

Journeys To The Ends Of The Earth

13 X 1 HOUR

EPISODIC BREAKDOWN

1. The Land of Fear (Niger)

The Sahara is the biggest desert on earth, taking its name from the Arab word for emptiness. In the dead heart of that emptiness there's a place called the Tenere. Emptiness the size of France in the middle of emptiness the size of the United States. It's no wonder the locals call this place The Land Of Fear.

2. The People of the Flame

Iran is one of the earth's final frontiers. It's a country little visited by western travellers in recent years, yet it has been at the centre of world affairs for millennia. David wanted to take a peek behind the veil of modern-day Iran. What he discovered was a complex, incredibly hospitable people living in a much-misunderstood country at the heart of a troubled region.

3. Keepers of the Lost Ark

David heads high into the Ethiopian Cush – a place known to the ancients as Punt, The Land Of Ghosts – In search of The Lost Ark. The Ark of the Covenant is believed to be the most powerful object ever made by man. In 586BC it disappeared. It's believed to have ended up in Ethiopia, and that's why David's gone there.

4. Swahili Sinbads

The battered dhow carves its passage though the waters of the South Indian Ocean. Its patched lateen sail, the salt air fragrant with cloves. Zanzibar: the spice island. A real-world Shangri-la; the island at the end of the earth. David Adams sails south in search of the lost world of Arab seafarer.

5. The Forbidden Zone

In the far-flung reaches of Siberian Russia there's a place unlike any other on earth. A place nine times zones from Moscow. A place so far east it's almost west. It's called Kamchatka, the snowbound Eden. One hundred thousand lakes, 300 geysers, 414 glaciers, and 100 volcanoes all crammed into a peninsula the size of California.

6. The Lost City of Gold

For the better part of 400 years people have searched the deep canyons and towering ice peaks of these mist-covered cloud forests trying to locate the lost cities of the Inca. They were all after one thing: gold. Any gold would do but there was one thing desired above all others, the Great Golden Disc of the Sun: the most sacred of all Inca relics.

7. The Last Trail of Butch and Sundance

David Adams re-lives the last days on the last trail of two American heroes, Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid, through the deserts of Bolivia. In 1908, the two legendary outlaws disappeared in the south of Bolivia not far from the border of Argentina. Were they killed by the Bolivian Cavalry? Or did they fake their deaths and escape to the USA and Europe as rich men?

8. In Search of Jason and the Argonauts

Nowhere else on Earth is the difference between the tranquillity and beauty of the physical world and the brutality and disorder of the people who live in it so great as it is in the former Soviet satellites. And right in the middle is Georgia. Today it's a place emerging from the iron grip of the Kremlin but once it was a land of mystery and dragons.

9. The Lost Buddhas of Afghanistan

Afghanistan is not so much a country as a series of shifting borders, a place with no easily definable physical or civil boundaries. About 1.5 million have been killed during the past 20 years of war. Perhaps another 4 million have fled. It was here, in the Bamian Valley north of Kabul the two largest statues of Buddha on the planet were carved in the third century.

10. The Road to Shangri-la

Legend tells of a utopian kingdom hidden among the towering mountains of inner Asia. For centuries, romantics, adventurers and the devout risked their lives searching for this heaven on Earth. Those who returned told of a journey through hostile lands, of crossing treacherous mountain passes and desert gorges in their search for a valley where people live for hundreds of years.

11. The Mystery of the African Pharaohs

Sudan is one of the world's last frontiers. It's a mineral treasure trove (unmined gold, uranium, oil) hobbled by a brutal history. It's Africa's largest country – stretching from Boston to Key West – yet virtually all of its 33 million inhabitants have no electricity, no telephones, and no postal service. It's also the scene of one of the longest ongoing civil wars ever played out.

12. The Lost World of the Khmer Rouge

The Cardamom Mountains in Cambodia are how Asia used to be. David Adams enters this lost world in search of the khting vor, a mysterious snake-eating animal known as the Cambodian unicorn which was until recently believed to be extinct.

13. The Ancient Chariots of Libya

Once, Libya was home to the richest cities in Africa, the headquarters for the African empires of Rome and Greece. Now it is reviled as a desert with a dictator in it. David Adams follows in the tracks of Ancient Rome's chariots of fire – the first wheeled vehicles to explore the Sahara – and discovers a little-known land of exotic brilliance, ancient cities and forbidding deserts.