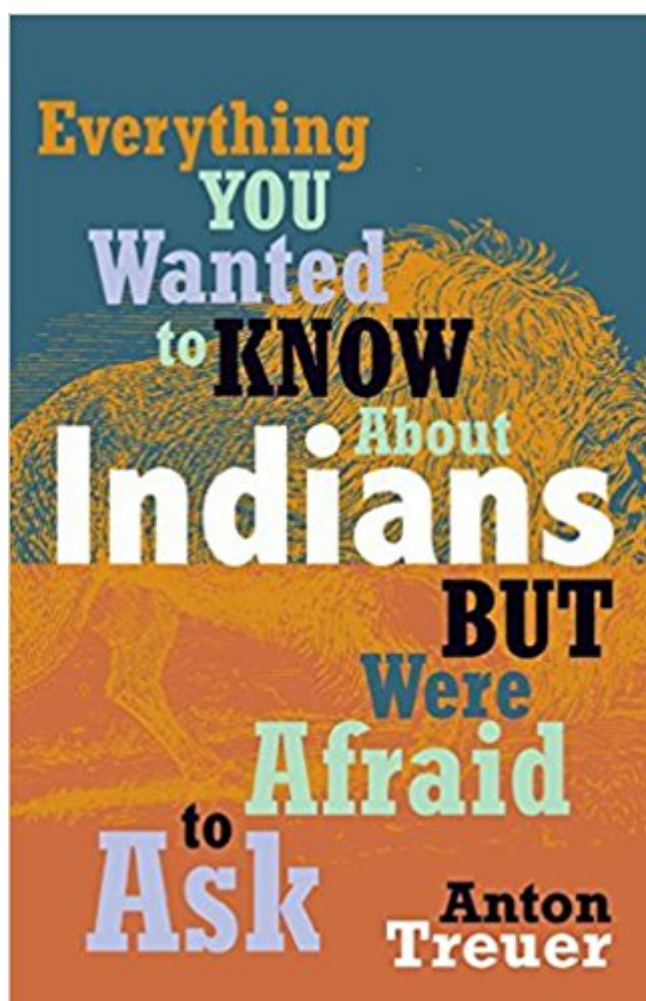


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# Everything You Wanted To Know About Indians But Were Afraid To Ask



## Synopsis

"I had a profoundly well-educated Princetonian ask me, 'Where is your tomahawk?' I had a beautiful woman approach me in the college gymnasium and exclaim, 'You have the most beautiful red skin.' I took a friend to see Dances with Wolves and was told, 'Your people have a beautiful culture.' . . . I made many lifelong friends at college, and they supported but also challenged me with questions like, 'Why should Indians have reservations?' 'What have you always wanted to know about Indians? Do you think you should already know the answers?' or suspect that your questions may be offensive? In matter-of-fact responses to over 120 questions, both thoughtful and outrageous, modern and historical, Ojibwe scholar and cultural preservationist Anton Treuer gives a frank, funny, and sometimes personal tour of what's up with Indians, anyway. 'What is the real story of Thanksgiving?' 'Why are tribal languages important?' 'What do you think of that incident where people died in a sweat lodge?' White/Indian relations are often characterized by guilt and anger. Everything You Wanted to Know about Indians but Were Afraid to Ask cuts through the emotion and builds a foundation for true understanding and positive action.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up-This collection of approximately 120 questions and answers, mainly gathered during the author's many public lectures on Native culture, can be used on many levels. Divided into chapters such as "Terminology

â œStraightforward, fascinating, funny, and often wise, Everything You Wanted to Know about Indians But Were Afraid to Ask is a wonderful resource for non-Indians and Indians too. (There are plenty of things we want to know about each other.) It is that rare thingâ •an informational and entertaining read.â •Louise Erdrich

The book is, as the title indicates, written in question-and-answer format, the questions (some of them interesting, some of them embarrassingly dumb) being ones the author has actually been asked by whites over the years. But the tone is serious, and there is a great deal of informative material, and a good sense of a Native's insider perspective, conveyed in the answers. Somewhat randomly organized, the book touches on Native American history, culture and language, tribal organization and relations with the US government, land theft and its continuing legacy of poverty, the history of oppression and the destruction of Indian culture, cultural practices such as powwows and ceremonies, ongoing challenges such as alcoholism, crime, and unemployment, and a grab-bag of stuff oblivious outsiders don't get, like casinos, the significance of eagle feathers and Indian names, whether Natives have a "mystical relationship with the land," and the appropriateness of the word "Indian". The author is careful to point out that Native American culture is widely various, so that he can speak only from his own perspective as a member of a particular tribe, and the book does rely somewhat heavily on Ojibwe history and traditions. But he is knowledgeable about, and respectful of, the many other tribes and bands that make up "Indian Country". All together, the book gives a very informative, helpful, and intriguing introduction to the many issues faced by contemporary Native Americans, and their history, and it includes extensive references to further resources for those seeking a more complete grounding. For the truly ignorant, such as myself, it was a great help to have these questions answered, and in a respectful and welcoming way. This book is a testimony to the author's desire to bridge cultures, and to benefit his own culture by doing so. It is an excellent contribution to that project, and a fascinating and informative read for non-Natives who also want to approach that issue respectfully and knowledgeably.

I guess I knew more about Indians than I thought. Not many surprises here for me. But it's a very factual book and I'm sure it helps lots of people answer questions they have. Growing up in St Paul Minnesota with quite a few native people living in our neighborhood, working at a large county hospital in Minneapolis, and reading books on the tragedies of native peoples' history helped me gain a good understanding and empathy for their various situations. Anything that can be done to improve relationships with all our neighbors starts with a good understanding of people's past

experiences and frame of reference.

This book is easy to read in short sessions, but you'll find yourself drawn into reading to the end of his stories. Prof. Treuer knows this subject from the "inside" from being an active member of his tribe, from careful study of available research, and from his own travels around the world. Before buying and reading this book, I knew some about Indians in North America from my own reading and from living and working on a reservation when I was younger. But, in every section of this excellent book, I learned much more. This is a superb book. I hope he writes some more!

This informative and entertaining book brings to mind the Elvis Costello song "What's so funny 'bout Peace, Love, and Understanding". The author's purpose is to help people move past the anger, myths, and misery that permeate Indian and White history. He has chosen to write a book that will encourage honest discourse and mutual understanding, thereby, making the world a better place. A laudable idea. The book is full of commonly asked questions and "insider" information about such topics as mascots, sovereignty, language, and much more. I highly recommend the book to all who would like to learn more about the American Indian perspective.

I saw Dr. Treuer speak in Grand Marais, MN. I wanted to read this book after meeting him. He is an excellent speaker and writer. A quote from the book: "Many tribal languages were never written. Why do they write them now? At one point in time, white people never used cars, so why do they use them now?" He says we need to confront our collective past, historical trauma, and inequities. The format of giving answers to commonly stated questions makes the reading clear and meaningful. Very informative.

Disclaimer: I am a white American. Growing up, my father shared much of this information with me about Columbus, etc. However, going through school, teachers would argue and not believe me. I refused their stories of supposed history. It is nice to have confirmation and a deeper understanding.

This book is highly readable, comprehensive, and important. Every American should read it.

A touch too politically correct and short on descriptions of the many tribal governments. But still the author is deeply talented, a viewpoint that transcends his politics - and he has been asked so many questions that his answers are very helpful. A fine step into the many and various wonders of

Americans of Indian heritage with at least one foot in a living and re-newing community - plus a friendly introduction to pow wows and other steps toward respectful friendships.

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