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The Motorcycle Diaries: Notes On A Latin American Journey



Synopsis

Â The book of the popular movie STARRING GAEL GARCIA BERNAL NOW A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER Â The young Che Guevaraâ€™s lively and highly entertaining travel diary, now a popular movie and a New York Times bestseller. This new, expanded edition features exclusive, unpublished photos taken by the 23-year-old Ernesto on his journey across a continent, and a tender preface by Aleida Guevara, offering an insightful perspective on the man and the icon. Â

âœA journey, a number of journeys. Ernesto Guevara in search of adventure, Ernesto Guevara in search of America, Ernesto Guevara in search of Che. On this journey of journeys, solitude found solidarity, â€ˆlâ€™ turned into â€ˆweâ€™.â€• â€ˆEduardo Galeano Â€ˆ âœWhen I read these notes for the first time, I was quite young myself and I immediately identified with this man who narrated his adventures in such a spontaneous mannerâ€ | To tell you the truth, the more I read, the more I was in love with the boy my father had beenâ€ |â€• â€ˆAleida Guevara Â€ˆ âœOur film is about a young man, Che, falling in love with a continent and finding his place in it.â€• â€ˆWalter Salles, director of âœThe Motorcycle Diaries.â€• Â€ˆ âœAs his journey progresses, Guevaraâ€™s voice seems to deepen, to darken, colored by what he witnesses in his travels. He is still poetic, but now he comments on what he sees, though still poetically, with a new awareness of the social and political ramifications of whatâ€™s going on around him.â€• â€ˆJanuary Magazine Â€ˆ Also available in Spanish: DIARIOS DE MOTOCICLETA (978-1-920888-11-4) Â€ˆ Features of this edition include: A preface by Che Guevaraâ€™s daughter Aleida Introduction by Cintio Vintier, well-known Latin American poet Photos & maps from the original journey Postscript: Cheâ€™s personal reflections on his formative years: âœA child of my environment.â€• Â€ˆ Published in association with the Che Guevara Studies Center, HavanaÂ€

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Customer Reviews

The hooks are obvious: charismatic revolutionary Che Guevara on a continent spanning motorcycle trip of South America. However, this book is by Ernesto Guevara, a 23 year old middle-class medical student looking for a break from his studies, and the motorcycle doesn't last through two countries. It is a rare glimpse into the young mind of a major cultural revolutionary. The book is also a unique look into the everyday life of South America in the middle of the 20th century. The point of view is of sons of privilege wandering the countryside and living off the land. Sometimes they are encountering the workers and experiencing their simple hospitality and honest struggles. At other times, they rely on their social class and education to open doors to more polite society. What I found compelling about this book is that in such a brief work the author was able to present a sweeping portrait of South American life. It was, for me, a wonderfully human introduction to the people and lands of this vast continent.

I grew up in Loma Linda, a University town with a medical school. I never heard of anybody taking off on a motorcycle, even after graduation, for a journey like this. But Che Guevara was an exception to the rulers. The young (Everything he did was young--he didn't live to see 40.) Ernesto "Che" Guevara, left the university & his life of privilege for seven months on the road, touring South America, first on a motorcycle, then as a vagabond, with his compadre Alberto. The two of them posed as Argentinian Doctors, specialists in the treatment of leprosy. This gained them food and lodging, as well as special treatment at times. It also gained them face-to-face experience with the impossible living conditions of people suffering from this disease. Alberto & Che traveled on their own resources. When money got tough, they scammed & stowed-away, sometimes even working for a meal, but they didn't cable home for money or assistance. During this experience, Che became personally acquainted with the poverty and disempowerment prevalent in South America. Reading the book was a delightful experience. Che has a poetic way with words. He doesn't take himself too seriously, telling tales of purloined wine, of scamming for sustenance, of bravely shooting a "puma" in the dark of night. By daylight it turned out to have been a local rancher's dog. He tells of hiding with a shipment of melons, hoping to stow away on a boat, but getting busted when sailors noticed melon rinds floating by the dock. Ernesto & Alberto were indeed a couple of scallywags, but

loveable, the kind you'd sit down with for a stein of beer or a cup of mate. This book tells a human story, one that's unselfconscious enough to be truly enjoyable. Almost enough to make me want to sell the house, buy a motorcycle ...

Over time, Che Guevara has emerged as a larger than life figure. It's difficult not to spot someone wearing a Che t-shirt in downtown Lima or Mexico City. The film, "The Motorcycle Diaries," attempted to tap into the cult of Che Guevara, and also create a road movie in the tradition of such Hollywood films as "Easy Rider," "Thelma and Louise," and "Rain Man." While I enjoyed the cinematic version of "Motorcycle Diaries," the book is even better because it's more honest. Reading Che's notes about his Latin American journey allows one to see first-hand how his revolutionary consciousness begins to develop over time from his chance encounters with numerous dispossessed peoples. I decided to read this book after a recent trip to Peru and was astounded by how accurate Guevara's observations are even today. The bourgeois still sip coffee in their gated communities in Lima while the poor suffer horribly in the countryside, either mining or trying to eek out a living from the harsh land. This book, though, also contains the humor and adventure one would expect from a classic travelogue. That he and his companion had very little money on the trip and had to rely on their wits and the kindness of strangers to survive makes this book that much better. Unlike many modern travel writers, who stay in five star hotels, and write glowing descriptions of their surroundings for "Travel and Leisure," Che slept with pigs, traveled with cows, and suffered constantly from the elements and frequent asthma attacks. In short, there's often not much physical separation between him and the poor people he observes, and that makes for a better yarn. Regardless of what you think of Che and the revolution he ultimately helped to lead, this book should be read by anyone interested in traveling to South America.

although this book was edited by che some time after returning from south america, he acknowledges this at the beginning of the book by saying, "the person who wrote these notes died the day he stepped back on argentine soil. the person who is reorganizing and polishing them, me, is no longer me, at least i'm not the me i was." and in the next paragraph, commenting on how people might interpret his words he states, "i present a nocturnal picture, you have to take it or leave it, it's not important. unless you know the landscape my diary photographed you've no option but to accept my version." it doesn't get much more simple than that. take me or leave me, i don't care. i read the pages of "the motorcyle diaries," and was completely blown away! i wanted to be right there on la poderosa with che and his amigo, alberto - drinking at all the dives; conversing with the

people; playing soccer with whatever team, in whatever town/country they happened to be; scamming places to eat and sleep, and making their way across the continent on the back de la poderosa until, bless her little hot-rod heart, she literally came apart. then, it was hitching, stowing away on boats, and, finally, floating downriver atop a not-so-navigable homemade raft, the whole while surrounded by the mystery and beauty of wild and mountainous south america. it was an awesome adventure to share! che's writing style is so conversational, and his wit will run up on you like a hairpin turn. i laughed out loud so many times. might i suggest you get a map of south america before turning the cover of this fantastic, freaking adventure. believe me, you'll get so wrapped up in it that you'll want to pinpoint each madcap pitstop. en fin, this is a tale of a grand adventure, of determination, willpower, curiosity, and guts. a great first read of the che. he was a believer in the underdog. sin duda.

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