



The Encyclopedia of Surfing

By Matt Warshaw, William Finnegan

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Everybody's going surfing. Each year, the surf industry brings in \$4.5 billion, and more than two-and-a-half million Americans, from California to Delaware, have caught the wave. Surfers have popped up on postage stamps, in television commercials, and in Hollywood movies, and the sport has developed the remarkable depth, color, and history that can only be cataloged in encyclopedic form.

With 1,500 alphabetical entries and 300 illustrations, *The Encyclopedia of Surfing* is the most comprehensive review of the people, places, events, equipment, vernacular, and lively history of this fascinating sport by "one of surfing's most knowledgeable historians" (San Francisco Chronicle). A remarkable collection of expert knowledge, spine-tingling stories, and little-known trivia, this is a book that no surfer-or armchair adventurer-will be able to resist.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

What's that sound coming from the beach? That's the rustle of pages turning, as would-be immortals look themselves up in *The Encyclopedia of Surfing*, surfing's first comprehensive reference book. *The Encyclopedia of Surfing* chronicles nearly every bit of wave-riding--its history, places, mythology, champions, tragedies, in-jokes, and minutiae. Author Matt Warshaw, former editor of *Surfer* magazine, and his fellow researchers took three years to put together this prodigious tome. The most surprising thing about the book is its terrific readability. Though the 1,500 entries are organized in typical encyclopedic style, one after the other alphabetically, none of them--not a *single one*--is completely boring. Not even the one on the technicalities of fin placement. In fact, the book is a trap, leading unsuspecting readers on a wandering journey from pioneer surfer Duke Kahanamoku to the development of hollow boards to the lifeguards who used them to lifeguard Eddie Aikau to his home in Waimea Bay to.... Suddenly, hours have gone by and there's still the huge entry on Gidget to read. Illustrated like a dictionary, this book has only one or two small black-and-white photos every couple of pages. A history of surfing introduces the entries; at the end, a bibliography, round-up of surf contest results, and lists of movies, magazines, and music provide the big finish. Though Warshaw's first three books (*SurfRiders*, *Above the Roar*, and *Maverick's*) were entertaining looks at surfers and surfing, this one makes him the official Kahuna of surf lore. Surfing is a multi-billion-dollar industry, flinging hordes of people and buckets of money into the waves each year. *The Encyclopedia of Surfing* is its new bible. --*Therese Littleton*

From Publishers Weekly

This volume is a gift to surfers, both neophytes and pros. Warshaw, a former pro-surfer and editor of *Surfer* magazine, offers the sport's first all-encompassing encyclopedia. "Cheater five," "Malibu U," "Gidget"--if you can name it, Warshaw's included it in his exhaustive catalog. There are entries for each physical part of the wave (such as the lip, curl and trough); detailed discussions of surf movies, magazines and books; types of surfboards, including both physical descriptions and the philosophy of surfing each ("animosity between shortboarders and longboarders has been present to one degree or another since the 1970s"); and bios of pro surfers and board shapers. Warshaw doesn't gloss over the sport's ugly sides, and devotes several pages to such topics as "violence and surfing," "localism," "surf rage," and "sharks and surfing." He offers helpful information for each country, state or county where surfing is popular--from Oregon to Californian, Maine to Florida, and from the Great Lakes to Texas. This is an indispensable tome for any surfer.

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From [Booklist](#)

Warshaw is a former pro surfer, editor of *Surfer* magazine, and a journalist who has written several well-received trade titles about the sport. Here the author has compiled an exhaustive reference to the surfing world, organized into alphabetical entries.

The entries cover basic techniques ("goofy foot" and "regular foot" stances, for example) and gear; legendary surf breaks and competitions; the science of surfing (including explanations of how waves are measured); cultural references, such as major publications, films, and characters (the infamous Gidget earns a lengthy entry); famous surfers throughout history; and broader topics, such as *Drugs and surfing*, *Religion and surfing*, *Surf art*, and *Television and surfing*, that examine surfing's subculture and impact on larger society.

The extensive appendixes include a selected bibliography; selected surf contest results from 1954 through 2002; an exhaustive list of surf movies, videos, and DVDs as well as a list of surfing magazines around the

world; and a selected surf music discography.

Warshaw's tone is both highly informed and personal. The entries define terms clearly and offer contextual analysis bolstered with quotes from various mainstream media sources. But Warshaw's profiles of individual surfers include some oddly subjective language. One official, for example, is described as a "fleshy, surf-erudite competition administrator," while legendary Laird Hamilton is the "brawny, blond master of tow-in surfing." The result is a unique resource that combines neatly categorized, rarely covered information with a lively, intimate view of the surfing world.

With surfing gaining prominence in the media, public and academic libraries will want to consider this one-of-a-kind resource. The reasonable price makes this accessible to those high-school libraries where materials on the subject are in demand. *RBB*

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