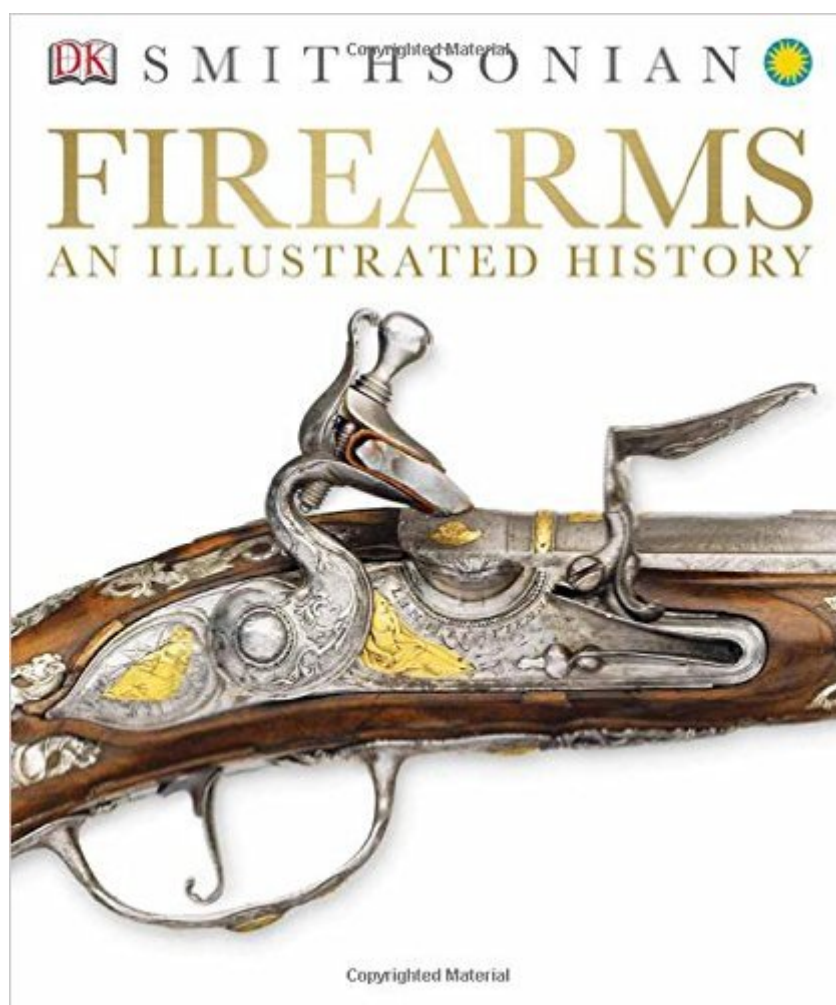


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# Firearms: An Illustrated History



## Synopsis

Published in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution, *Firearms: An Illustrated History* charts the evolution of the gun, from the pistol and rifle, to the machine gun and revolver. Detailed catalogs profile more than 300 firearms spanning over 700 years. With virtual tours detailing the most intricate details of key weaponry and photographic features on the world's iconic gun makers, including Colt, Smith & Wesson, Maxim, and Kalashnikov, *Firearms: An Illustrated History* is the perfect gift for gun, weapon, and military history enthusiasts.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 320 pages

Publisher: DK (March 17, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1465416056

ISBN-13: 978-1465416056

Product Dimensions: 10.2 x 1.1 x 12.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (72 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Dk:Illustrated History of Firearms charts the evolution of firearms,from the time when gunpowder was invented to the present day. It is highly illustrated and contains 2 exclusive removable prints at the back of the book.Weapon "showcases" let's readers take an exclusive tour of some of the world's most famous guns, such as the Ak47,Colt M1911, and Gattling gun.Afew errors here and there,but overall a wonderfully written and illustrated book.This book is more for visual enjoyment than serious reference,however.Have a nice read:)

