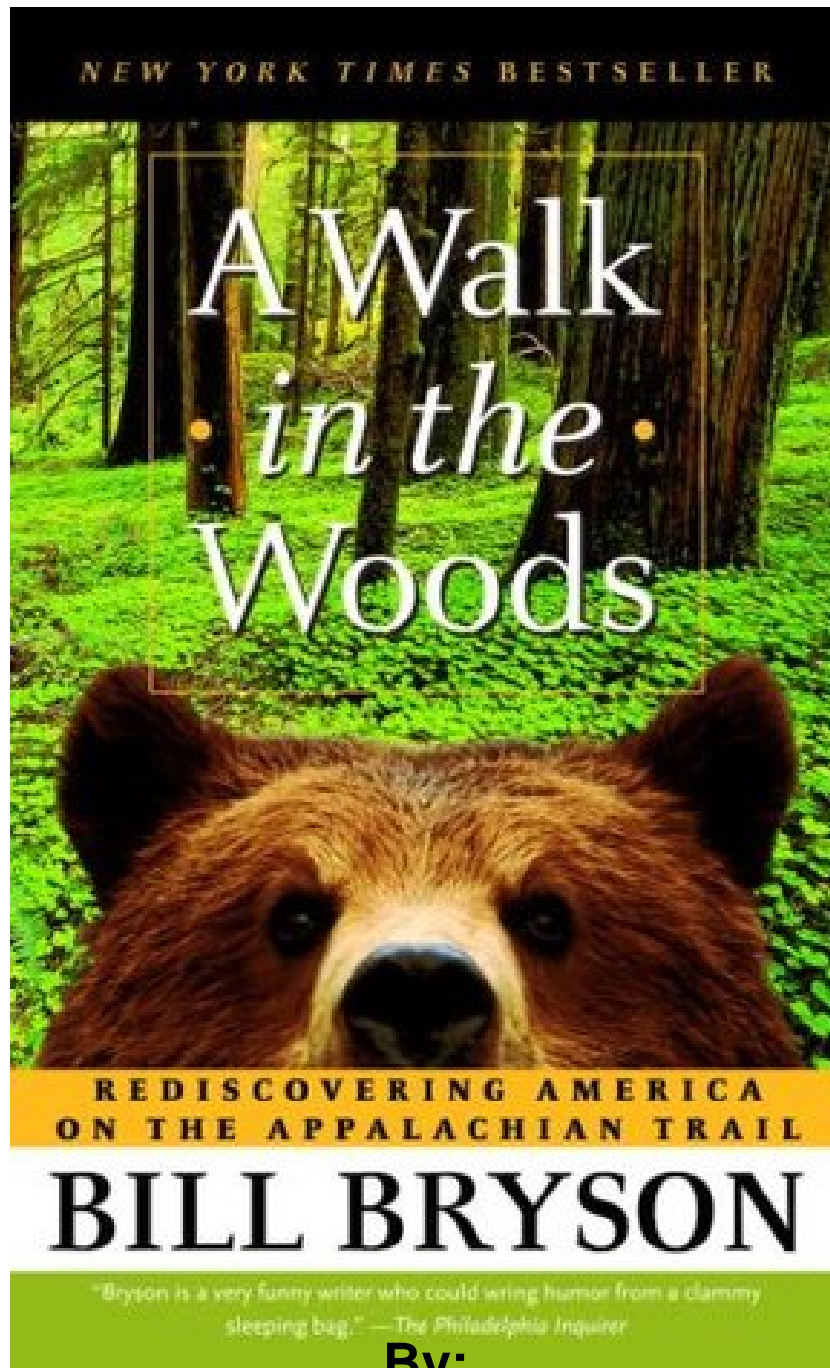


# A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail Book PDF Download



**By:**  
**Bill Bryson**

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It's been a busy couple of weeks, so I thought I'd spent the last of my holiday indulging in a witty travelogue to set my feet itching. Unfortunately, I picked the wrong book. Years of declining the advice of the Bryson-worshippers, it seems, was not in vain.

