The Colossal Book of Mathematics collects together Gardner's most popular pieces from his legendary "Mathematical Games" column, which ran in Scientific American for twenty-five years. Gardner's array of absorbing puzzles and mind-twisting paradoxes opens mathematics up to the world at large, inspiring people to see past numbers and formulas and experience the application of mathematical principles to the mysterious world around them.

The book goes way beyond a collection of puzzles, in that Gardner really provides an overview of mathematics concepts involved and goes beyond the simple solution of the puzzle to give the reader a sense of particular concepts in mathematics (e.g., topology). His approach really makes mathematics quite interesting.

Whether discussing hexaflexagons or number theory, Klein bottles or the essence of "nothing," Martin Gardner has single-handedly created the field of "recreational mathematics."
In its twelve sections, The Colossal Book of Mathematics explores a wide range of areas, each startlingly illuminated by Gardner's incisive expertise. Beginning with seemingly simple topics, Gardner expertly guides us through complicated and wondrous worlds: by way of basic algebra we contemplate the mesmerizing, often hilarious, linguistic and numerical possibilities of palindromes; using simple geometry, he dissects the principles of symmetry upon which the renowned mathematical artist M. C...
Martin Gardner’s Mathematical Games columns in Scientific American inspired and entertained several generations of mathematicians and scientists. Gardner in his crystal-clear prose illuminated corners of mathematics, especially recreational mathematics, that most people had no idea existed. His playful spirit and inquisitive nature invite the reader into an exploration of beautiful mathematical ideas along with him. These columns were both a revelation and a gift when he wrote them; no one—before Gardner—had written about mathematics like this. They continue to be a marvel. This volume, originally published in 1959, contains the first sixteen columns published in the magazine from 1956-1958. They were reviewed and briefly updated by Gardner for this 1988 edition.