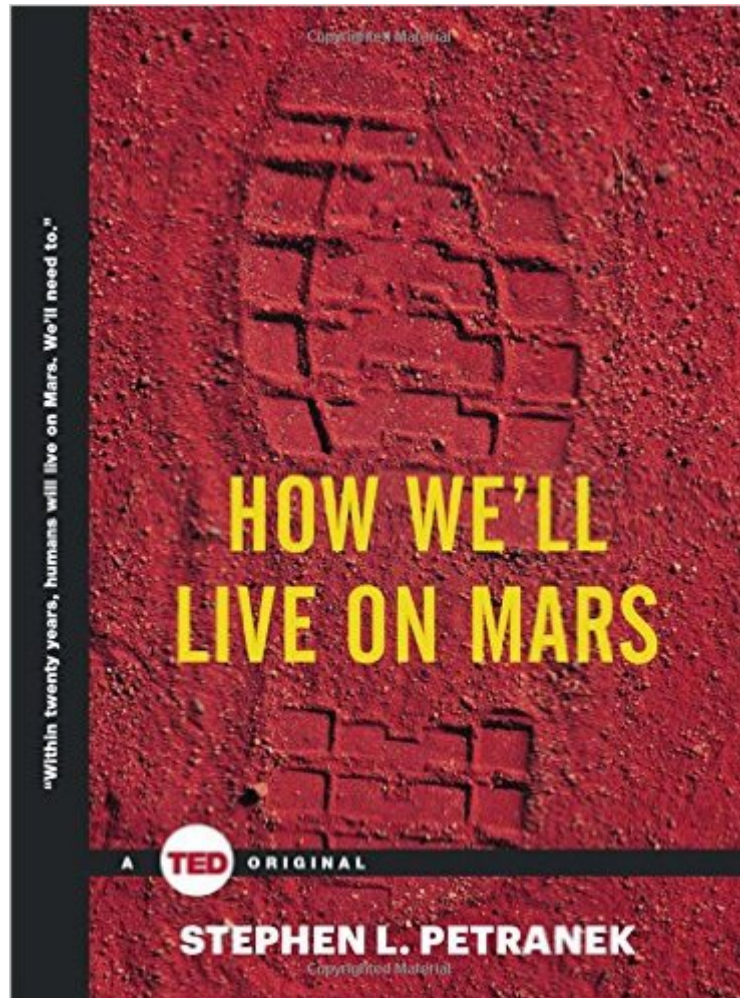


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# How We'll Live On Mars (TED Books)



## Synopsis

Award-winning journalist Stephen Petranek says humans will live on Mars by 2027. Now he makes the case that living on Mars is not just plausible, but inevitable. It sounds like science fiction, but Stephen Petranek considers it fact: Within twenty years, humans will live on Mars. We'll need to. In this sweeping, provocative book that mixes business, science, and human reporting, Petranek makes the case that living on Mars is an essential back-up plan for humanity and explains in fascinating detail just how it will happen. The race is on. Private companies, driven by iconoclastic entrepreneurs, such as Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Paul Allen, and Sir Richard Branson; Dutch reality show and space mission Mars One; NASA; and the Chinese government are among the many groups competing to plant the first stake on Mars and open the door for human habitation. Why go to Mars? Life on Mars has potential life-saving possibilities for everyone on earth. Depleting water supplies, overwhelming climate change, and a host of other disasters—from terrorist attacks to meteor strikes—all loom large. We must become a space-faring species to survive. We have the technology not only to get humans to Mars, but to convert Mars into another habitable planet. It will likely take 300 years to terraform Mars, as the jargon goes, but we can turn it into a veritable second Garden of Eden. And we can live there, in specially designed habitations, within the next twenty years. In this exciting chronicle, Petranek introduces the circus of lively characters all engaged in a dramatic effort to be the first to settle the Red Planet. How We'll Live on Mars brings firsthand reporting, interviews with key participants, and extensive research to bear on the question of how we can expect to see life on Mars within the next twenty years.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book has plenty of good information and speculation with only a few errors. This is a topic that is extremely difficult to write about without making any mistakes at all. It's quite possible to write accurately one day and have that accuracy destroyed by new developments and discovery before actual publication. It's hard to explain to those who have not tried, the incredible breadth of knowledge required to discuss travel to and living on Mars unless that person has attempted it. As one who has essayed this effort in both fact and fiction (see ETCJournal.com and Mars Rhapsody), I can tell you it's a tough job. This book does the topic reasonable justice. This book is designed to be read in a single sitting. As a result, it often does not plumb the depths of some topics. Quite a bit of the book details the history of the ideas of travelling to Mars, beginning with Wermer von Braun (pronounced: Verner fawn Brown). Petranek covers the psychological, economic, and physical issues involved in getting to and living on Mars rather completely. He spends some time on Mars One and Elon Musk, suggesting that the former is a very long shot due to funding issues (I agree) and that the latter is almost guaranteed to succeed for a variety of reasons (I agree again). He spends a bit too much space on slamming NASA, albeit with some good reasons. He even indicts Richard Nixon as the primary person responsible for us not reaching Mars already. As to the errors, they are relatively minor compared to the scope and thrust of the book. For example, the author writes, "When you run out of oxygen in a space suit, you can only breathe the carbon dioxide that you exhale for so long before you lose consciousness."

How We'll Live on Mars is an engrossing book, albeit short. The beginning immediately hooks you in with a description of what could be, how we might land on Mars and the pressing concerns that astronauts would have upon landing. The book then backtracks and discusses much of our past history with the red planet, including von Braun's The Mars Project and the current space industry, focusing on Elon Musk's SpaceX. He uses this history lecture as a platform to espouse anti-space shuttle arguments, something that I honestly do not have enough knowledge on to feel strongly one way or the other about. This diatribe does seem a little out of place in the book, especially because the rest of the book is very upbeat and enthusiastic about space travel, and I honestly don't think that we could have made it safely to Mars without the experiences we've gained using the space shuttle and extended stays in space stations. He then describes what the

obstacles will be when we reach Mars: how we'll find water, air, and shelter, before going into the feasibility of terraforming Mars or genetically modifying humans to live on Mars. Overall, the book was an encouraging look into the fourth planet. I have full faith in Mr. Musk and various space agencies around the world to bring us to Mars within my lifetime, and I enjoy reading books like this one to get a good idea of how we'll be able to accomplish it. I could have read a much more dense and technical book than this one and been perfectly content, but if you're looking for a good overview, this is your book. On the other hand, if you are looking for an in depth analysis, this will leave you wanting. If you already know the history of space exploration and SpaceX, only about half of the book is new knowledge.

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