



Down Under

By B. Bryson

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Just in time for the 2000 Olympics-the bestselling author of *A Walk in the Woods* takes listeners on a truly outrageous tour Down Under.

Compared to his Australian excursions, Bill Bryson had it easy on the Appalachian Trail. Nonetheless, Bryson has on several occasions embarked on seemingly endless flights bound for a land where Little Debbies are scarce but insects are abundant (up to 220,000 species of them), not to mention crocodiles.

Taking listeners on a rollicking ride far beyond packaged-tour routes, IN A SUNBURNED COUNTRY introduces a place where interesting things happen all the time. Leaving no Vegemite unsavored, listeners will accompany Bryson as he dodges jellyfish while learning to surf at Bondi Beach, discovers a fish that can climb trees, dehydrates in deserts where temperatures leap to 140 degrees F, and tells the true story of the rejected Danish architect who designed the Sydney Opera House.

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Down Under By B. Bryson Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Bill Bryson follows his Appalachian amble, *A Walk in the Woods*, with the story of his exploits in Australia, where A-bombs go off unnoticed, prime ministers disappear into the surf, and cheery citizens coexist with the world's deadliest creatures: toxic caterpillars, aggressive seashells, crocodiles, sharks, snakes, and the deadliest of them all, the dreaded box jellyfish. And that's just the beginning, as Bryson treks through sunbaked deserts and up endless coastlines, crisscrossing the "under-discovered" Down Under in search of all things interesting.

Bryson, who could make a pile of dirt compelling--and yes, Australia *is* mostly dirt--finds no shortage of curiosities. When he isn't dodging Portuguese man-of-wars or considering the virtues of the remarkable platypus, he visits southwest Gippsland, home of the world's largest earthworms (up to 12 feet in length). He discovers that Australia, which began nationhood as a prison, contains the longest straight stretch of railroad track in the world (297 miles), as well as the world's largest monolith (the majestic Uluru) and largest living thing (the Great Barrier Reef). He finds ridiculous place names: "Mullumbimby Ewylamartup, Jiggalong, and the supremely satisfying Tittybong," and manages to catch a cricket game on the radio, which is like

listening to two men sitting in a rowboat on a large, placid lake on a day when the fish aren't biting; it's like having a nap without losing consciousness. It actually helps not to know quite what's going on. In such a rarefied world of contentment and inactivity, comprehension would become a distraction.

"You see," Bryson observes, "Australia is an interesting place. It truly is. And that really is all I'm saying." Of course, Bryson--who is as much a travel writer here as a humorist, naturalist, and historian--says much more, and does so with generous amounts of wit and hilarity. Australia may be "mostly empty and a long way away," but it's a little closer now. --*Rob McDonald*

From Publishers Weekly

With the Olympics approaching, books on Australia abound. Still, Bryson's lively take is a welcome recess from packaged, staid guides. The author of *A Walk in the Woods* draws readers in campfire-style, relating wacky anecdotes and random facts gathered on multiple trips down under, all the while lightening the statistics with infusions of whimsical humor. Arranged loosely by region, the book bounces between Canberra and Melbourne, the Outback and the Gold Coast, showing Bryson alone and with partners in tow. His unrelenting insistence that Australia is the most dangerous place on earth ("If you are not stung or pronged to death in some unexpected manner, you may be fatally chomped by sharks or crocodiles, or carried helplessly out to sea by irresistible currents, or left to stagger to an unhappy death in the baking outback") spins off dozens of tales involving jellyfish, spiders and the world's 10 most poisonous snakes. Pitfalls aside, Bryson revels in the beauty of this country, home to ravishing beaches and countless unique species ("80% of all that lives in Australia, plant and animal, lives nowhere else"). He glorifies the country, alternating between awe, reverence and fear, and he expresses these sentiments with frankness and candor, via truly funny prose and a conversational pace that is at once unhurried and captivating. Peppered with seemingly irrelevant (albeit amusing) yarns, this work is a delight to read, whether or not a trip to the continent is planned. First serial to *Outside* magazine; BOMC selection. (June)
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From Library Journal

Bryson toughs it out in Australia.
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jerry Goble:

Spent a free time and energy to be fun activity to try and do! A lot of people spent their down time with their family, or their friends. Usually they performing activity like watching television, about to beach, or picnic in the park. They actually doing same every week. Do you feel it? Do you wish to something different to fill your current free time/ holiday? May be reading a book can be option to fill your totally free time/ holiday. The first thing that you'll ask may be what kinds of book that you should read. If you want to attempt look for book, may be the book untitled Down Under can be very good book to read. May be it might be best activity to you.

Victor Green:

Is it an individual who having spare time after that spend it whole day by simply watching television programs or just lying down on the bed? Do you need something totally new? This Down Under can be the reply, oh how comes? A book you know. You are thus out of date, spending your time by reading in this new era is common not a nerd activity. So what these guides have than the others?

Vicky Gamez:

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