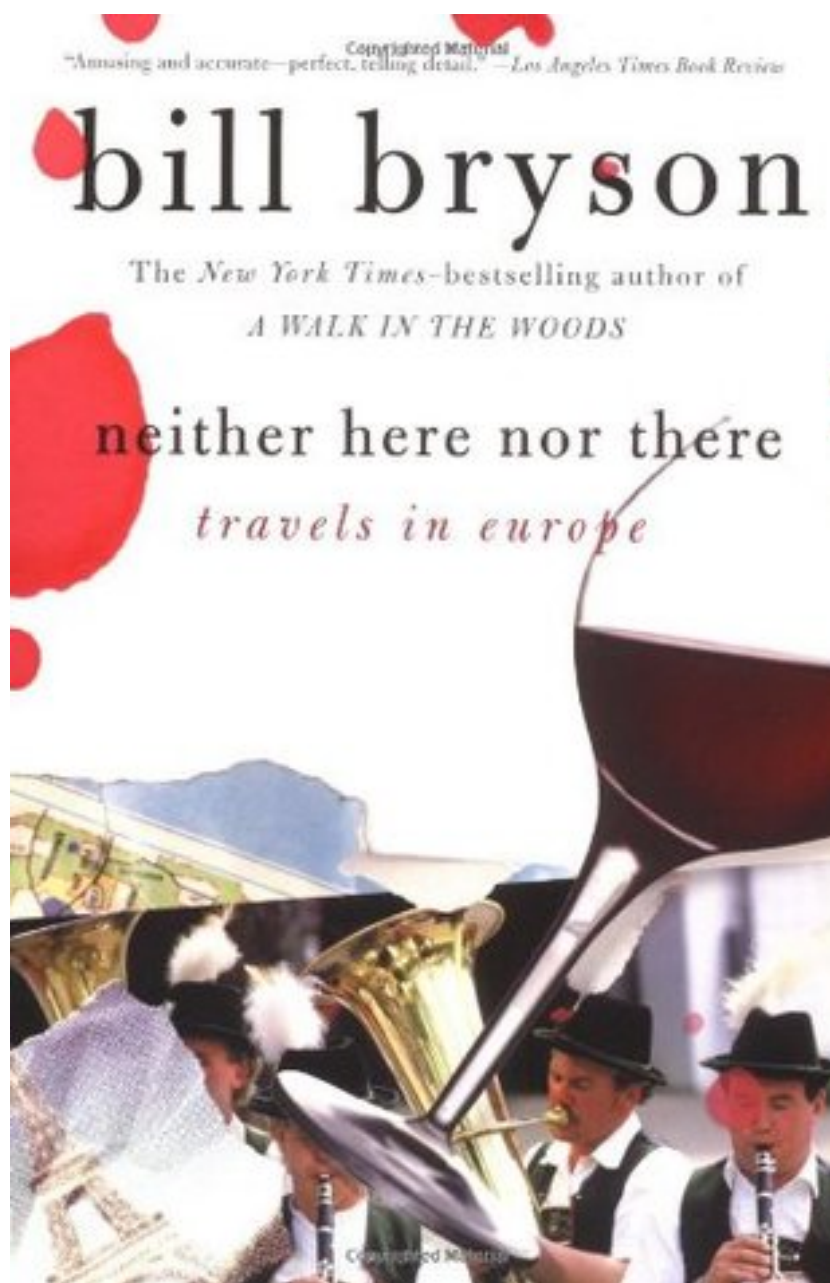


Neither Here nor There: Travels in Europe Book PDF Download



**By:
Bill Bryson**

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What people Say:

Markus

Bryson at his worst. He is the whining American tourist he claims to detest. Meandering through a dozen or so european countries, he manages to complain about virtually every hotel accomodation. And for christ sake Bill, put a freakin map in your book. I'm not totally ignorant when it comes to european geography but if youre gonna write about travelling hundreds of miles every other day, i'd like to glance at the route with out having to bust out my world atlas.

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After Shorthistoryof nearly everything i was so high on him, now this...

Brendon Schrodinger

I'm a fan of Bill Bryson.

I'm not a fan of the complaining, whingeing, swilling pleb who wrote this travel book. No, this is too harsh. But I do feel a little ripped off only because I know how interesting a Bill Bryson book can be. There's no history in this book, there's no culture, there is very little interesting stories.

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Diane

This book hits the sweet spot: Bill Bryson travels around Europe, entertaining us with his humor and thoughtful observations, and also sharing memories of a similar trip he took in the 1970s with his bumbling friend, Stephen Katz.

Ah, poor Stephen. If you have read Bryson's book

which is about hiking the Appalachian Trail, you will remember Mr. Katz as the comic foil, the ridiculously overweight guy who complained a lot and who threw away critical supplies because they were too heavy in his pack.

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which is about hiking the Appalachian Trail, you will remember Mr. Katz as the comic foil, the ridiculously overweight guy who complained a lot and who threw away critical supplies because they were too heavy in his pack. Here is how Bryson introduces Stephen in

"Katz was the sort of person who would lie in a darkened hotel room while you were trying to sleep

and talk for hours in graphic, sometimes luridly perverted, detail about what he would like to do to various high school nymphets, given his druthers and some of theirs, or announce his farts by saying, 'Here comes a good one. You ready?' and then grade them for volume, duration, and odorosity, as he called it. The best thing that could be said about traveling abroad with Katz was that it spared the rest of America from having to spend the summer with him."

Hahaha! This book frequently made me laugh out loud and want to read passages to friends, but of course I had trouble getting the words out because I couldn't stop laughing.

