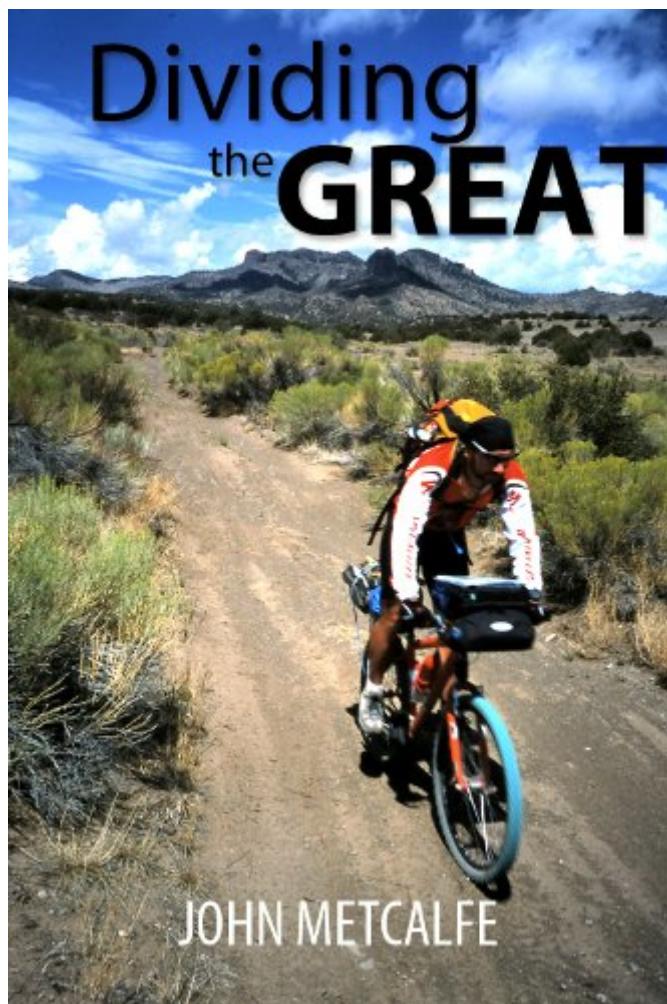


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# Dividing The Great



## **Synopsis**

The Great Divide is America's premier long distance mountain bike route. It is the longest unbroken mountain bike route in the world and was included in National Geographic's list of the 50 most amazing places on earth. The route makes its way 2500 miles from Canada to Mexico as it crisscrosses the Continental Divide. Metcalfe and his riding buddy JK are mountain bikers, and Dividing the Great is the hilarious account of their journey as they attempt to complete the route in their own record time. "A thoroughly enjoyable, fast and funny read. Metcalfe's dry sense of humor, unflinching introspection, and keen observations of American culture and human nature draw you in."

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I really enjoyed this book. I found the author's humor to be delightful. It is fun to read words that Americans do not usually use and at times I had to figure out what he was talking about. He is quite charming in an odd sort of way. He doesn't hesitate to make fun of himself and his personal achievements. I liked his discussion about the beauty of the country and his kind thoughts about the diversity of cultures he found along his way. It is a good read. I have read many hiking books but

this is different because he is traveling by bicycle. I learned a lot about long distance biking and the necessity of knowledge about bikes and landscapes in order to be successful. I recommend it for anyone interesting in this trail and the many adventures it offers!

