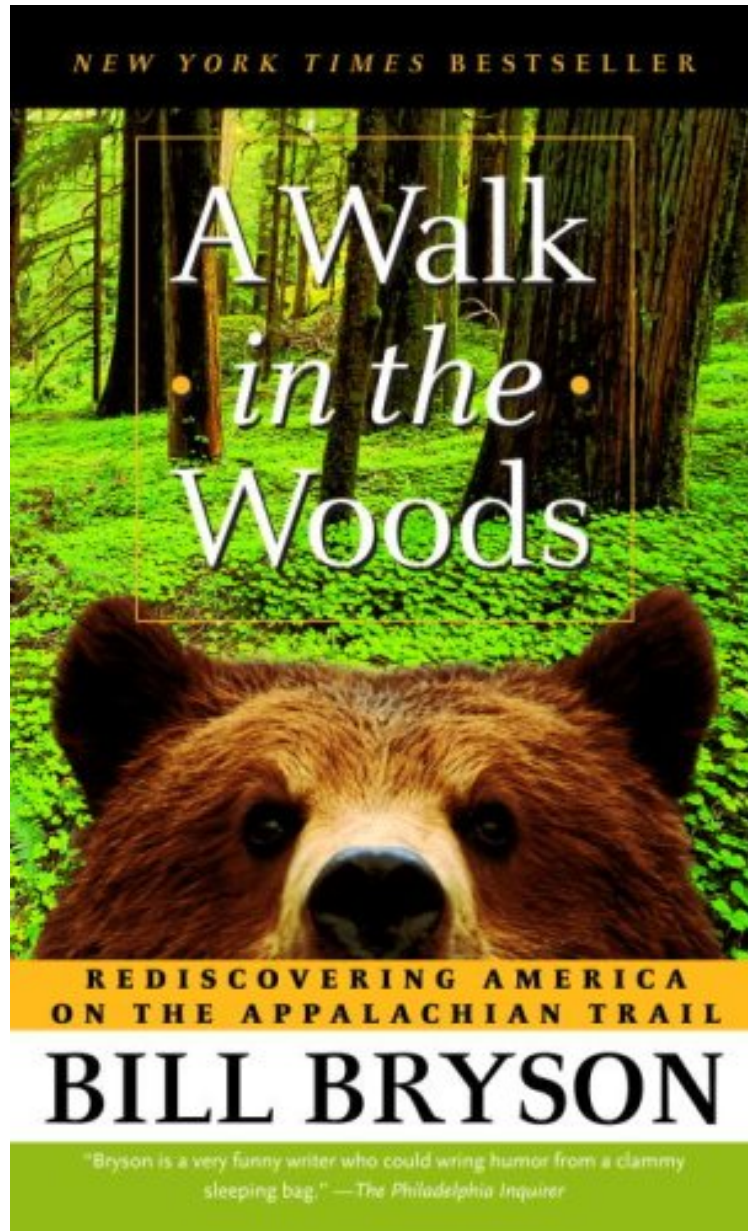


(Read free) A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail

A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail

Bill Bryson

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Bill Bryson : A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail:

40 of 42 people found the following review helpful. Read It Before You Hike It! By Gerald Austin Stephens Jr. I'm a sexagenarian who, on a recent vacation, happened to walk out and back on the first three miles or so of the southern terminus of the Appalachian Trail (Springer Mtn, GA) and, in a fit of exhilaration, decided then and there that I would, by golly, hike the AT before I died. I was even so foolish to announce this on social media, which provoked a flood of suggestions that, before making any rash decisions, I read Bill Bryson's "A Walk in the Woods." And so I did. Having years ago read and enjoyed his "Notes from a Small Island," I was not surprised that "A Walk" kept me chuckling--sometimes laughing uproariously. Nor was I surprised by Bryson's skillful wordcraft--the man is a masterful phrase turner. And yet there's more. As I was joyfully entertained by his incisive sense of humor, I was simultaneously and seriously learning history, biology, geology (and several other -ologies) as well as being discomfited by Bryson's documentation of our culture's dismissive practices regarding ecology. Bill Bryson is very witty, to be sure, but he's also very knowledgeable, does thorough research, and subsequently marshals and seamlessly expresses what he's learned. In other words, he's a very good teacher. I much recommend this book. And, yes, I'm still planning to hike the AT.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The movie is better if you live in the south. By cjtravis Bill Bryson is an excellent teller of tales! But for anyone local to the trail, the movie is far more enjoyable. The descriptions of the scenery and difficulties of the journey are spot on and are very enjoyable to read. But his constant and unending belittling and complaining and berating of the folks that he encounters in this book, completely hurt my feelings and turned me off to reading anything else he has written. A large part of this writing is dedicated to such comments on the populace!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It's worth your time. By Bayard G. Bill Bryson's memoirs of the Appalachian Mountain Trail walk that he and Hanover New Hampshire and a Sam Katz of Des Moines Iowa did in 1996-1997. Bryson is a travel writer. He writes well and the book has a warmth that makes you want his book to go on and on. He has terrific humor of a sarcastic nature. He weaves into his narrative facts about the trail, the founders of the trail, how different hikers approach the hike (thru walkers, etc.), the gear, food and water required to walk the trail, the landscape, the mountains, rocks, trees, rivers, streams and lakes, fauna and flora, the dangers (bears, rattlesnakes, insects, poisonous plants, murders), the hardships, and the weather, the camp grounds and sheds, observations about other hikers, the National Parks, the local clubs that maintain the trail, persons and companies that have exploited the trees, animals, fish, and minerals, towns along the trail, roads, etc. He draws stark contrasts between the rustic trail and the concrete asphalt world on either side, and he gets you to see the rustic as preferable. The weakness of the book is Bryson, at heart, a loner. I'd read his books, but I would not go out of my way to go on a hike with him (apparently not many of his friends or acquaintances did either, except for Katz and I would hike with Katz).

