

Preface

To children the world is full of magical events, and the line between make-believe and reality is (happily) distinctly blurred. However, as we all age and have to be realistic, earn money, become serious and responsible adults (yawn!) and accept that life is short and no one is immortal, those magical events fade and die. We accept that the worlds of make-believe are simply a product of the vivid imaginations of great story tellers, and that we are all very similar human beings; just slogging away at the tedious day job, and hoping for a win on the lottery. However, there are still a few events which are truly magical and, for me, total solar eclipses (TSEs) are about as magical an event as you can ever experience. Our Earth and Sun are, by a ludicrously lucky coincidence (or, some would argue, by a cosmic architect) almost the same apparent size in the sky. Thus, seventy times a century, the Moon's shadow passes over a narrow band on the Earth's surface and, for those on the track, with clear skies, a truly awe-inspiring sight can be seen.

But be warned, eclipse chasing is an addictive drug. Once you have seen totality, you will crave more of the same. The sight of an eclipsed Sun is the stuff of science fiction, but, for the cost of a plane flight or an organized holiday, it can be yours, albeit for a few fleeting minutes.

This is not the first total solar eclipse book to be written. A handful of others have been published in the last ten years. However, this is the first new total solar eclipse book to be published in the exciting digital photography era and so I make no apology for bringing the subject bang up to date.

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