into a world debating not only what happened to these close cousins but also what legacy they have left for those who followed. *Cave Neandertal* is also a detective story, investigating one of the biggest mysteries of prehistory and archaeology: Who were the Neandertals? Why did they disappear around 35,000 years ago? And, more mysteriously, what light do they shed on us moderns? Bahrami takes listeners into the thick of an excavation, neck deep in Neanderthal dirt, and to the front row of the heated debates about our long-lost cousins.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

she has a rich detailed writing style

Excellent service and product.

Very readable. The reader feels like walking amongst them.

A wonderful book about what we do and don't know about the Neandertals, with an emphasis on current efforts to apply rigorous scientific principles to the effort of understanding who they were, and how they are related to us. I was particularly interested in the descriptions of how our human self image has previously hampered our ability to understand the Neandertals, and how science, in the form of the scientific method, and modern genetics, are helping us see facts, unfiltered by those biases. If you are interested in Neandertals, travel, food, drink, the Dordogne region of France and its people, the people doing this work, or what it's like to work in a modern dig site, you will enjoy this book.

I won this book in a Goodreads giveaway and I'm glad I did. This is a very enjoyable read written by someone who revels in both getting her hands dirty and then settling down in the evening with the crew to a "civilized, modern" scotch and great food. I was pleasantly surprised that the author is able to keep to the evidence. As much as she wants to know the "story" behind the Neandertals, she doesn't lean one way or another in any of the questions that seem to keep coming up. Were they like us? Maybe no one will ever find the definitive answers, or maybe someone will find a new undisturbed site that just may.

Great book! Starts off with a vivid illustration of the sights, sounds and smells of the outdoor markets and cafes in the Dordogne today and then takes you on a journey back 50,000 years in time, to the Neandertals who lived and died there. The inside stories about what actually goes on at a paleo excavation are fascinating to pre-history buffs who dream about taking part in a dig. The episode about grad students struggling to make a fire shows what a major accomplishment this skill is. One of the strongest points of this book is the way these modern-day camp episodes, like fire and meat-eating, are put into the Neandertal context. Could Neandertals make their own fire, or just harness natural occurrences of it? What role did meat-eating play in the development of our brains? The discussion of recent advancements in genetics shows how our old-fashioned view of Neandertals as dim-witted, inferior cousins who died off has evolved. I felt like I had been introduced to some distant relatives, who were not that different from ourselves

Incredible survey of not only the current state of thinking regarding Neandertals and their ultimate fate, but interwoven in this gem is stories of the author's time spent in the field with the experts. She describes the places and great people she met along the way as well. To me, this was a gripping tale as much as a science book. Really enjoyed this one!

Café Neandertal is an entertaining memoir. I loved learning about a modern excavation dig in southwest France while living in a colorful, little village with big personalities. It is fascinating to consider the comparisons the author makes between our closest cousins, the Neandertals, and modern humans. Written with great technique “it is clear the author loves her subject.

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