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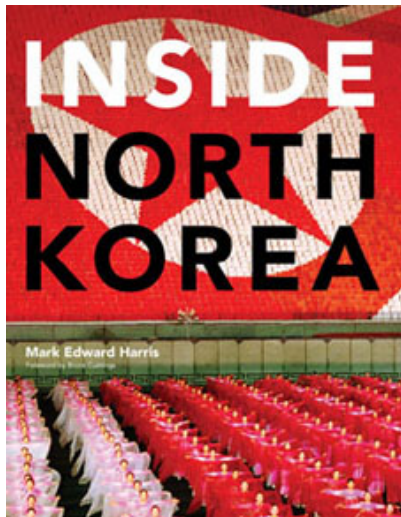
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To most of the world, North Korea is a mystery.

All but closed to outside visitors and influence, its public posture guarded and combative, the world sees almost nothing from inside its borders.

Award-winning photographer Mark Edward Harris obtained rare access to this reclusive country, documenting life within its borders, along its northern border with China and the highly militarized demilitarized zone dividing North and South Korea. The compelling photography from his travels is collected in [NORTH KOREA](#). The images he captured are amazing: the monumental architecture and empty streets of the capital; tightly controlled zones of economic and tourist trade with South Korea; mass games featuring 100,000 choreographed participants.

While artistically provocative, the shots provide a window into a land few non-citizens know. "Even though I loved shooting in black-and-white for this book, I knew that people wanted to see the country as it was, not my artistic interpretation," says Harris. "I tried to accurately capture a place that few people get to visit."

Naturally, Harris traveled to the cities, like the capital, Pyongyang. But some of his most compelling shots come from the lesser-known border regions. "A lot of North Korea's money is funneled into its cities," says Harris. "Pyongyang in particular is a showcase in certain ways. That's why trips to the border regions were so vital."

Traveling as an American in this country provided Harris with a unique perspective. George Bush famously named North Korea as a member of his "axis of evil" and Kim Jong Il has exhibited naked aggression toward U.S. government and policies, yet Harris reports that he was received cordially, albeit with some curiosity.

"The Korean people themselves treated me very warmly," says Harris. "There were some soldiers I met, that if looks could kill, I'd be dead right now. But when it came to the people themselves, they made it clear that it was the American government and policies they were against, not the people."

The amount of time Harris spent there allowed him to capture something that is rarely seen of North Korea by the outside world—everyday life. "What we often see in the media are either moments of great horror or great joy. But real life happens in the moments in between. I wanted to capture real moments of human interaction with my shots. A child walking with her father, people on a trolley going to work. People just living their lives."

To see some of Harris' compelling photography, check out [this excerpt](#). And you can send a friend an epostcard of the book's images [here](#).

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