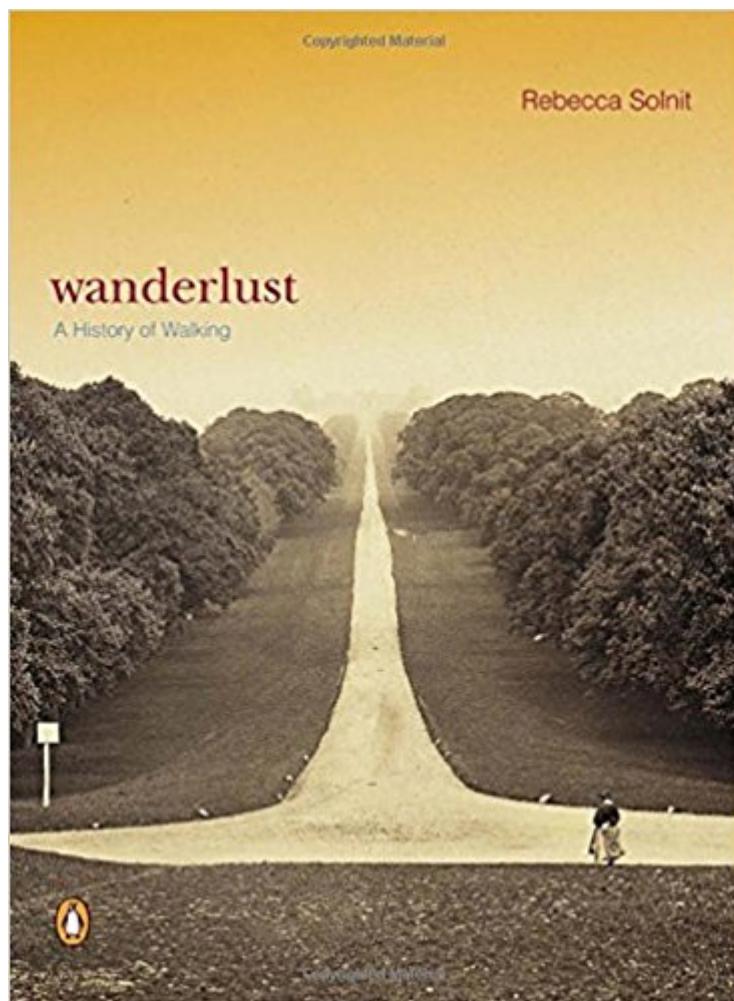


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Wanderlust: A History Of Walking



Synopsis

A passionate, thought provoking exploration of walking as a political and cultural activity, from the author of *Men Explain Things to Me* Drawing together many histories--of anatomical evolution and city design, of treadmills and labyrinths, of walking clubs and sexual mores--Rebecca Solnit creates a fascinating portrait of the range of possibilities presented by walking. Arguing that the history of walking includes walking for pleasure as well as for political, aesthetic, and social meaning, Solnit focuses on the walkers whose everyday and extreme acts have shaped our culture, from philosophers to poets to mountaineers. She profiles some of the most significant walkers in history and fiction--from Wordsworth to Gary Snyder, from Jane Austen's Elizabeth Bennet to Andre Breton's Nadja--finding a profound relationship between walking and thinking and walking and culture. Solnit argues for the necessity of preserving the time and space in which to walk in our ever more car-dependent and accelerated world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The ability to walk on two legs over long distances distinguishes *Homo sapiens* from other primates, and indeed from every other species on earth. That ability has also yielded some of the best creative work of our species: the lyrical ballads of the English romantic poets, composed on long walks over hill and dale; the speculations of the peripatetic philosophers; the meditations of footloose Chinese and Japanese poets; the exhortations of Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman. Rebecca Solnit, a thoughtful writer and spirited walker, takes her readers on a leisurely

journey through the prehistory, history, and natural history of bipedal motion. Walking, she observes, affords its practitioners an immediate reward--the ability to observe the world at a relaxed gait, one that allows us to take in sights, sounds, and smells that we might otherwise pass by. It provides a vehicle for much-needed solitude and private thought. For the health-minded, walking affords a low-impact and usually pleasant way of shedding a few pounds and stretching a few muscles. It is an essential part of the human adventure--and one that has, until now, been too little documented. Written in a time when landscapes and cities alike are designed to accommodate automobiles and not pedestrians, Solnit's extraordinary book is an enticement to lace up shoes and set out on an aimless, meditative stroll of one's own. --Gregory McNamee --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Walking, as Thoreau said and Solnit elegantly demonstrates, inevitably leads to other subjects. This pleasing and enlightening history of pedestrianism unfolds like a walking conversation with a particularly well-informed companion with wide-ranging interests. Walking, says Solnit (*Savage Dreams; A Book of Migrations*), is the state in which the mind, the body and the world are aligned; thus she begins with the long historical association between walking and philosophizing. She briefly looks at the fossil evidence of human evolution, pointing to the ability to move upright on two legs as the very characteristic that separated humans from the other beasts and has allowed us to dominate them. She looks at pilgrims, poets, streetwalkers and demonstrators, and ends up, surprisingly, in Las Vegas--or maybe not so surprisingly in that city of tourists, since "Tourism itself is one of the last major outposts of walking." Inevitably, as these words suggest, Solnit's focus isn't pedestrianism's past but its prognosis--the way in which the culture of walking has evolved out of the disembodiment of everyday life resulting from "automobilization and suburbanization." Familiar as that message sounds, Solnit delivers it without the usual ecological and ideological pieties. Her book captures, in the ease and cadences of its prose, the rhythms of a good walk. The relationship between walking and thought and its expression in words is the underlying theme to which she repeatedly returns. "Language is like a road," she writes; "it cannot be perceived all at once because it unfolds in time, whether heard or read." Agent: Bonnie Nadell. 4-city author tour.

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Thank you!

Excellent a deeply and interesting relation between a sport and a way of life.

A fascinating tour through space and time, with side trips into science, gardening, political activism, and mountaineering. Like all of her books, it is ultimately about the individual and community; about citizenship. An important voice in our time.

I bought this for my mother who is now in a nursing home. She loved it.

Wonderful essays--insightful and well-written!

I love Solnit!!! Very introspective and thought provoking

great book, easy read...

This is one of the best books on the relations between the body, space, and art I have read. The prose is beautiful, and the connections she draws between histories and geographies about walking are fascinating.

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