Something of a coffee table picture book, which is not a bad thing. This book includes beautiful color pictures of small arms and artillery from matchlocks to modern firearms.I bought this book because I wanted some information about the change over from flintlock firearms to percussion cap weapons; this book answered my questions. For sure, it is a very useful reference work. Particularly beautiful

are the pictures of the elaborately inlaid and engraved Ottoman rifles from the 17th and 18th centuries. Perhaps it's nit picking, but I may as well point out a few of the book's weaknesses. To begin with, the book was assembled with the expert assistance of four consultants. Three of the four are Brits; Henry, Rimer and Smithurst. Now, I have nothing against our British friends and they are true experts in their field, but this does give a bias to the entries. American contributions to firearms design as well as descriptions of weapons of interest to American gun enthusiasts have been thinned a bit in favor of a more European bias. No doubt, an aspect of this issue is that there is a LOT of ground to cover, but that leads to my second criticism. The book includes artillery. This is surely interesting, but the focus could have been maintained on small arms; small arms alone is a plenty big enough subject area to cover and this would have allowed a more comprehensive treatment of the relevant area of primary interest. And the artillery entries are particularly thin, perhaps because the authors recognized that with this addition, they were wandering a bit out of the main subject area. Notable in being absent from comprehensive discussion are (in no particular order); the M16/AR-15. This is a true oversight as this weapon was ground breaking in the late fifties when it was originally developed. And it is also an excellent example of modern weapons' modularity that has been an important development in small arms as they are now a mature technology. There is NO mention what-so-ever of Ronnie Barrett's contributions to rifle (especially sniper rifle) technology. This is truly unfortunate as his interesting and intimidating rifles have made serious contributions on the modern battlefield. Gas seal revolvers are discussed (the Joseph-Lang; 1855) but little to no mention is made of probably the most famous gas seal revolver of them all; the Belgian designed Nagant. It would have been nice if some of the experts from the NRA National Firearms Museum could have been included on the consultants list. But perhaps that would have led to too many cooks in the kitchen. I don't know. *Firearms: an Illustrated History* is a beautiful book and well worth owning. The subject of firearms is such a large subject area that perhaps it is inevitable that no one book could ever hope to cover everything.

This Smithsonian illustrated book recounting the history of firearms by DK publishing is a definitive account of the world's gun powder weaponry. It is a beautifully printed book that is packed with color illustrations. There is sufficient although not extensive text and labeling to give the reader an understanding of the pictures. Every page contains a myriad of glossy photos or drawings. It is organized by both gun type and historical chronology. In most cases the firearm type determines approximately where it belongs in history so there is some blending in the organization. That is not a

problem for the reader and probably the only way to arrange the content in a logical fashion. Hand guns, rifles, canons, shotguns, machine guns, flintlocks and many many more weapons from all over the world are shown and described in the book. This is a serious, informative and accurate history of firearms. There are even references to how, when and why the featured guns were used. When possible there are manufacturers and designers mentioned. It has an excellent glossary, index and a long list of acknowledgements. This is what some would call a coffee table book because it is so well done and so attractive. It is a large book printed on heavy slick paper. It has a beautiful embossed dust cover. It is a high quality book in every way. The information in the 320 page book is wide ranging and just detailed enough as to be interesting to every reader. It is a scholarly work with general appeal to anyone interested in the history of firearms.

This is a great book that should provide any firearm enthusiast hours of enjoyment. The photography and illustrations are beautiful and detailed. I won't go into all the good things about this book because it would just repeat what others have said but I do have to mention something that is pretty funny. Although the book is very accurate for such a large and detailed effort, there are some minor errors. I'll just mention two that appear on a single page. On page 95, the text mentions that the Colt Single Action Army was introduced in 1973 and then goes on to say that, among who used that revolver were the "forty niners" of the gold rush. Think about that. After gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill in January of 1948 the Gold Rush really took hold by 1949. Most historians define the gold rush as spanning the seven years from 1849 to 1856. Now, how could a forty-niner have a revolver introduced in 1873? Then, at the top of the same page, the text states that the Colt Single Action Army was introduced in 1863. I see errors like this as being funny unless there are too many of them. I am only through about 1/3rd the way through the book so I don't know how many, if any, errors are to follow but, so far, the book has been very accurate as far as I can tell with a couple exceptions like those mentioned above.

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