

Polar Journeys: The Role of Food and Nutrition in Early Exploration

Robert Feeney

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#3233841 in Books University of Alaska Press 1997-11-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x .90 x 6.00l, 1.13 #File Name: 0912006978279 pages | File size: 22.Mb

Robert Feeney : Polar Journeys: The Role of Food and Nutrition in Early Exploration before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Polar Journeys: The Role of Food and Nutrition in Early Exploration:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent nutrition education By John Gookin Feeney's book is insightful on the topic of expedition nutrition, from someone with obvious schooling and expertise in biochemistry. The book is well-referenced, with a 12 page bibliography, routine references, and a lot of great half page quotations from classic expedition journals. Expedition people shouldn't be scared by the word biochemist, the explanations are very simple and the reading is easy like a magazine rather than academic. This book explains some of the biochemical mechanisms of nutrition on extended expeditions. For instance, there are graphs that show what happens if you get too low or too high on the amount of vitamin A in your body, with explanations for the two diseases you get and why they make you ill. There are also explanations for why some vitamins, like A, are fat soluble, and need to be managed differently from the water soluble vitamins on expeditions. I understand that these are very basic concepts to nutrition people, but this book takes interesting stories of expeditions and weaves in the explanations for why these concepts matter and how they apply in real expedition contexts. It provides vicarious experiences that I think will help students of nutrition understand these concepts at a deeper level. This book has sections that are quite valuable in understanding the scientific method. For instance, a negative correlation was found between citric acid and scurvy, but this

knowledge was not used very precisely for the next 50 years, in a day when people died from scurvy. This would make an excellent textbook for a class to discuss why these findings weren't used sooner, with possible parallels for contemporary findings on topics like climate change where the (IPCC) science is clear and unequivocal, yet deniers are looking for middle ground between opinion polls and science. If you are interested in the topic of expedition nutrition, this book is both a great read and a great reference book. BTW, a contemporary complement to this book is Wayne Askew's book chapter called "Nutritional support for expeditions" in the book "Expedition and Wilderness Medicine" by Bledsoe (2009). 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Nutrition on Ice By R. L. Rodriguez Stupidity, arrogance, foolishness - courage, brilliance, vision. The path to scientific discovery is never straight and not always rational. Such was the path to our current understanding of modern nutrition. In Polar Journeys: The Role of Food and Nutrition in Early Exploration, Professor Feeney, a real-life polar explorer and food biochemist, does a wonderful job describing the trial and error (and sometimes irrational) approach to establishing what we now know as "recommended daily allowance" (RDA) or the basic nutritional requirements for human health. Feeney traces the course of nutrition research from early explorers who ventured onto the oceans in small ships for months and years looking for new lands and learning the hard way, the basics of human nutrition. Did you know that ship rats are a good source of vitamin C? Did you know that 165 years after British Navy doctor James Lind found that citrus fruit cured scurvy, polar explorer, Robert Scott, still believed that scurvy was caused by ptomaine poisoning? Did you know that before there was an Atkins Diet, there was the "Eskimo Diet" which consisted of 2900 calories per day - 73% fat, 26% protein and 1% carbohydrate (one of the benefits of the Eskimo Diet was nearly odorless stool). Long before there were Institution Review Boards to oversee human experimentation, explorers were using the Earth's poles as laboratories to test the very limits (and beyond) of human endurance. Hundreds of men gave their lives, often needlessly, to discover that humans need a balanced diet of protein, fat and carbohydrate, laced with just the right mix of vitamins and minerals. If you like food, adventure and a good yarn well spun, you will enjoy this book.

Feeney, a distinguished biochemist, relates the history of arctic and antarctic exploration to the the science of nutrition. Vivid descriptions of explorers and their plights include the expeditions of Stafansson, Franklin, Nares, Greely, DeLong, Peary, Cook, Amundsen, Mawson, Scott, and Shackleton.