



Off the Tourist Trail: 1,000 Unexpected Travel Alternatives

Sadie Smith (Editor) , Bill Bryson (Foreword)

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Off the Tourist Trail is a guide to the world's unspoiled sights and experiences. It takes a hundred clichéd tourist destinations - everything from over-visited national parks to overrated museums - and reveal 1,000 fresh and fascinating alternative options. Written by a team of travel experts, and with a foreword by Bill Bryson, this book brings vibrant cities, enchanting sights, breathtaking natural wonders and unforgettable experiences to life with informative narrative and stunning photography.

Choose your destination by theme - Ancient and Historical Sights, Festivals and Parties, Great Journeys, Architectural Marvels, Natural Wonders, Beaches, Sports and Activities, Art and Culture, and Cities - or simply flick through this sumptuous guide and be inspired. Practical advice on getting there and around, where to stay, where to eat and when to go, as well as useful 'Need to Know' facts, ensure that you get the most out of your time away.

Less crowded, generally less expensive, and often more spectacular and rewarding, these lesser-known wonders of the world encourage readers to ditch the famous but well-worn choices, reminding them what real travel is all about - escaping the everyday and embracing the new.

Vacations will never be the same again.

Off the Tourist Trail: 1,000 Unexpected Travel Alternatives Details

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Simone says

Long lines and crowded tourist sites can easily put a damper on a travel day. It makes such a difference when you have the space and time to thoroughly enjoy historic sites, beaches, etc. without the crowds. This book gives plenty of ideas of less popular places to check out that are usually just as good, and sometimes better, than the most popular ones.

Amy says

This is a HUGE book. Either get it for your coffee table or check it out at the library. If you want alternative places to visit to the heavily toured "must see" places, this book has these recommendations.

Kimberly says

DK wins again with this fantastic travel book. It offers alternatives to popular travel destinations and tells why the place is comparable or better. Many of the suggestions had me thinking twice about some of my planned destinations.

However, the book isn't perfect. After all, if I'm in Paris, I'm going to go to the Louvre, even though this book says not to bother. If I'm in China, I'm most likely going to the Great Wall. And even though the book says I should consider Iceland to Yellowstone, the cost difference makes Iceland a distant possibility.

Still, there were plenty of options there that I had never heard of or considered before. That, along with the gorgeous photos, makes it a winner.

Amy says

Neat book! Lots of alternatives to the more popular tourist destinations of the world. Many of these are WAY off the beaten path so it's great to plan well & in advance if you plan to travel to any of these destinations. Also, only a few of the 1,000 destinations are located in the US.

On a side note, I got some great ideas for computer "wallpaper" (search Google images) from some of the things that I read and pictures that I saw in this book!

Becky says

This was a fun, quick book with really interesting alternatives in it. Some I'd heard of, many I hadn't. I

appreciated the suggestions for those who really want to go to the "original" touristy places anyway, but I felt their criticisms of many of those same places were a bit harsh. We all know tourist places are going to be packed with other tourists and not as charming as they may have been 100 years ago, but we don't care. I just really liked having alternative options that include the same awe and inspiration as the "originals," but are more likely to feel like original experiences instead of just checking something off a list.

There are a few pages with dozens of suggestions in little boxes across the whole spread, and I found this overwhelming and disenchanting. Too much text, too little detail, too few photos, too little color. Plus, the design wasn't always well-done so you'd have a picture of penguins and you'd think, "Oh, that looks neat, where's that?" but you'd have to read every single square around the photo to figure out which one mentions penguins, because it wasn't clear which box was meant to pair with the photo. Design-wise that didn't work well at all.

I actually used this book to make a fun list of new places I'd like to visit--additions to my standard bucket list of "to see someday" places around the world. It stretched my interest into regions I'd never really expected to see on my list before (such as Iran and Japan and Argentina), and occasionally held the "Wow!" factor as I discovered things I never knew about familiar places I already love or want to explore, such as the Netherlands and Paris and Canada.

Overall a fun and horizon-expanding book.

Elaine Meszaros says

This is SUCH a dangerous book if you like to travel. Here are a thousand alternative trips and places to visit off the standard tourist trail. Usually less expensive than the big names, much less-visited and often harder to get to, these destinations are so very tempting. Find alternatives to the over-touristed Machu Picchu in Isla del Sol which is much more intact and barely visited. Visit Lalibela, a stone church carved into the ground, as opposed to tourist-packed Petra. There are cheaper tropical islands, festivals of every sort, canyons, falls and train routes. Oh so tempting!

Carrie says

I want to go to all the places. I would buy this if I could find it cheap somewhere. I could dream a lot of dreams w this book.

David says

Loved it. Almost the ideal coffee table book. Great pictures and alternative ideas for both actual tourists and armchair travellers. Over 300 pages of beautifully displayed information that entices the reader to get out and see places, festivals and events first hand. What I found a little annoying was that in trying to add so many alternative options the authors were forced (chose) to add many as almost small footnotes when further information would have been great. The cost of some things was also a bit dubious and there was no explanation as to whether this is for budget/middle or top end tourists. I am sure it cost us less than half of the estimated cost to tour Mendoza and nearby wineries, while travel in Borneo was classed as "expensive". I

also found some of the comparisons a bit stretched, Grand Vs Bryce Canyons for example? Overall though DK have put together a wonderful book that I would be happy to own as it is one of those that could be picked up for a quick 5 minute flick through, has lots of trivia, and could be read over time and again.

