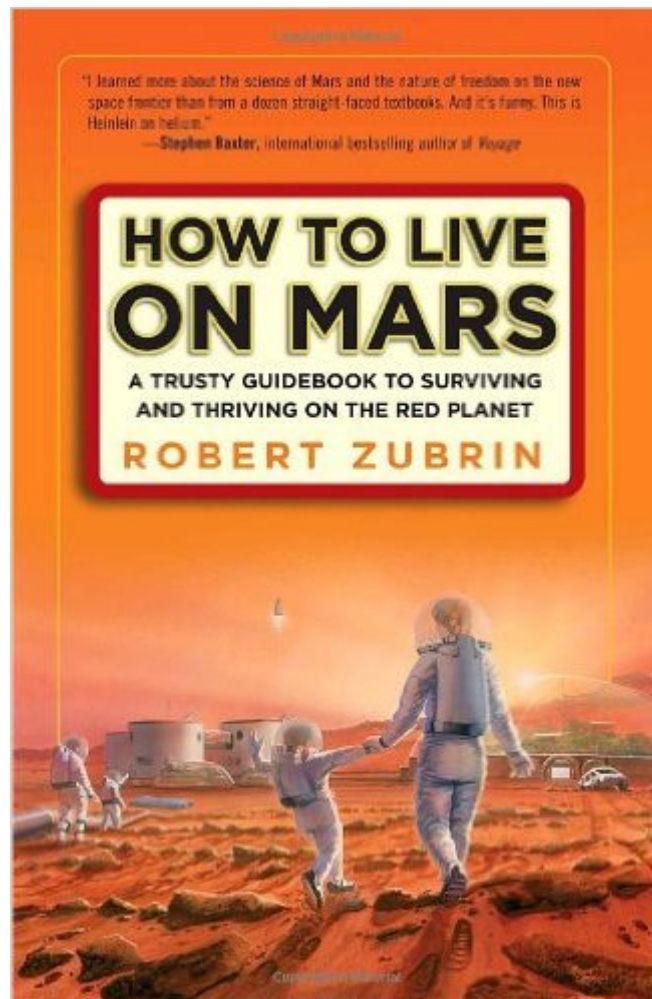


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How To Live On Mars: A Trusty Guidebook To Surviving And Thriving On The Red Planet



Synopsis

Thinking about moving to Mars? Well, why not? Mars, after all, is the planet that holds the greatest promise for human colonization. But why speculate about the possibilities when you can get the real scientific scoop from someone who's been happily living and working there for years? Straight from the not-so-distant future, this intrepid pioneer's tips for physical, financial, and social survival on the Red Planet cover:

- How to get to Mars (Cycling spacecraft offer cheap rides, but the smell is not for everyone.)
- Choosing a spacesuit (The old-fashioned but reliable pneumatic Neil Armstrong style versus the sleek new "but anatomically unforgiving" elastic skinsuit.)
- Selecting a habitat (Just like on Earth: location, location, location.)
- Finding a job that pays well and doesn't kill you (This is not a metaphor on Mars.)
- How to meet the opposite sex (Master more than forty Mars-centric pickup lines.)

With more than twenty original illustrations by Michael Carroll, Robert Murray, and other renowned space artists, *How to Live on Mars* seamlessly blends humor and real science, and is a practical and exhilarating guide to life on our first extraterrestrial home.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Once again, Zubrin delights and informs like no other. This concise, easy-reading, laugh-out-loud, little volume is packed with more solid scientific and engineering information about Mars, Mars exploration and settlement than even "The Case for Mars." Whereas the latter was informative and interesting, but fairly straight-laced, Zubrin here takes a decidedly more lighthearted approach,

creating a fictional, early 22nd century guide to surviving and thriving on the new frontier. As usual, Zubrin's strongest suit is his ability to turn his caustic wit against the foolish, timid, bureaucratic, cowardly, thoughtless paralysis which presently cripples the aerospace establishment, and indeed, Zubrin suggests, the entirety of terrestrial "civilization" (if what we have down here still merits the term.) Perhaps my favorite example is the following passage detailing water reclamation from the exhaust of a space suit's methanol/oxygen fuel-cell (used to provide electric power) in order to extend the endurance of Martians on EVA. "The water you obtain will include a significant quantity of carbon dioxide in solution, which is why NASA has banned systems that plumb fuel-cell wastewater directly back to the suit canteen. However, despite the claimed medical problem, it is a fact that in the twentieth century, many people chose to drink carbonated water as a matter of preference." I do not hold with those who regard Zubrin's political asides as an interruption of an otherwise interesting presentation of scientific or engineering information. Zubrin's ability to decisively skewer folly of all sorts, technical, medical, political, social, is the primary reason that he has always impressed me, and in my opinion, constitutes the single best feature of this particular book.

Bob Zubrin really knows his stuff when it comes to the Red Planet. And here he gives us a somewhat tongue-in-cheek, projected look at the guidebook he would write for the wanna-be Mars immigrant of the late 21st century. That's cool. And it's fun and informative. But that's the end of the good news. Here's the bad news.

1. This work is extremely short. It is barely more than novella-length. It is about half of the length of a "normal" best-selling novel. That's word count, not pages - the print edition must have pretty big type. And fully 5% of the "book" is a bullet list of the topics! The market value of a locked digital copy of a novella-length work is about \$2, not \$10. So this is a rip off in the basic sense of content-per-dollar.
2. The Kindle Edition is a trashed OCR scan that borders on unreadable and will drive you nuts. Starting halfway through the first chapter, a few random words or phrases in each sentence are in italics. I can't get my REVIEW to emulate THAT, so instead I'LL SHOW you by inserting some WORDS IN capitals TO emulate the problem. Don't YOU think this IS really irritating? IF it doesn't BOTHER YOU yet, then you haven't SEEN enough of IT and you'll just have TO take my WORD FOR it, it IS really annoying. So how do I know it's OCR? Smoking gun: part of a caption reads "A/lost people look better in...". Classic and obvious OCR glitch: a flyspeck in the M caused it to mis-read "Most people.."; once it saw the first hump in the M as an A, it was lost in morphospace trying to assign some char values to the rest of the M! There are hundreds of other cases, in many of them it is quite difficult to work out what the actual text is supposed to be. I have no idea why they did this stupid book trick.

This book is overall fairly good, with plethora of of speculative information about future life on mars. However, it has three major issues: The first is that (for the kindle at least) it has not been properly formatted. Some words are (apparently at random) spaced improperly so that they show up on the kindle with gaps in the middle of them: like th is. It's not frequent enough to prevent easy reading, but it happens enough to be noticeably irritating. The second is that the author tends to have a rather pessimistic (and in my mind, slightly unrealistic) view of future technology. Aside from the cynicism about scam artists and criminals creating hard life on the frontier of a new planet, which is fine, the author also tends to ignore probable technological advances: to the point that I initially assumed this book was published in the late 80's instead of last year. A couple of early examples are his claim that MIR had to be abandoned because the inside was contaminated with intolerable amounts of disgusting "green gunk" organic residue, when actually it was de-orbited due to lack of funding and plans for MIR2 (which eventually was incorporated into the ISS), or the assumption that by the year 2100+ we won't be able to create socks with heating elements woven into them that won't short out and electrocute the user when he or she sweats. The final con for this book is the author's attitude towards NASA, which is so far beyond acerbic that it gets tiresome and frankly makes him come off as something of a complete jerk. I get that NASA as an organization is somewhat bureaucratic, inefficient, and makes mistakes. But in this book, it's portrayed as being laughably backwards, corrupt, and criminally negligent. Constantly.

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