



# Naked at Lunch: A Reluctant Nudist's Adventures in the Clothing-Optional World

By Mark Smith

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People have been getting naked in public for reasons other than sex for centuries. But as novelist and narrative journalist Mark Haskell Smith shows in *Naked at Lunch*, being a nudist is more complicated than simply dropping trou. “Nonsexual social nudism,” as it’s called, rose to prominence in the late nineteenth century. Intellectuals, outcasts, and health nuts from Victorian England and colonial India to Belle Époque France and Gilded Age Manhattan disrobed and wrote manifestos about the joys of going clothing-free. From stories of ancient Greek athletes slathered in olive oil to the millions of Germans who fled the cities for a naked frolic during the Weimar Republic to American soldiers given “naturist” magazines by the Pentagon in the interest of preventing sexually transmitted diseases, Haskell Smith uncovers nudism’s amusing and provocative past.

*Naked at Lunch* is equal parts cultural history and gonzo participatory journalism. Coated in multiple layers of high SPF sunblock, Haskell Smith dives into the nudist world today. He publicly disrobes for the first time in Palm Springs, observes the culture of family nudism in a clothing-free Spanish town, and travels to the largest nudist resort in the world, a hedonist’s paradise in the south of France. He reports on San Francisco’s controversial ban on public nudity, participates in a week of naked hiking in the Austrian Alps, and caps off his adventures with a week on the Big Nude Boat, a Caribbean cruise full of nudists.

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**Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

Review

#### Praise for *Naked At Lunch*

**One of the *Huffington Post*'s 20 Notable Non-Fiction Books You Might've Missed This Year**

**One of *Los Angeles Magazine*'s 7 Books You Need to Read This June**

**A *Publishers Weekly* Best Book of the Week**

"Smith offers lots of funny anecdotes about his first-person research. As you might imagine, the clothing-optional world is not all Adonis and Aphrodite playing volleyball."—**Ron Charles, *Washington Post***

"Haskell Smith's rollicking *Naked at Lunch* does its absolute best to make us feel more comfortable in our skin. In his funny, thorough account of his investigative stint as a social nudist, he deftly balances reporting, dry humor, historical context and hilarious anecdotes. . . . Haskell Smith's enthusiasm is infectious and his subject matter will make you appreciate the cool breeze on your mostly unclothed beach body more than ever."—***Huffington Post***

"Smith clearly delights in talking to oddballs; he balances this nicely with a pocket history of nudist movements . . . Smith's tone is breezy, free-wheeling, often very funny."—***Boston Globe***

"L.A. author Smith puts on his reporter's hat and takes off everything else as he explores the history and sociology of nudism."—***Los Angeles Times***

"*Naked at Lunch* is an absolute hoot."—**Maggie Nelson, *Los Angeles Magazine* (7 Books You Need to Read This June)**

"Haskell Smith fully enters the land of nudism to find a world peopled by good-natured hedonists, the sort who have more in common with wine connoisseurs and foodie fanatics than with seedy perverts."—***LA Weekly***

"In the spirit of Mary Roach's curiosity and humor . . . fascinating and funny."—***Los Angeles Daily News***

"A delightful and informative look at nudism throughout history and around the world."—***Seattle Times***

"[Haskell Smith is] alert to the latest schisms and controversies within the nudist world. His tone is informal and spiced with daffily well-targeted turns of phrase. But he's also trenchant and commonsensical in his observations . . . *Naked at Lunch* is a perfect summer read."—***Oregonian***

"Mark Haskell Smith nails the many variations in the clothing-optional world. . . . The book is breezily written, warmly personal, and largely nonjudgmental."—***Minneapolis Star Tribune***

"Gets down and dirty with [the] history of nudism."—***San Francisco Chronicle***

"Hilarious, absorbing and—to adapt Blake's comment on Milton—a sustained celebration of the invention of

clothing.”—**Geoff Dyer**

“A strangely compelling, riotously funny traipse through the world of nudism. Mark Haskell Smith is a worthy heir to the George Plimpton school of journalism. He's not there to mock; he's there to experience humanity in all its full-monty complexity.”—**J. Maarten Troost, author of *Headhunters on My Doorstep* and *The Sex Lives of Cannibals***

“*Naked at Lunch* is a total joy. Mark Haskell Smith is a fine reporter, a trenchant cultural observer and a spectacular writer. He's the best kind of participatory journalist; one who stands proudly with his subjects even as he stands apart from them. The naked cruise chapter is a tour de force and a worthy addition to the canon of great cruise writing. Even if you've never been nude in your life and have no plans to be in the future, this book will thrill you with its hilarious and outrageous stories and move you with its essential humanity.”—**Meghan Daum, author of *The Unspeakable: And Other Subjects of Discussion***

“Mark Haskell Smith turns out to be an ideally curious point man into the bizarre and complicated world of modern-day nudism. If there's a funnier, more interesting book about being naked, I'd very much like to read it.”—**Tom Bissell, co-author of *The Disaster Artist***

“*Naked at Lunch* is insightful, brave, and inspiring. With extraordinary honesty and humor, Haskell Smith faces down social and personal inhibitions to experience both a fascinating subculture and a moving personal transformation.”—**Jillian Lauren, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Some Girls: My Life in a Harem***

