



# AGAINST THE FLOW

Culinary adventures up the Mekong River

Ian Walker

## **Press Release**

April 2009

### **New book reveals one man's quest to travel upstream the length of the Mekong River –eating anything he can along the way**

**Readers will enjoy an exciting journey as the author unveils his discovery of the world's most delicious pepper and tea more expensive than gold**

Ian Walker, the top London chef turned food guru and author, releases his much anticipated second book, 'Against the Flow', next month. Described by some as the 'Culinary Bruce Parry', Ian has captured all of the most exciting details of his latest quest, an intriguing and dynamic adventure that strikes at the heart of the cuisine and people along the Mekong River, taking him from the low-lying delta in Vietnam, 4,350 kilometers north to the mystical source in Tibet, making him only the second Briton to reach it.

Along the way, Ian's insatiable appetite allows nothing to be refused: the beating heart of a Cobra snake and beetles that thrive on water buffalo dung are savoured with locals. He also finds his morals severely tested in Vietnam – and shares some stomach-churning experiences on the road journeys that take him into the mysterious land of Tibet – but it's the link between the people and the food that the river provides that is the true heart of the book.

Following the success of his first book, 'Thirty Miles – a Local Journey In Food', where he took on the challenge of proving that it was possible to find quality local grown produce, Ian set his sights on a more ambitious project that would allow him to combine his passion for travel, adventure and cooking food at source. In this second outing, Ian guides the reader along the mighty Mekong River – one of the world's major rivers and the lifeblood of the millions of people that depend on it for survival – across the seven countries that it passes through. His epic feat of reaching the river's remote source located high in the Himalayas in Tibet and only discovered in 1994 – traveling upstream the entire time – made him one of just a handful of Westerners to accomplish this.

During his journey, Ian discovers the remarkable everyday cuisine of Cambodia: a hidden gem of the culinary world that is beginning to come out of the shadows again (following Pol Pot's genocidal reign), and where many of the age-old family recipes were lost with its people. In Laos, Ian devours lizard, ant eggs, and various deep fried bugs and beetles, and also visits an area that had more bombs dropped on it during the Vietnam conflict than were dropped during all of WWII.

In this engaging book, Ian also explores the rich pickings of the highly expensive and sought after Puer tea, bought by the wealthy as an investment, and discovers Vietnam's biggest export (and a staple of every kitchen across the country), known locally as liquid gold. As he nears the end of his journey, heading towards the Yunnan Province, Ian hunts and forages with the Miao tribes, and finds that Yak tea, yoghurt and tsampa become his daily staples as he eats and lives with nomads, culminating in an action-packed finale as he pushes to the river's source.

**Pricing and Availability:** Published by Troubador, 'Against the Flow' will be on general sale from April 1<sup>st</sup> priced at £7.99, and will be available from Waterstones, Amazon.com and xxxxx.

**Notes to Editors:** For press copies of 'Against the Flow', images, more information or to speak with Ian, please contact Andrew Ball, please see press contacts below.

**About the Author:**

Ian Walker has been a chef since he was 16, spending eight years working in top London restaurants including Overtons, Mirabelle, Bank and Monsieur Max, before becoming an Innovation Chef for Sainsbury's. In between travelling and writing Ian is also a successful food consultant, working with manufacturers who supply Waitrose, Sainsburys and Marks and Spencer. His exploring credits include cycling through the Democratic Republic of Congo, travelling across Mongolia on horseback and venturing into the remote regions of Northern Vietnam.

Now a fully fledged adventurer through food author, Ian has two books to his name, the first being the well received 'Thirty Miles – a local journey In Food' where he was challenged to prove that quality food could be made just from using ingredients from within a 30 mile radius. The book was well received and featured in an exhibition at the Science Museum. Having written 'Against the Flow' charting his experiences and adventures up the Mekong, Ian is now preparing to undertake his next book early in 2009.

**Press Contact:**

Andrew Ball/Chaz Brooks  
Chazbrooks Communications  
Tel: +44 (0) 1483 537890  
E-mail: andrewb@chazb.com, chazb@chazb.com