



Getting High: Marijuana through the Ages

John Charles Chasteen

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This engaging book traces the global history of marijuana, reaching back thousands of years. Noted historian John Charles Chasteen follows the use of the drug since Neolithic times, which makes marijuana among the first domesticated plants. Surprisingly, though, only infrequently has it been used as a recreational drug. Instead, there is a vibrant spiritual dimension to its long history that has been continually ignored.

Beginning with the familiar “outbreak” of the 1960s, Chasteen unearths successive layers of marijuana’s history. Written with insight, clarity, sophistication, and good humor, this deeply informed work discusses the cultivation of cannabis and its many forms, including hemp, one of the world’s principal fiber crops. After a tour of Latin America, Africa, India, and the Muslim world, Chasteen concludes that unlike alcohol marijuana has always flourished outside the mainstream. Its principal users have been creative outsiders of many kinds—mystics, artists, musicians, free thinkers, and spiritual seekers—as well as poor laborers attracted by its low cost. Marijuana, it seems, is a mind-expanding drug after all, and Chasteen explores its rich heritage with captivating insight.

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