Luanne Ollivier says

More delicious armchair travel! But with a twist this time. Off the Tourist Trail explores 'unexpected travel alternatives'. The authors of this book are the many travel writers who have contributed to the Eyewitness Travel books that DK publishers.

The format is pretty unique - alternatives to well known attractions, journeys, natural phenomenon and more such as Stonehenge, Niagara Falls and more are presented -up to six specifically related suggestions and up to 45 additional recommendations.

Many of the 'well-known' attractions were new to me, so I had just as much fun reading about them. But the off the beaten track destinations are amazing. Our world is so full of extraordinary sites and events. Many of them, I will never get a chance to see, so I enjoy travelling from my armchair. Each destination has a description along with practical information - getting there, where to stay, best time of the year to visit and a direct web address. (I stopped many times to hop on the computer)

Of course, I always have to check out the Canadian suggestions. I was thrilled to see that Nova Scotia's Evangeline Trail was presented as an alternative to driving the old Route 66 in the US. We actually drove this trail this past summer and yes, it was pretty stunning. We took the train out to the East Coast to start, so I was interested to see the section on alternatives to the famous Orient Express train. The Canadian from T.O. to Vancouver is listed - a trip I'd like to undertake. As was the Viking Trail in Newfoundland, an suggestion in the Great Journeys section.

I've focused on North America, but there are mostly world wide suggestions. The Camino de Santiago has attracted literally hundreds of thousands of walkers, but there are alternatives - a pilgrimage to Rome being one of them.

I'm always drawn to the small islands found as specks on maps and globes. I wonder at the people who live there and what their lives are like. I had never heard of the tropical Fernando de Noronha Islands, suggested as a substitute for the Galapagos Islands, but I'd sure love to visit!

This coffee table sized book is printed on glossy stock and filled with lots of sharp, clear photos. Perfect for an armchair getaway.

Lyndsey says

Loved that this gave some alternatives to the usual places, but the book isn't the easiest place to get info because they've packed so much in. Gorgeous pictures though!

Julie says

Mmmm....didn't get any closer to choosing our destination(s) for our epic trip for 2015. We will be celebrating 30 years of wedded bliss (or otherwise) in Feb. and my 50th Birthday in Sept. We are looking for somewhere special to visit. We pondered New Zealand, however, it's in the direct opposite direction to where 2/3 of our children reside!! Ha! So, decided to go towards Europe instead. This book has some interesting options and comparisons for destinations but overall I didn't find it very helpful. I think perhaps it tries to do too much.

John Orman says

Truly a book of wonderful alternatives to the standard travel destinations. For just about every traditional tourist spot, another location is pointed out that may have many better aspects to it.

Most of those secondary locales I had never heard of. Each popular locale has a section explaining why it is not highly recommended any longer, and almost all the time the rationale is tourist overcrowding and the concurrent damage to the site or its environment.

Here are some of the winners and losers in the book's ratings:

Bryce Canyon over the Grand Canyon

Tikal over Chichen Itza

Palace on Wheels over Orient Express

Coastal Route 15 (Mexico) over Route 66 (US) Nooooooooo!!!

Chicago over Manhattan

Devil's Tower over Uluru (Australia) Yesssssss!!

Iceland over Yellowstone ????

Cherry Blossoms in Japan over New England Fall Color

Climbing Mount Stanley over Mount Kilimanjaro

Crazy Horse Memorial over Mt. Rushmore

Deb says

"This may become my favorite time-wasting, daydreaming book ever. Just paging through, seeing suggestions of places to visit that I've never even heard of before, but likening them somewhat to places I *have* heard of, but want to avoid because of the [crowds, cost, cliché, take your pick]. As Bryson says in the intro, it's a shame I'll never get to them all, but better that than to ever run out of things to anticipate.[return][return]As in all DK books, the photography is gorgeous, rich colors, interesting and varied views of whatever is being covered. There are, necessarily, few pictures of any one destination, but they've done their best to provide an overview while not making similar places look the same. The book itself is definitely NOT a ""travel"" book - it's more coffee-table size than pocket size. It's not meant to be an in-depth guide so much as a jumping-off point.[return][return]The book is divided into sections by different kinds of tourism: ancient/historical sites, festivals, journeys, architecture, natural wonders, beaches, sports, art/culture, and cities. The cities section tends to focus on lesser-known sights in major cities, since there's nothing you can quite say is almost the same as New York/Paris/London/Beijing.[return][return]While the book only provides the very basic information on each destination, it's still a great way to find out about places you may never have heard of otherwise, and then do your own research. And even though the focus is non-tourist destinations, many are presented in a ""this, instead of that"" format, and there is always a sidebar covering the basics if you still feel compelled to go for the more well-known example, with ways to avoid the worst of the crowds (e.g., visit the North Rim of the Grand Canyon instead of the more popular South Rim; go out to the Giza pyramids early in the day when it's less crowded; etc.).[return][return]I really can't recommend this one enough. If you have it on your coffee table, I can almost guarantee that every visitor will end up paging through it, fascinated."

Crystal says

Some interesting stuff in here, but a lot of these destinations just weren't my taste. A nice book to flip through, but I'm not making any new travel plans based on it.

Melissa says

[2012.10] As with other DK books, great photographs. I wish all the sites in the book had photographs to go with them though (a bunch didn't). Maybe I'm odd because I don't consider some of the "off the trail" places to actually be so, but I suppose they might be not be among the world's *most* visited sites. It doesn't mean they're not heavily visited though; more and more people traveling means more crowded sites.
