

Top 10 Modern Travel Books

1. Robert Byron – The Road to Oxiana. ‘Bertie mentioned all whales have syphilis’. Classic.
2. Eric Newby – A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush. Brit holidays in Himalayas by mistake.
3. Evelyn Waugh – When the Going was Good. Collection of his best Travel. Underrated.
4. William Dalrymple – In Xanadu. Walked across Asia as student; wrote hilarious account.
5. P L Fermore – A Time of Gifts/Between the Woods & the Water. Greatest Travel prose.
6. Bruce Chatwin – In Patagonia. Modernist Travel. But still a beautiful tissue of lies.
7. George Orwell – Down and Out in Paris and London, etc. Politicised but still Travel.
8. Laurie Lee – As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning. Poetic & only half made-up.
9. Brennan – South from Grenada. Pity he was a liar & cheat. See my Spain chapter for more.
10. Bill Bryson – Neither Here Nor There. New wave observational comedy fertilises Travel

Top 10 Historical Travel Books

1. Herodotus – The Histories. The Father of History was also Father of Travel; & hence lies.
2. Lucan – A True Story. Roman travel satire. Every word of it absolutely true... honest!
3. Coryat – Crudities. Walked to India in 1612. Popularised Grand Tour, fart jokes, forks.
4. Henry Fielding – Voyage to Lisbon. 1st English Travel satire. See my Spain chapter.
5. Tobias Smollett – Travels. Smellfungus vs the French. See my France chapter. Grumpy!
6. Lawrence Sterne – A Sentimental Journey. Bryson 250yrs early. See my France chapter.
7. Boswell & Johnson – Journey to the Western Isles. Did little for Anglo-Scottish relations.
8. Washington Irving – Sketchbook, etc. A civilised Yank discovers Europe, invents Spain.
9. Mark Twain – A Tramp Abroad, etc. Another civilised Yank in Europe. Satirical.
10. Burnaby – A Ride to Khiva. Classic Victorian travel. Best of the Great Game narratives.