

Paradise with Serpents



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In 1537 a group of Europeans founded Asuncion on the banks of the Paraná River in modern day Paraguay where they were enthusiastically welcomed by the Gurani people. An extraordinary fusion of New World and Old was created, a place where magnificent baroque cathedrals were built of carved stone in the heart of the jungle, and solemn Catholic masses were performed on European instruments by Gurani Indians and their Jesuit mentors. Today Paraguay is the only South American country which is truly bilingual: Spanish and Gurani are both spoken and every citizen is proud of his or her dual heritage. Long fascinated by Paraguay due to childhood stories of his great-uncle Charlie—who vanished into the Amazonian jungle of old north Paraguay in search of Inca silver Carver—Robert Carver travels into this forbidden lost world in search of his own golden city of outlandish experience in this enrapturing travelogue. The physically reckless journey takes him from mule trains high in frozen mountains to steamers up remote rivers in dense tropical jungles. Fascinating and original, this is first-hand look at one of South America's most unique and engrossing nations.

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目录:

[Paradise with Serpents_ 下载链接1](#)

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