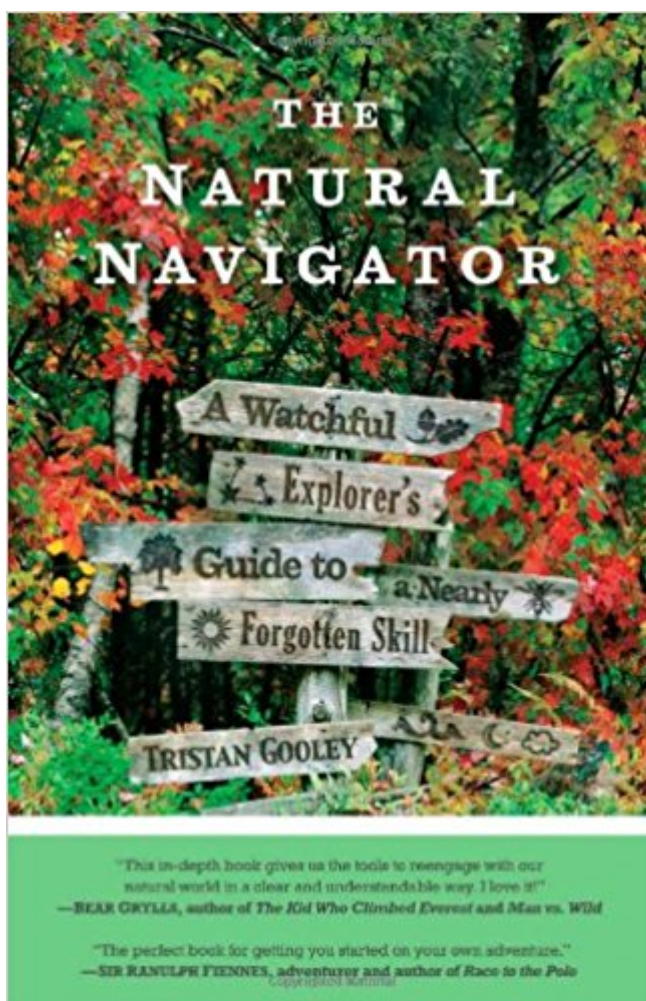


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# The Natural Navigator: A Watchful Explorer's Guide To A Nearly Forgotten Skill



## Synopsis

Before GPS, before the compass, and even before cartography, humankind was navigating. Now this singular guide helps us rediscover what our ancestors long understood – that a windswept tree, the depth of a puddle, or a trill of birdsong can help us find our way, if we know what to look and listen for. Adventurer and navigation expert Tristan Gooley unlocks the directional clues hidden in the sun, moon, stars, clouds, weather patterns, lengthening shadows, changing tides, plant growth, and the habits of wildlife. Rich with navigational anecdotes collected across ages, continents, and cultures, *The Natural Navigator* will help keep you on course and open your eyes to the wonders, large and small, of the natural world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In ancient days, man found his way in the world and over the oceans through solar, lunar, and celestial observation, an art almost lost in a modern world given direction first by compass and cartography and more recently by computer-voiced GPS units. Gooley, a Fellow at the Royal Institute of Navigation, sets out to revive the ancient skills of discerning direction by reading the sky – and other forms of natural observation – in a book rich with fascinating tips (most tennis courts are aligned north-south to minimize the sun's glare; an outstretched fist doubles as a crude sextant) but freighted with pedantic pedagogy. Determined readers who pass through the thicket of words will be rewarded by a wealth of information. Much of it is commonsensical: pay attention to landmarks; stars in the night sky twinkle, but planets don't. Some of it is informative:

moss doesn't always grow on the north side of trees, as many a Boy Scout has been taught. Moments are fascinatingly arcane: the author once determined the direction south by observing a "bird-poo compass." Though too technical for easy reading, Gooley's energetic enthusiasm for the art of natural navigation is just enough compensation. (Mar.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

