



# In Pursuit of the Traveling Salesman: Mathematics at the Limits of Computation

By William J. Cook

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## **In Pursuit of the Traveling Salesman: Mathematics at the Limits of Computation** By William J. Cook

What is the shortest possible route for a traveling salesman seeking to visit each city on a list exactly once and return to his city of origin? It sounds simple enough, yet the traveling salesman problem is one of the most intensely studied puzzles in applied mathematics--and it has defied solution to this day. In this book, William Cook takes readers on a mathematical excursion, picking up the salesman's trail in the 1800s when Irish mathematician W. R. Hamilton first defined the problem, and venturing to the furthest limits of today's state-of-the-art attempts to solve it. He also explores its many important applications, from genome sequencing and designing computer processors to arranging music and hunting for planets.

*In Pursuit of the Traveling Salesman* travels to the very threshold of our understanding about the nature of complexity, and challenges you yourself to discover the solution to this captivating mathematical problem.

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