Soon to be a major motion picture starring Robert Redford and Nick Nolte. The Appalachian Trail trail stretches from Georgia to Maine and covers some of the most breathtaking terrain in America--majestic mountains, silent forests, sparkling lakes. If you're going to take a hike, it's probably the place to go. And Bill Bryson is surely the most entertaining guide you'll find. He introduces us to the history and ecology of the trail and to some of the other hardy (or just foolhardy) folks he meets along the way--and a couple of bears. Already a classic, *A Walk in the Woods* will make you long for the great outdoors (or at least a comfortable chair to sit and read in).

Bill Bryson has made a living out of traveling and then writing about it. In *The Lost Continent* he re-created the road trips of his childhood; in *Neither Here nor There* he retraced the route he followed as a young backpacker traversing Europe. When this American transplant to Britain decided to return home, he made a farewell walking tour of the British countryside and produced *Notes from a Small Island*. Once back on American soil and safely settled in New Hampshire, Bryson once again hears the siren call of the open road--only this time it's a trail. The Appalachian Trail, to be exact. In *A Walk in the Woods* Bill Bryson tackles what is, for him, an entirely new subject: the American wilderness. Accompanied only by his old college buddy Stephen Katz, Bryson starts out one March morning in north Georgia, intending to walk the entire 2,100 miles to the trail's end atop Maine's Mount Katahdin. If nothing else, *A Walk in the Woods* is proof positive that the journey is the destination. As Bryson and Katz haul their out-of-shape, middle-aged butts over hill and dale, the reader is treated to both a very funny personal memoir and a delightful chronicle of the trail, the people who created it, and the places it passes through. Whether you plan to make a trip like this one yourself one day or only care to read about it, *A Walk in the Woods* is a great way to spend an afternoon.

--Alix Wilber

From Publishers Weekly

Returning to the U.S. after 20 years in England, Iowa native Bryson decided to reconnect with his mother country by hiking the length of the 2100-mile Appalachian Trail. Awed by merely the camping section of his local sporting goods store, he nevertheless plunges into the wilderness and emerges with a consistently comical account of a neophyte woodsman learning hard lessons about self-reliance. Bryson (*The Lost Continent*) carries himself in an irresistibly bewildered manner, accepting each new calamity with wonder and hilarity. He reviews the characters of the AT (as the trail is called), from a pack of incompetent Boy Scouts to a perpetually lost geezer named Chicken John. Most amusing is his cranky, crude and inestimable companion, Katz, a reformed substance abuser who once had single-handedly "become, in effect, Iowa's drug culture." The uneasy but always entertaining relationship between Bryson and Katz keeps their walk interesting, even during the flat stretches. Bryson

completes the trail as planned, and he records the misadventure with insight and elegance. He is a popular author in Britain and his impeccably graceful and witty style deserves a large American audience as well. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From School Library Journal YA—Leisurely walks in the Cotswolds during a 20-year sojourn in England hardly prepared Bryson for the rigors of the Appalachian Trail. Nevertheless, he and his friend Katz, both 40-something couch potatoes, set out on a cold March morning to walk the 2000-mile trail from Georgia to Maine. Overweight and out of shape, Katz jettisoned many of his provisions on the first day out. The men were adopted by Mary Ellen, a know-it-all hiker eager to share her opinions about everything. They finally eluded her, encountered some congenial hikers, and after eight days of stumbling up and down mountains in the rain and mud, came to Gatlinburg, TN. Acknowledging they would never make it the whole way, they decided to skip the rest of the Smokies and head for the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia by car. Late that summer, for their last hike, the pair attempted to hike the Hundred Mile Wilderness in Maine, near the trail's end. They got separated and Bryson spent a day and night searching for his friend. When they finally were reunited, "...we decided to leave the endless trail and stop pretending we were mountain men because we weren't." This often hilarious account of the foibles of two inept adventurers is sprinkled with fascinating details of the history of the AT, its wildlife, and tales of famous and not-so-famous hikers. In his more serious moments, Bryson argues for the protection of this fragile strip of wilderness. YAs who enjoy the outdoors, and especially those familiar with the AT, will find this travelogue both entertaining and insightful. Molly Connally, Kings Park Library, Fairfax County, VA Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.