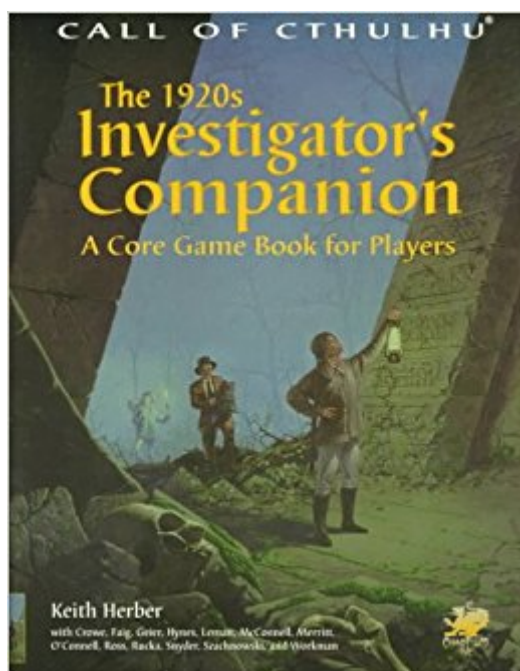


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The 1920s Investigator's Companion: A Core Game Book For Players (Call Of Cthulhu)



Synopsis

A core game book for players. When faced with the horrors of the Cthulhu Mythos, investigators need all the help that they can get. This essential player's aid for Call of Cthulhu provides it. The 1920s Investigator's Companion is split into four sections. "The Roaring Twenties" details life in the 1920s, from a general historical overview to listing of favorite songs, books, and films of the era. "On Becoming An Investigator" details the trials of becoming an investigator, offers 140 different occupations, and annotates the use of skills in the 1920s. "The Tools of the Trade" lists resources investigators may use for research, describes various forms of transport and transportation, and also catalog other equipment and weapons. "Words of Wisdom" brings the book to a conclusion by offering advice to the intrepid investigator. Now, for the first time, everything a 1920s investigator needs is gathered in one place.

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Customer Reviews

A core game book for players. When faced with the horrors of the Cthulhu Mythos, investigators need all the help that they can get. This essential player's aid for Call of Cthulhu provides it. The 1920s Investigator's Companion is split into four sections. "The Roaring Twenties" details life in the 1920s, from a general historical overview to listing of favorite songs, books, and films of the era. "On Becoming An Investigator" details the trials of becoming an investigator, offers 140 different occupations, and annotates the use of skills in the 1920s. "The Tools of the Trade" lists resources investigators may use for research, describes various forms of transport and transportation, and

also catalog other equipment and weapons. "Words of Wisdom" brings the book to a conclusion by offering advice to the intrepid investigator. Now, for the first time, everything a 1920s investigator needs is gathered in one place.

The book quickly skims 1920's songs, fashion and general lifestyle and has many hundreds of cool little gems of information -- What was the main newspaper of Amsterdam in the 1920s? What hours was the Library of Congress open to the public? What songs were popular in 1924? It also has a small but reasonable set of purchasable items like clothes, vehicles and weaponry which the main sourcebook sorely lacks and wonderful information on 1920's forensics and criminal investigation. Unfortunately, there's a section of occupations in the middle which takes up half the book. There are little nuggets of information like famous members of that occupation in the 1920's -- Woodie Guthrie the Hobo, Howard Carter the Archaeologist and so on -- but overall, it's just a set of additional sets of skills the player can take and extra benefits and powers. None of it is as unbalancing as *Unearthed Arcana* was to first-edition AD&D, but it's still a step in the wrong direction, and having it take up half the book is pretty silly. Still, the good far outweighs the bad and unless you're already an expert on the 1920's, you'll find a very large amount here to like and to learn from. If you're only buying one *Call of Cthulhu* sourcebook beyond the basic, I'd still recommend getting one of the Arkham Country books (*Arkham Unveiled*, *Kingsport: City in the Mists*, *Return to Dunwich* and *Escape From Innsmouth*) instead of this one since they address specific settings. The Arkham book in particular gives excellent specifics that will be more useful to you than the grand, worldwide events of the 1920's Investigator's Guide. Of course if you're willing to spend the money, both/all are good purchases.

This book has a lot to offer both players and Keepers for *Call of Cthulhu*. For players, it has lots of new occupations, along with some optional 'special' rules to go along with each. For instance, a person in law enforcement has reduced or negated sanity losses when he sees the scene of a violent murder, as this type of character would probably be accustomed to this sort of thing. Another example is that an athlete would get a bonus to CON or STR, and bank robbers have a negative modifier to their EDU. In a way, I like this. But in a way, it also seems a bit restrictive - what if I want to play a rookie cop who is not accustomed to bloody crime scenes, or a highly educated guy who has taken to robbing banks? As a Keeper, I think it would be best to take these special rules as suggestions, not as hard and fast 'rules.' Most of the rest of the book is setting info, background and history about life in the 1920's. I really dig this, as it makes it easier for players to add depth to their

characters and imagine their surroundings, and it makes it easy for Keepers to add new depth to their settings and NPCs without having to do a lot of painstaking research on the period. There is very little in the book in the way of rules additions or clarifications, I guess largely because the CoC system doesn't much need 'em. This book is mainly background stuff. Some of the art in the book looks kind of bad, like it has been photocopied or something. To me, that's trivial, but might be important to some, I guess. All in all, I think this book was well worth my hard-earned cash, and I think it will serve me well in the campaign I am running.

The Call of Cthulhu RPG core rule book is amazingly good (I am want to think of a single core rule book which is fuller or better); and being such, I am not sure whether I should find it odd that the source books tend to be more "sturdy tools" than full fleshed additions. Take the 1920's Companion, it is largely dry reading, strong on the fleshing out of a 1920's campaign but not something that you will read and reread unless you need to look up the data. But, at the same time, the amount of stuff that this book gives you (and makes you realize that you might have forgot to account for in your 1920's game) is pretty astounding. You characters are aided in the assembly of their personality and personal belongings. Timelines are good even in "alternate history" campaigns, and can help you to rewrite history if you wish. Essays and charts flesh out more hard data on procedure and product of the 1920's. On the more technical side, there is one piece of errata that I know of and typos are minimal (besides that one mistake, none come to my mind). The specific page layout is not always attractive...but still, this is one sturdy tool to use. Highly recommended as an extension to the already wonderfully complete world of the CoC RPG.

As the saying goes, "If you must buy one supplement to Call of Cthulhu..." A great role-playing game is generally playable out of a single book. Core rules, including character generation, should be simple enough to fit easily. Expansion books then add new elements to your main book. For "Call of Cthulhu," I find the "The 1920S Investigator's Companion" to be the only expansion I use every game. The additional Investigator occupations add an exciting element and allow for more customization for players. For the Keeper, the "Investigator's Companion" does not add any complication to game play, as many expansion and optional rule books do. The book is packed with information about the 1920's, and can really fill out your campaign. The optional character classes, such as "Athlete," are adaptable to other eras. "The 1920S Investigator's Companion" is a very well put-together supplement, and is easy to navigate.

I bought the book on a recommendation from a gaming friend because I was having a dickens of a time finding references on the 1920's. This book touches on so much more than I'm used to finding in most straight non-fiction books on the era (who basically want to just talk about flappers and gangsters--not helpful to me at all). While this isn't a be-all-and-end-all reference on the era, I found it extremely helpful in helping me focus what I wanted to do with my own research. It also came with bibliographies which have been extremely helpful. I'm glad I got the book.

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