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The Odyssey of the Ants

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Two leading myrmecologists introduce us to the daily lives of ants. A scientific odyssey full of surprises that reads like an adventure novel!

Scientists have catalogued 13,000 species of ant and estimate another 12,000 exist. Astonishing in their sheer diversity, these insects, which first appeared 170 million years ago, have colonized every continent except Antarctica, far outstripping Napoleon and Genghis Khan as conquerors.

Drawing on their travels, Dussutour and Wistrach describe in detail a key activity: the search for food, which can occupy millions of individuals within a single colony. To this end, ants may undertake journeys of several dozen miles, often through hostile terrain full of obstacles and predators. But so diverse is their range of tactics in negotiating these that one might think ants invented the art of war.

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