Dispensing with all navigational technology, Gooley aims to reconnect his audience with the natural world by teaching it to stay on course without instruments. He allows one exception, a stick. One can deduce true north from the shadow it casts, which is just one of many ways to fix the cardinal directions that Gooley presents in this companionable guide. Enriching his instruction with references to all sorts of mythical and historical navigators, Gooley stresses careful observation of one's surroundings as the foundation for his methods of orientation. Trees, moss, even puddles contain clues. The navigational trick is to deduce the order that they reveal, such as the direction of prevailing winds, about an environment's seemingly chaotic appearance. Looking up to celestial orbs—the sun, moon, planets, and stars—Gooley explains ways to detect their regularity and apply it on treks over land and voyages across the sea. Whatever scale of adventure readers intend, from a local hike to a trip around the world, Gooley's practicality and enthusiasm foster appreciation for nature and deliver a survival skill in the bargain. --Gilbert Taylor

Tristan Gooley has presented us with a very special and unique book. It is not a list of navigational tricks or orienteering procedures, although there are some great ones in here, but a philosophy of how to walk in the woods or sail the ocean while tuning oneself to the place, as opposed to blind-reckoning with a host of electronic tools (his approach reminds me of Robert Miller's approach in *Kayaking the Inside Passage: A Paddling Guide from Olympia, Washington to Muir Glacier, Alaska* when he says "a person who needs GPS to kayak the Inside Passage should not be kayaking the Inside Passage"). Tristen wants us to look beyond the location and see the place. "This is only the latest in a long cultural development...from Greek philosopher and geographer Anaximander's first map of the world, created in 500 BC, that has proved that it is possible to convey information about the location of a place without the need to convey a sense of the place itself. This has been a powerful development, but its very success has led to a strangely limited perspective of the world and the journey itself". Tristan attempts to coach us on how to recognize the cues and see the world around us. Although there are a few simple tricks such as the fact that

satellite dishes usually point towards the equator, most of his teaching is more complex. How to use the sun to tell direction. How to tell time by the stars. Which way is south based on the shape of a trail tread. He asks us not to just use the tricks (such as the sun being due south at mid-day) but to learn the full spectrum of how the natural system works then to get in tune with it and use it as our total guide for the information it can provide."The natural navigator needs to restore the relationship between direction and the sky to its former loftier status, where direction is not simply found by looking to the sky but actually is what is seen in the sky."Once convinced we should navigate naturally, Tristen shows us how to use the clues in the land, the sun, the stars, the sky, and the elements of weather. He then takes us to sea to understand what is the same, such as the stars, but also what is different, such as no shadows that can be effectively used. Birds tell stories that trees tended to convey on land. He helps us understand how ancient travelers, such as the Polynesians, navigated with thoughts on how we can use these methods in our own journeys (a warning here, most ancient navigators used a host of knowledge gained through a lifetime, the natural navigator knows that and is spending their life learning that information. These are not parlor tricks).If you honestly believe that it is grossly negligent to venture into the forest without your GPS powered up and connected to your backpack shoulder strap, then you need this book but probably won't read it. If you keep your GPS off and tucked into a drybag for emergencies then this book is for you and will save you some batteries. The real breakthrough will be when you put your compass in the same drybag hidden away because you can tell direction by the natural clues. Tristen will convince you it is not only possible but well worth the effort. Do we need this? I think the author answers that well:"...it is also true that we can get by in life without any knowledge of music, art, drama, or history. So a better answer to this question is perhaps that it does not matter if you are walking to the coffee shop or sailing across an ocean, natural navigation can provide a unique insight into the world around you."This is a book to be owned and set on your shelf for continual reference. It is a unique insight.

This book is amazing and exactly what I was looking for. A neat trip into the forgotten and dying art of natural navigation.

Excellent transaction! Delivered quickly and great quality! Better than advertized!

Very interesting and informative.

My brother hunts in the woods in northern AZ and told me this book has helped him navigate the terrain many a time.

This book was a gift for a friend who loves a good walk through the woods, and it provided him with ways to explore using many of nature's cues. He loved it! I'd recommend it to anyone looking for new ways to enjoy nature. And it's great for anyone likely to get lost in the woods - It will help lead the way home!!

I go to the woods to play a lot and this book was full of valuable tips to know. Some of the tips I was aware of but there were many new ones in there I didn't know. This book could save lives...

The Natural Navigator is an excellent book that will be fun and a valuable aid to anyone with the need to venture outside their house. It's full of useful tips and information. The book clearly and concisely explains natural concepts that will be of value even to this crusty old field geologist and backpacker. I wish it had been available 45 years ago when I was just starting.

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