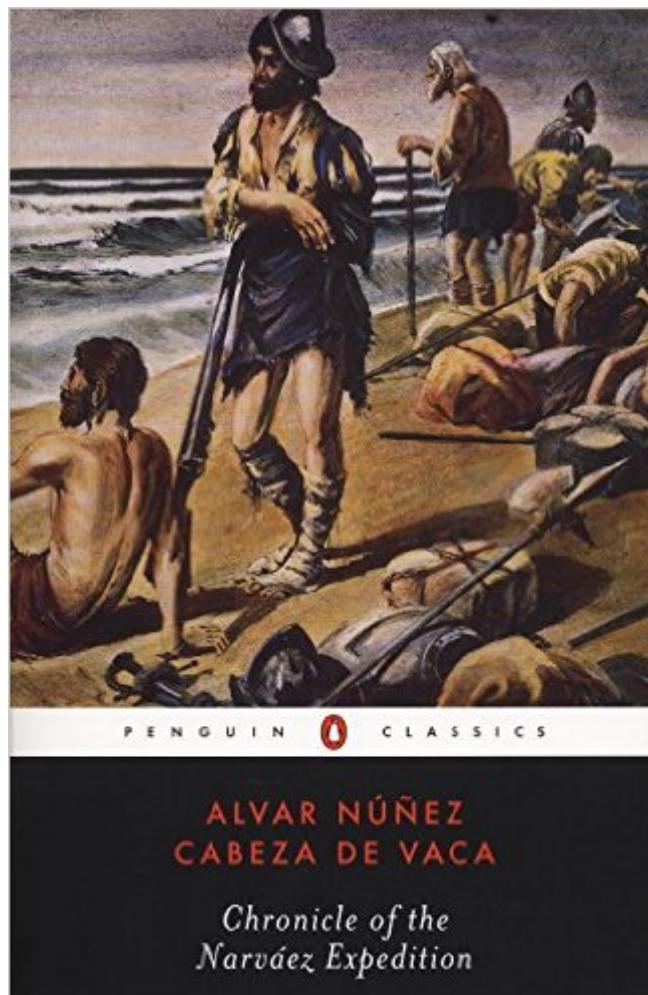


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# Chronicle Of The Narvaez Expedition (Penguin Classics)



## Synopsis

The New World story of the Spanish explorer Cabeza de Vaca in his own words. This riveting true story is the first major narrative detailing the exploration of North America by Spanish conquistadors (1528-1536). The author, Alvar NÃºÃ©ez Cabeza de Vaca, was a fortune-seeking Spanish nobleman and the treasurer of an expedition sent to claim for Spain a vast area of today's southern United States. In simple, straightforward prose, Cabeza de Vaca chronicles the nine-year odyssey endured by the men after a shipwreck forced them to make a westward journey on foot from present-day Florida through Louisiana and Texas into California. In thirty-eight brief chapters, Cabeza de Vaca describes the scores of natural and human obstacles they encountered as they made their way across an unknown land. Cabeza de Vaca's gripping account offers a trove of ethnographic information, including descriptions and interpretations of native cultures, making it a powerful precursor to modern anthropology. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I was intrigued by this strange chronicle when I lifted it from the dusty shelf of my local bookstore. I

had never heard of it and I was surprised that such a thing even existed. A first-hand account of a 16th century conquistador expedition to the new lands of the Americas no less! The book is short enough to hold the attention and the fact that it is a true tale holds the attention through periods of drab text and detailed descriptions of the lay of the land. In fact, two distinct points capture the attention, firstly the matter-of-fact way in which *cabeza de vaca* views the monstrosities he is faced with, from shipwreck to torture and hunger. Secondly, the altogether human way in which the natives are portrayed; they are not seen as unthinking savages but as children, scared and uncertain, that need to be cared for. This is certainly not the tale of a gross escapade to conquer primitive peoples, rather it is an 'expedition' in every respect and it is fascinating as a result. At times it is a chore to plough through, but I believe the overall and lasting impression that the book leaves is a sufficient reward for the time spent on it. And, hang on a minute, doesn't the name of the author mean 'head of the cow'? How strange....

Excellent as reference to Latin American studies. Different from the film version of course, and more logical. I recommend it for anyone who admires the feat of the first European explorers of the "New World".

This is an incredible story of survival and early anthropology. *Cabeza de Vaca* and his comrades endured incredible hardships and emerged, it seems, as better human beings. Watch the movie (*Cabeza de Vaca*) and read this first hand account. He is an uncelebrated conquistador who became an advocate for the indigenous people of the Americas.

Written in brief, succinct chapters with self-effacing honesty, this is an incredible journey across an unknown continent. *De Vaca's* tale is an amazing tale of survival and perseverance in the face of despair. Wonderful work.

1500's, some Spanish ships wash up in Florida, and one guy (*Cabeza de Vaca*, which implausibly means "The Cow's Head") and his small crew end up crossing the continent to California. And living to write about it. Years ago, when I lived in Boise, Idaho (I know, who the hell ever lives in Boise?), I saw a foreign film of this and assumed it was fiction. Had no idea the stuff actually happened. Or did it? That's the question hanging over the book. What's true, what isn't? In this book, as in life, I'm inclined to believe the strangest stuff is true: the tall "Indians" somewhere in the southwest who dressed as women and practiced homosexuality, the village of Indians who were all blind, the years

he spent as a slave to various tribes--had to be true. Also, throughout much of this book, Nunez does not make himself a conquering hero. He constantly points out that he is a naked observer, and I think that's largely true. And while he is fervidly Christian, he doesn't sit in judgment of the peoples and cultures he encounters, an improbable and remarkable feat for a Catholic of any age, but especially the 1500's. All in all, strange, fascinating read.

I didn't know anything about this real story until I watched BBC Conquistadors. When I learned about Cabeza de Vaca, I was eager to read the account of his years lost, wandering in the south part of North America for 9 long years until he found some "Christians" in the northwest part of Mexico. Although the book is short and simple, the information provided is invaluable, especially with the descriptions of the Indians in this region, its customs and way of living. One thing that called my attention was all the hardships he had to endure during his long journey, going naked and feeding mostly of fruits and roots, proving in this case that he was a survivor by nature since others were not that lucky in the same precarious environment. And yes, what a strange name.

Chronicle of the Narvaez Expedition is, in my opinion, an honest account of what Cabeza de Vaca lived as he walk the paths of the New World. I loved how he relies in God to survive all those years in a very harsh environment as well as surviving the different Indian tribes he encounter along the way. If you are a God believer, this is a great book for you to read, it demonstrates that with faith great miracles are come to pass.

This book is for people who love history and stories of adventure. I was bored with the repetition of the events that occurred throughout this book. However, I do love the details given of his accounts of life with the Indians.

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