I just finished this delightful book, "Dividing the Great", by John Metcalf, a recount of the author's mountain biking adventure with a friend on the Great Divide Mtn Bicycle route, which follows the CD from Canada to Mexico. (The how-to book on that is "Cycling the Great Divide", by Michael McCoy.) Both "John and JK" are from England, so some of his descriptions and phrases are quaint in that foreigner sort of way. The Great Divide Cycling Route is popular among mountain bicyclists, as well as dual sport motorcycle adventure types, like me. I have ridden much of the Montana sections over the years. I have also met several people on the route, bicyclists, dual sporters, and locals such as waitresses in some of the small towns along the route. So, I thought the book might be interesting - I was right. Metcalf does a nice job of keeping 6 weeks of adventure interesting without being repetitive. It is a nice blend of touristy facts, descriptions of topography and scenery, and his personal reflections, not to mention the challenges of all that pedaling. I liked the logistics - water and food (to stay hydrated and carbohydrated, and avoid passing out - becoming "bonked"), camping/lodging, and the like. For us moto-heads who enjoy writing ride reports, it is a nice lesson in how to keep it interesting. In fact, he largely skips over descriptions of the roads and trails. Apparently, Metcalf is somewhat modest, he does not brag or boast: Their's was quite an adventure, 2500 miles or so in about 6 weeks, while carrying only one change of spandex each, one tent, two sleeping bags, tools, extra tires and tubes, and that's about it. (Most cyclists pull a small trailer, or use chase vehicles, and take 3 months or so.) As you may know, there are very few towns of any size along the whole route - and they can be two or three cycling days separated. Bicycle shops are few and far between. Having ridden parts, I can attest that the actual route is quite grueling, ranging from paved roads to wash-boarded gravel, to single track trails. I found several sections to be very challenging on my KTM 600. There is plenty of steep, lots of headwinds, but mainly, this is VERY remote country. Their goal was to finish in about 6 weeks: exactly twice as long as the current world record of 3 weeks - hence, I presume, the title of Dividing the Great. That may seem like these guys were whimps, but believe me, they were not. I won't give away the end of the book, except that it is very enjoyable. And finally, Metcalf describes lots of fun and funny events along the way. As an amateur mechanic who occasionally does his own wrenching, I enjoyed this interaction: Mechanical problems prompted a visit to a bike shop. The mechanic was cranking down, tightening the bolt pretty hard, putting a fair amount of effort into it. Metcalf, worrying he might twist

off the bolt, says, "That's pretty tight". The mechanic says, "Don't worry, that's only 35 psi. ""35 psi? ""Yea, that's the pressure in my veins - at that pressure my arm veins are dilated. Get up to 45 psi and my forehead veins pop out." Funny and so true. Tom WarrGreat Falls

Just an honest, for the most part hysterical, account of a great adventure. If you have adventured yourself, and found yourself in pitiful situations of your own doing with no way out but forward, this is a book for you. If you can find humor in absolute misery, read this book. Because a new day always dawns on the worst of situations, and the beauty and solitude and challenge that led you there in the first place, exist and greet you. From the lackadaisical decision to go, to the trials of getting to the trailhead from England, to day to day and hour to hour observations and struggles, to people met, to strange situations, to landscape description, griping, equipment trouble, doubts and personal stench - this book has it all. More than anything this book has inspired me to ride some of this trail in my own state of Montana. And when you'd rather keep reading this book instead of doing the wifely duty.....well, need I say more?

I highly recommend this funny informative book for all with an interest in learning about riding the divide or who likes to read travel stories or if a fellow cyclist. I will recommend this book on my own blog as well.

Great book. Very funny stories. If you like Bill Bryson, you will like this. It make me want to get out of my damn cube at the office and get on my MTB to ride this. I am recommending this book to some friends - maybe I can get a group together to ride this. Would love more details on the technical aspects of planning the ride - gear needed, what you brought, etc. But I know that is not what the book is supposed to be - it is a travel journal and a good one.

Fun and entertaining "journal" of a mountain bike journey on the Great Divide trail. This take on this epic route was light and humorous but without a lot of specific details on the actual route itself. Easy to read.

I've read several of the Divide narratives and this was my favorite. Metcalfe is a good writer without being pretentious or preachy like some others. He didn't go in for a bunch of philosophical whining. It was a fun and humorous story about two friends diving into the adventure of a lifetime. I would most definitely read his next book.

John Metcalfe has written a highly enjoyable book about the adventure he and friend JK had mountain biking the Great Divide route. While they approached the trip as somewhat of a race, the writing never felt rushed and included plenty of details about every day of their endeavor. Metcalfe managed to maintain an engaging writing style while focusing on the trip. This is in contrast to many other adventure travel tales I have read where the author goes off on tangents, neglecting to tell about the trip itself. I doubt I could complete this trip in twice the time John and JK took but it sure was fun reading about it.

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