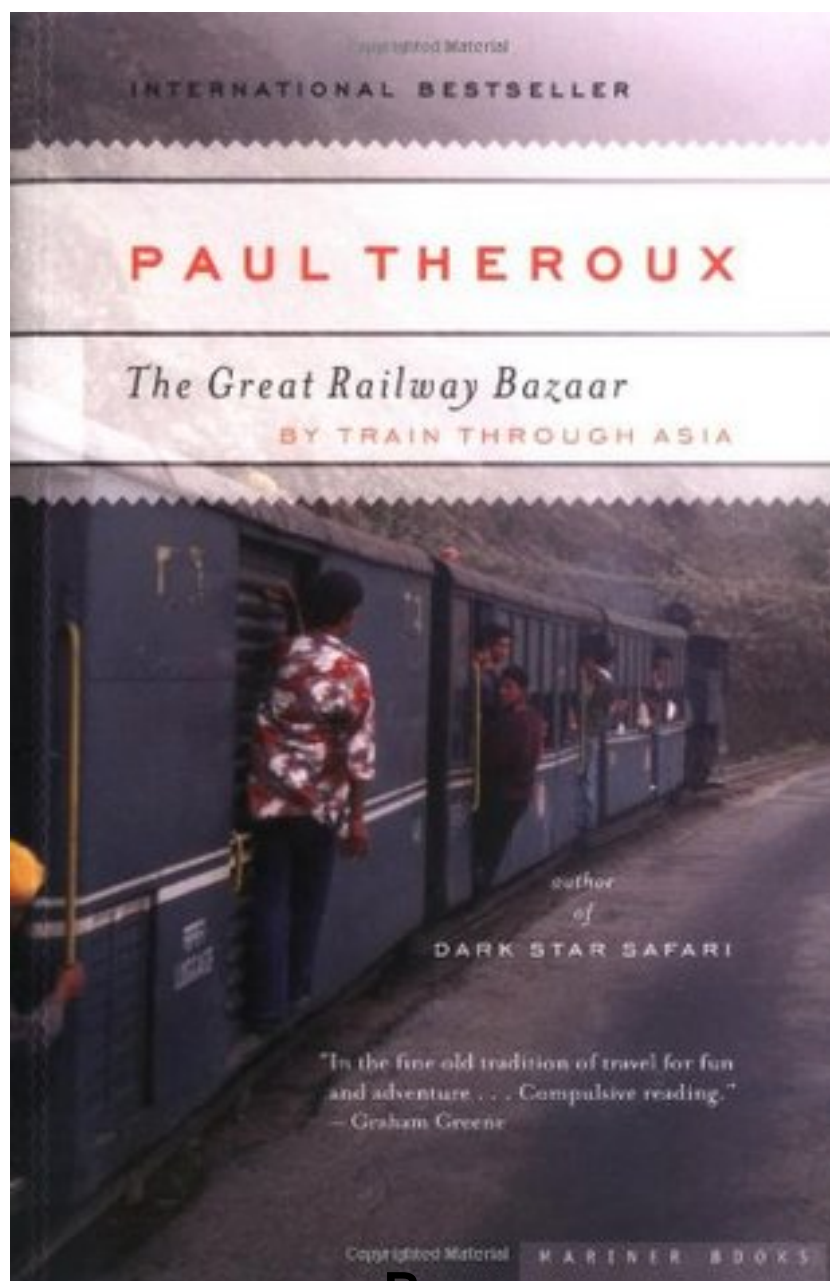


The Great Railway Bazaar Book PDF Download



By:
Paul Theroux

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What people Say:

Brad

...you are a miserable bastard.

On every excruciating page of this around Europe and Asia whine-fest, I wanted to shake your self-righteous little New England prick shoulders and beat some enjoyment into your crabby-bastardness.

The trains are late or crowded or smelly -- waaaaah!

The food is crappy or elsewhere or non-existent -- waaaaah! waaaaah!

The service is poor or sarcastic or requiring bribes (sorry... "baksheesh." Boy are you ever cool and in the know) -- waaaaah! waaaaah! fucki

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Andrew Smith

I've been hearing about Theroux for years and yet had never read one of his books. The idea of reading about a man journeying alone was something I couldn't quite settle to. Would it be tedious and repetitious? Perhaps it'd be like delving into one of those dry guidebooks we've all taken with us to a foreign city -- lots of information but very little pleasure? In the end curiosity got the better of me and I grabbed an audio copy of perhaps his best known book.