It wasn't just stories about Katz that I enjoyed. Bryson toured all over Europe -- he started in Hammerfest, Norway, to see the Northern Lights, then jetted over to Paris, then Brussels, Cologne, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Rome, Naples, Florence, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, Yugoslavia and Istanbul. (That isn't even a complete list, but you get the idea -- he literally traveled from one end of Europe to the other.)

While in Istanbul, Bryson decides he is finally ready to return to England:

Jeff

Three and a half stars rounded up.

It's never a good idea to read Bill Bryson on public transportation. Stifling belly laughs can be painful and the resulting noise sounds like something between strangling an aardvark and air rapidly escaping from a balloon.

The benefits: Fellow commuters won't look you in the eye and go out of their way to avoid you, so I practically have the whole train car to myself.

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This is one of Bryson's earlier books, so it's long on humor, random observations and anecdotes, and short on insight. He comes off as a lightweight Paul Theroux; however, I was in the mood for laughs and there are plenty contained here.

My previous Bryson book was

, so it was nice to hear more about everyone's nightmare travelling companion, Stephen Katz, even it was via flashback. Not only does Katz have awful luck with bird's crapping on his head, but he has the singular worst pick up line ever.

Eric_W

Bryson writes hysterical travel books. In this one he sets out to re-create a backpacking trip of Europe he made during the seventies when he was twenty. His descriptions of people and places will have you falling out of your chair. The beer he is offered in Belgium, for example, defies his palate. He just can't associate the taste with any previous experience, but finally decides it puts him in mind of a very large urine sample, possibly from a circus animal. (He should have stuck with Coca-Col

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Bryson has truly captured some of the giddy enjoyment that I experience when traveling in a foreign country where one does not speak the language. I can't think of anything that excites a greater sense of childlike wonder than to be in a country where you are ignorant of almost everything. Suddenly you are five years old again. You can't read anything. You have only the most rudimentary sense of how things work. . . . Your whole existence becomes a series of interesting

guesses.

At the Arc de Triomphe, some thirteen streets come together. Can you imagine? I mean to say, here you have a city with the world's most pathologically aggressive drivers -- who in other circumstances would be given injections of valium from syringes the size of basketball jumps and confined to their beds with leather straps -- and you give them an open space where they can all go

in any of thirteen directions at once. Is that asking for trouble or what?â€•

Interspersed are salient comments about traveling on European trains. â€œThere is no scope for privacy and of course there is nothing like being trapped in a train compartment on a long journey to bring all those unassuageable little frailties of the human body crowding to the front of your mind â€“ the withheld fart, the three and a half square yards of boxer shorts that have somehow become concertinaed between your buttocks, the Kelloggâ€™s corn flake that is unaccountably lodged deep in your left nostril,â€•. . .and rude comments about the Swiss: â€œWhat do you call a gathering of boring people in Switzerland? Zurich.â€•

He reveals some funny stories about himself. â€œI had no gift for woodworking. Everyone else in the class was building things like cedar chests and oceangoing boats and getting to play with dangerous and noisy power tools, but I had to sit at the Basics Table with Tubby Tucker and a kid who was so stupid that I don't think we ever learned his name. We just called him 'Drooler.' The three of us weren't allowed anything more dangerous than sandpaper and Elmer's Glue, so we would sit week after week making little nothings out of offcuts, except for Drooler, who would just eat the glue. Mr. Dreck never missed a chance to humiliate me. 'And what is this?' he would say, seizing some mangled block of wood on which I had been laboring for the last twenty-seven weeks and holding it aloft for the class to titter at. 'I've been

teaching shop for sixteen years, Mr. Bryson, and I have to say this is the worst beveled edge I've ever seen.' He held up a birdhouse of mine once and it just collapsed in his hands. The class roared. Tubby Tucker laughed so hard that he almost choked. He laughed for twenty minutes, even when I whispered to him across the table that if he didn't stop it I would bevel his testicles."

It used to be -- not as common now as formerly -- that each public washroom had an attendant whose job it was to keep everything clean, and you were expected to drop in some change for his or her income. The sex of the attendant was irrelevant to the sex of the washroom and Bryson had difficulty getting used to the idea of some cleaning lady watching him urinate to make sure he didn't "dribble on the tiles or pocket any of the urinal cakes. It is hard enough to pee when you are aware that someone's eyes are on you, but when you fear that at any moment you will be felled by a rabbit chop to the kidneys for taking too much time, you seize up altogether. You couldn't have cleared my system with Drano. So eventually I would zip up and return unrelieved to the table [in the restaurant:], and spend the night back at the hotel doing a series of Niagara Falls impressions."

Bryson does not mince words, and his perspective on former Austrian president Waldheim echoes mine but is perhaps more trenchant. â€œI fully accept Dr. Waldheimâ€™s explanation that when he saw forty thousand Jews being loaded onto cattle trucks at Salonika, he genuinely believed they were being sent to the seaside for a holiday. For the sake of fairness, I should point out that Waldheim insists he never even knew that the Jews of Salonika were being shipped off to Auschwitz. And letâ€™s be fair again â€“ they accounted for no more than one third of the cityâ€™s entire population (italics theirs), and it is of course entirely plausible that a high-ranking Nazi officer in the district could have been unaware of what was happening within his area of command.

Let's give the man a break. I mean to say, when the Sturmabteilung, or stormtroopers, burned down forty-two of Vienna's forty three synagogues during Kristallnacht, Waldheim did wait a whole week before joining the