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The Art Of Travel



Synopsis

Aside from love, few activities seem to promise us as much happiness as going traveling: taking off for somewhere else, somewhere far from home, a place with more interesting weather, customs, and landscapes. But although we are inundated with advice on where to travel, few people seem to talk about why we should go and how we can become more fulfilled by doing so.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 5 hours 22 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Bolinda Publishing Pty Ltd

Audible.com Release Date: February 1, 2013

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B00B9G2OGC

Best Sellers Rank: #10 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Movements >

Pragmatism #77 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Nonfiction > Travel #181 in Books >

Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Writing > Travel

Customer Reviews

If you have a well worn copy of 'Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance' on the shelf, then you will want to add this one to the collection. Neither of these books is about Buddhism, but both explore in their own ways what John Ruskin proposed as the twin purposes of art: to make sense of pain and to fathom the sources of beauty. To which the author suggests, "the pleasure we derive from [this] journey may be dependent more on the mind-set we travel with than the destination we travel to."

I loved this book. A great mix of philosophy and humor. There are some parts that were a bit boring but once I reached the end, I couldn't help but start over again. I'm going through with a highlighter this time because there are so many special passages that just made me stop and marvel. Perfect travel companion!

Although very well written, The Art of Travel only partly deals with travel. Alain de Botton excels at

times with descriptions of places he has seen but too often reverts to the lives of people like Humboldt and Van Gogh. Such people are very interesting but steer away from the subject of the book. Worth a read -- I particularly liked the end piece where he talks about Travel around the bedroom - but the title is misleading.

Sorry to disagree with so many here but I really wanted to enjoy this. I've read other works by the author that I thought were very good and I believe he is a very talented and thoughtful writer. In this book his reflections on his travels seemed joyless and trite. His interpretations of the artists and what they were conveying through their work didn't always seem to ring true to me. I kept reading hoping this would get better but I was disappointed. When he describes places he visits the people who inhabit them are strangely absent from his reflections. As a frequent solo traveler I believe you don't know a place unless you know at least something of it's people but the author seems to avoid human contact as much as possible to indulge in his intellectual fantasies about the meaning of the most trivial details. I think traveling with him would be a bore. Sorry but in my opinion this is a classic case of missing the forest for the trees.

De Botton arranges his subject in the relaxed sequence of Departure, Motives, Landscape, Art, and Return. Each section except the last has two sub-chapters. Departure, for example, has "On Anticipation" and "On Traveling Places." Typically an author, artist, or journalist's sense of travel is introduced through their work and the theme is expanded; sometimes with other artists, sometimes with personal stories of De Botton. The book is rich in literary and artistic references. De Botton deeply explores the sensations of travel. He opened my mind to ways of feeling travel that I may have remotely felt but not had the skill to dwell on and fully develop. I say "immersive" because the book is an experience. Meandering, but gracefully guided by De Botton, I emerged on the other side of my reading as a different person, a more sensitive and attentive traveler. Unthought-of possibilities of thinking, doing, and feeling while traveling are now in my mind. I have a kinship with De Botton, but also with his subjects like Baudelaire, Flaubert, Edward Hopper, the explorer Humboldt, and Ruskin. Excellent company!

I love this writer. Charming, self-effacing, funny, interesting. Great read I've gifted this book to a few people as well.

An intellectual book that is simple to read and easy to understand, but it requires focus

none-the-less. Enjoyed it. Recommend.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. De Botton has a clear eye and a fresh perspective. At its best his writing is laced with poetry and wit. I have to say that after a really ripping first couple of chapters the middle of the book felt like a bit of slog - less well-written and loaded with observations that seem ill-supported even to the author and so are buttressed with provisos like "perhaps" and "it seems". Fortunately he pulls it off at the end and finishes, if not with a bang, at least with a trip around the bedroom in pink pajamas. Hard to argue with that.

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