



# The Desert Smells Like Rain: A Naturalist in O'odham Country

*Gary Paul Nabhan*

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**Longtime residents of the Sonoran Desert**, the Tohono O'odham people have spent centuries living off the land—a land that most modern citizens of southern Arizona consider totally inhospitable. Ethnobotanist Gary Nabhan has lived with the Tohono O'odham, long known as the Papagos, observing the delicate balance between these people and their environment. Bringing O'odham voices to the page at every turn, he writes elegantly of how they husband scant water supplies, grow crops, and utilize wild edible foods. Woven through his account are coyote tales, O'odham children's impressions of the desert, and observations on the political problems that come with living on both sides of an international border. Whether visiting a sacred cave in the Baboquivari Mountains or attending a saguaro wine-drinking ceremony, Nabhan conveys the everyday life and extraordinary perseverance of these desert people in a book that has become a contemporary classic of environmental literature.

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