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Set in 1973 (but released in 1975) it tells the story of his travels to and across Asia. It's really a collection of episodes, the focus of which is on the trains, the passengers - many of whom he engages in discourse – and the railway stations. We actually learn precious little of the cities he visits.

There is a secondary purpose to the travel as he eludes to a number of lectures he delivers in various cities along the way, though no background to or coverage of these events is included.

The train journeys are mostly long affairs and he has booked sleeping cars which he's usually required to share with a mixed bag of companions. The accounts of these encounters and those with others he meets along the way are often hilarious, with Theroux recounting whole conversations (though I wonder how accurately) with a dry humour that had me laughing out loud. He paints vivid pictures of some memorable characters he met along the way.

We follow his journey from London and across Europe and then through much of Asia. The section of the journey I enjoyed most was his travel through India, which takes up the central part of the book. The whole thing takes on a slight

feel as each place seems wilder and each character wackier than the last. There's a bit of historical information thrown in but it's really about the conversations he has and of him recording his instant impression of the places he visits. Of the northern city of Simla he reflects.

Somehow Theroux manages to make each stage of the journey feel fresh and different, despite the obvious self-limitations. He writes with erudition and humour and I can't help thinking he'd be a great guy to share a meal and a few drinks with. I'll certainly be back to sample more of his work.

A quick note on the audio version I listened to. Frank Muller is superb as narrator of this book, with his pacing and phrasing seeming to draw the best out of Theroux's words. My only niggle is the very strange Indian accent he deployed though, in truth, it didn't impinge on my enjoyment.

Kirsten

oh dear, yes, he's observant and turns a pretty phrase on every page, makes you laugh, etc. but he's so contemptuous of everyone he comes across i lost interest. skipped all the trains between india and the soviet union. he really loses it at the end and addresses all the russians he meets on the trans siberian railway as monkeys. granted, i have now been in a similar situation, far from home in bleak surroundings at christmastime, like theroux on the trans siberian, homesick and irritated by ev

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Teresa

Penso (pensava) que viajar Ã© algo para viver, nÃ£o para ler ou ouvir contar; por isso nunca me interessei por literatura de viagens. Mas como tenho um fraquinho por comboios, e muitos dos livros do Paul Theroux tÃªm comboios nas capas, decidi escolher um para experimentar:

que foi o primeiro relato de viagens de Theroux.

Partiu de Londres em Setembro de 1973 e regressou quatro meses depois. Diz, no PrefÃ¡cio, que

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Gostei desta franqueza, que se mantém sempre ao longo do livro; diz sempre o que pensa (mal ou bem) quer dos lugares, quer das pessoas.

A viagem é feita quase toda em comboio - o Expresso do Oriente, o Flecha Negra, o Transiberiano e tantos mais - passando pela Turquia, Irão, Índia, Tailândia, Japão, Vietname, União Soviética e outros países asiáticos. Não visita os locais turísticos, e quase todo o relato paisagístico é sobre o que vê das janelas do comboio e nas estações onde faz o transbordo. A grande riqueza desta viagem assenta nos diálogos que Theroux estabelece com as dezenas de pessoas com que se cruza; os habitantes dos locais e outros passageiros.

Trinta anos depois, Theroux faz a mesma viagem, relatada em

. Não vou esperar tanto para voltar a viajar com ele...

Jenny (Reading Envy)

I started out liking this book, but the author started to grate on my nerves. He took an amazing trip on trains from Europe to Turkey to Iran through Asia including Thailand, Japan, and Siberia. For a large portion of his journey, he is following the "hippie trail," popular in the 1960s and 1970s for people traveling from England to India. But his tone and commentary on the people he meets were not always the kindest. In fact he seemed rather uninterested in talking to anyone who wasn't already

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He does mention why trains are perfect settings for conversations with strangers:

"The conversation, like many others I had with people on trains, derived an easy candor from the shared journey, the comfort of the dining car, and the certain knowledge that neither of us would see each other again. The railway was a ficator's bazaar, in which anyone with the patience could carry away a memory to pore over in privacy."

Still, it isn't as if you can board one train to see all these places, and I enjoyed reading about how the train itself changed as the country did. This is in 1973, and a lot of political upheaval has happened since then, so I'm still looking forward to reading

where he revisits the same journey 30 years later. I'm hoping I'll find that he has matured too, but I'm not crossing my fingers.

In an

, Theroux talks about how this train trip was one of the elements in his first marriage ending. Within the book he only mentions his wife once that I can remember, and perhaps I should have suspected something from her absence.

Examples of his racial stereotypes:

"Money pulls the Iranian in one direction, religion drags him in another, and the result is a stupid starved creature for whom woman is only meat."