I'm halfway through, and - like the author on the daunting trail - am unsure as to whether or not I can finish my task. Bryson sounds, to put it mildly, a real jerk. He's smug and superior, and spends most of the book complaining about his co

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I'm halfway through, and - like the author on the daunting trail - am unsure as to whether or not I can finish my task. Bryson sounds, to put it mildly, a real jerk. He's smug and superior, and spends most of the book complaining about his companions on the trail. A common motif is how everyone one is but a weekend hiker, that he is a true back-to-nature type in comparison. True, some of his encounters sound less than thrilling, but even the obnoxious woman he encounters should get credit for tackling the trail by herself. Instead, she's unceremoniously ditched (in real life as well as print) by the man who couldn't stomach the thought of going alone. He enlists the companionship of a long-lost friend with whom he'd proven incompatible on a previous travel experience. Said "friend" is then derided throughout the book for his sloth, roughness in manner, and lowbrow tastes. Meanwhile, Bryson paints himself as Guardian of the Trail, criticising the Parks Service along with all who venture through her woods.

I'm still waiting for even a glimpse of the much-vaunted Bryson wit and charm to show itself. At the moment, he's nothing more than the stereotypical Blue Stater - putting himself on a pedestal while looking down his nose at everyone else. It's not attractive, and it makes for a very frustrating read. I wish he'd stayed home.

## Jason

I am what some might call a

. I do genuinely enjoy a leisurely stroll in the "mountains" of Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. I like the pretty views. I always bring my conveniently-sized L.L. Bean backpack (\$39.95 from the

) so I have a place for my camera and cell phone. But by early afternoon, I would like to be done, please. I would like to be done and sitting at a booth in a pub with my burger and beer. Camping is certainly worthy of consideration, but here

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) so I have a place for my camera and cell phone. But by early afternoon, I would like to be done, please. I would like to be done and sitting at a booth in a pub with my burger and beer. Camping is certainly worthy of consideration, but here's the deal: I don't do rain. In light of the fact that weather reports are unreliable beyond a 48-hour window (and even that is pushing it in New England), it is unlikely I would ever camp for more than a two-night stay. Oh, and if I were to camp, I would like it to be at a site that has free Wi-Fi.

What this amounts to is that the Appalachian Trail, endearingly referred to by those hiking it as "the AT," will never be anything more to me than a lovely little map.

BUT. I am glad for gung-ho people like Bryson and his chubby checker friend Katz who

walk "the AT" and are kind enough to let me know what I am missing. As it turns out, I am not missing much. This is not to downplay the extraordinariness of a 2,200-mile trail of wilderness running from Georgia to Maine, a trail that takes the average thru-hiker six months to complete, but in terms of day-to-day variation, it is basically a shitload of trees followed by another shitload of trees.

For me, this book makes a better argument for the day hike. There are many parts of the trail I would enjoy, including the

## Anne

I kind of surprised I liked this book

, because:

I read pathetically little non-fiction

I've

read a travelogue

I'm only a fan of the Great

as long as I'm safely

.

So, color me shocked that I not only

this, but giggled my way through quite a bit of it! Bryson really is a pretty funny writer, and the way he captured his experience on the Appalachian Trail had me in tears a few times. His fears about getting mauled by a bear (among other things) befor

## Diane

Bill Bryson calls the Appalachian Trail "the granddaddy of long hikes," but for me, this book is the granddaddy of hiking memoirs. I first read it sometime around 1999, and I enjoyed it so much that not only have I reread this multiple times, but it also inspired me to read at least a dozen other hiking adventures. None have matched Bryson's wit.

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was his humorous take on attempting a long-distance hike of the Appalachian Trail, which spans more than 2,100 miles from Georgia to Maine. Here were his reasons for trying:

And so Bryson plans his trip, gets indignant over the high cost of outdoor equipment, and recruits an old friend, Stephen Katz, to walk the trail with him. Katz, an overweight, out-of-shape, recovering alcoholic, adds much hilarity to the adventure. The first day on the trail, Katz falls behind and has a fit, throwing away a lot of supplies in an effort to lighten the load of his pack. Later he gets lost during a stretch when they were dangerously low on water. But he's so pathetic and funny that you forgive him.

Meanwhile, Bryson was having his own problems that first day:

After a few days on the trail, they met another hiker named Mary Ellen, who leeches onto them.

I'm not going to retype entire pages, but trust me that the conversations with Mary Ellen are one of the highlights of this book.

## J.L. Sutton

I wanted to like Bill Bryson's A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail. Not sure what I was expecting from this—perhaps more about hiking on the actual AT and the reasons Bryson made this trek—but I was mostly disappointed. It read like a series of travel brochures: here's the history of the region on this section of the trail, and now another! There was much more attention devoted to towns along the route than hiking the actual trail. It was also disappointing that Br

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