“Our knight in shining lotion . . . makes some stealthy observations . . . Interspersed with his naked adventures are fascinating . . . glimpses of nudists throughout history . . . Haskell Smith can hit the David Sedaris humor sweet spot.”—***Los Angeles Review of Books***

“Throwing both caution and clothing to the wind, novelist and journalist Haskell Smith strikes a winning combination of personal and journalistic narrative as he investigates the appeal of nudism. . . . Though he's not above making more than a few jokes about swinging genitalia, Haskell Smith does an admirable job of keeping the narrative respectful . . . Haskell Smith's empathy and genuine interest in nudism and its appeal make this account both informative and entertaining . . . A witty and insightful read.”—***Publishers Weekly* (starred review and “Best Book of the Week”)**

“An amusing and earnest attempt to understand the appeal of nudism. . . . With solid reporting and scholarship, Smith delves into the genesis of the global nudism movement, constantly enlivening material that could have gotten stale. . . . Smith makes you laugh and think. A thoughtful and entertaining analysis of why so many still want to ditch their clothes and let it all hang out.”—***Kirkus Reviews***

“A lot of people will enjoy *Naked at Lunch*. Mark Haskell Smith's escapades and his observances are hilarious.”—***Myrtle Beach Sun News***

“Smith, a likable American writer who ambles a breezy path between the likes of Bill Bryson and Geoff Dyer, offers up plenty of hilarity as he prepares to embrace this subculture of ‘nakations’ and ‘clothing optional’ environments . . . This thoughtful, funny book is a plea for the middle ground. By the end of his unbuttoned adventures, Smith has widened his idea of what normal can be—and, following him into that sea of flesh, so has the reader.”—***Guardian***

“Hilarious insight into what makes people get together and strip off . . . William Burroughs' 1959 *Naked*

*Lunch* may win when it comes to sex and drugs but *At Lunch* pulls its pants down when it comes to barefaced laughter.”—*Daily Telegraph* (Sydney)

“Part social study, part history of naturism and nakedness, the book is written with a light touch and although it never becomes salacious, [Mark Haskell Smith] keeps the story interesting.”—*Sydney Morning Herald*

“*Naked At Lunch* is the kind of book George Plimpton might well have written if he were still alive.”—*Winnipeg Free Press*

“Hilarious”—**Thrillist**

“*Naked at Lunch* . . . may be the best book on naturism—and the most persuasive argument for naturism—ever written by a non-naturist . . . The book is a pleasure to read, whether or not you’re a naturist yourself.”—**Naturist Philosopher**

“Hilarious . . . well researched, truthful . . . *Naked at Lunch* will go a long way toward dispelling many of the misconceptions that mainstream, non-nudist readers have about Nudism . . . destined to become a classic of naturist literature. Many nudists . . . will find much to enjoy here as well.”—**SoCal Naturist Newsletter**

“Smith’s informal, often carefree tone serves him well . . . the book projects fresh perspectives throughout.”—*N Magazine*

“Very funny stuff . . . Haskell Smith writes entertainingly.”—*Press and Journal* (UK)

About the Author

**Mark Haskell Smith** is the author of five novels, most recently *Raw: A Love Story*, and the nonfiction book *Heart of Dankness: Underground Botanists, Outlaw Farmers, and the Race for the Cannabis Cup*. His work has appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, and *Vulture*. He lives in Los Angeles.

## Users Review

### From reader reviews:

#### Cheryl Fenske:

Book is usually written, printed, or descriptive for everything. You can know everything you want by a book. Book has a different type. To be sure that book is important factor to bring us around the world. Adjacent to that you can your reading expertise was fluently. A publication *Naked at Lunch: A Reluctant Nudist's Adventures in the Clothing-Optional World* will make you to end up being smarter. You can feel much more confidence if you can know about every little thing. But some of you think which open or reading a new book make you bored. It isn't make you fun. Why they may be thought like that? Have you looking for best book or suited book with you?

#### Barbara Jackson:

Spent a free time and energy to be fun activity to try and do! A lot of people spent their down time with their family, or their very own friends. Usually they performing activity like watching television, gonna beach, or picnic in the park. They actually doing same every week. Do you feel it? Do you want to something different

to fill your current free time/ holiday? Might be reading a book might be option to fill your cost-free time/ holiday. The first thing that you'll ask may be what kinds of e-book that you should read. If you want to try look for book, may be the publication untitled Naked at Lunch: A Reluctant Nudist's Adventures in the Clothing-Optional World can be great book to read. May be it can be best activity to you.

### **Mae Marks:**

People live in this new moment of lifestyle always attempt to and must have the spare time or they will get large amount of stress from both lifestyle and work. So , whenever we ask do people have spare time, we will say absolutely sure. People is human not only a robot. Then we request again, what kind of activity are you experiencing when the spare time coming to a person of course your answer will probably unlimited right. Then ever try this one, reading ebooks. It can be your alternative throughout spending your spare time, the particular book you have read is Naked at Lunch: A Reluctant Nudist's Adventures in the Clothing-Optional World.

### **Edna Dixon:**

Playing with family in a park, coming to see the water world or hanging out with friends is thing that usually you might have done when you have spare time, after that why you don't try issue that really opposite from that. One activity that make you not sensation tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition details. Even you love Naked at Lunch: A Reluctant Nudist's Adventures in the Clothing-Optional World, it is possible to enjoy both. It is fine combination right, you still desire to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout men. What? Still don't get it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

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