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This guide is an armchair tour of the author's favorite European travel experiences. In a series of personal vignettes, Steves tells of the Swiss schoolteacher who risked Steves's life to show him an edelweiss he couldn't pick, the Seina native who still bears a medieval grudge against Florence, and the Parisian who took a deep whiff of moldy cheese and sighed, "It smells like zee feet of angels."

Rick Steves' Postcards from Europe: 25 Years of Travel Tales from America's Favorite Guidebook Writer Details

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From Reader Review Rick Steves' Postcards from Europe: 25 Years of Travel Tales from America's Favorite Guidebook Writer for online ebook

Craig Barner says

I adhere to Rick Steves' philosophy: "Travel is intensified living." I use his guidebooks (or Lonely Planet) when I go overseas. I've been interviewed by him for his radio show. I have even met Steves at a travel convention.

Given that, it might come as a surprise to admit to my distress by the occasionally negative tone of "Postcards from Europe." Where is Rick Steves' famous non-stop enthusiasm for travel? He frequently laments the sight of too many tourists--the people who have made him successful and have allowed him to live the life of a professional vagabond. Is he an ingrate?

As I thought more about my reaction, I realized there is something behind Steves' burnt gusto when reflecting on a recent visit to Europe. Last year I was drawn to Amsterdam to visit the Anne Frank Museum. I have read and re-read Anne Frank's diary about a dozen times and have read five books about her and her family. As I walked through the Secret Annex, where Anne went into hiding, including the room where she wrote and slept, I couldn't help but wonder how many of the thousands of people visiting that day were there to honor the memory of Anne Frank and how many were there just because the site was listed in a travel guide. I see what Steves is getting at. Do people travel for the adventure and to be pilgrims or do people travel because they have been sold something? Steves still loves travel, even if his enthusiasm is a bit singed.

I thoroughly enjoyed the section in the book where Steves recalls his "Europe through the gutter" experience. His first visit without parents to Europe in the early 1970s as an 18 year old is one of the most memorable -- and even a bit harrowing -- travelogues I have ever read. He and a friend conquered Europe on a budget of a couple dollars a day. I think I would have enjoyed the same intense experience had I done the same at that age.

Steves has friends in every location he visits. I enjoyed "meeting" these people. And, one day I hope to bump into Rick Steves on some back street in Europe. I am certain he will evince his trademark fervor--burnt or otherwise--for travel.

Meg says

I enjoyed Rick's review of some of his favorite places and how he started his travel company. The early background information was fascinating. What I didn't care for was his seeming lack of regard for the effect his publicity has on a place. And also, Rick is treated like a king, but guess what: we wouldn't be :-)

Freyja Vanadis says

The writing was great and I enjoyed reading about the various countries he visited, but I was surprised to see

that he could be a bit of an ass in his dealings with other people. I mean, seriously: on his first trips, he made his clients sleep in on the ground in sleeping bags in huge tents with 400 other people instead of staying in hotels? Really, Rick? What exactly was the purpose of that? "To get a taste of the real Europe" doesn't cut it, because Europeans don't sleep in huge community tents. And the only reason he stopped is because one of his clients complained. I still love his TV shows, and I think he's the best American tour guide writer, but my opinion of him dropped a notch or two.

Mary Kay says

This is a charming collection of stories about Rick's travels through Europe. I enjoyed learning about how Rick became a tour guide as a young man. The book doesn't have a strong narrative drive, so the book is easy to put down, but also easy to pick back up. I like some of Rick's other books better (such as "Travel as a Political Act"), but this one was fun, too.

Allison de Laveaga says

I listened to the audio version, narrated by Rick Steves himself. Since I've read his guidebooks and watched a few of his videos, his voice was familiar, like an old friend. I especially enjoyed his stories of his youth, including the first trip he made to Europe with his parents when he was a teenager. His father owned a piano studio so the family went to Germany to visit some European piano workshops. Rick fell in love with Europe and vowed he would spend every summer there, which he did. He tells funny stories about traveling with a teenage friend and surviving on bread and stolen desserts. He also shares how he first got started, by teaching a class on budget travel. Only later, at the suggestion of a relative (I think), does he think to write a guidebook. As would be expected, Steves is recognized by travelers wherever he goes. Mostly they want travel advice but sometimes they ask him how he films his shows. It seems he doesn't make much money off his shows, which was a surprise. All in all, an entertaining read.

Fariza says

Being alone in a foreign country reading about Europe (where most of my friends chose to do their internship to and which I can't afford to do so. T_T)

Steve took me along with him through all of his journey in his writing. Most of the times, I laughed to his jokes and sometimes he made me think of my own journey here. I've felt the same experience as his. He inspired me to take the risk to go around without a plan. He encouraged me to talk to the locals with my limited Korean abilities. His journey had become part of my own little journey here. Read his book everywhere, during picnics and bus rides. I promised to read this book again.

I believe there were many changes happened in Europe now and all of the characters probably not alive anymore, however I believe that he inspired many young generations to follow his steps. If you're not allergic to book, physical book and you're going to Europe, his book is a great reading stuff.

Personally I think most travelers cling to the internet too much and neglects locals recommendation.

Rick Steve officially listed in my favorite writer! His writing surely made my day here.

Sarah Carr says

I am, admittedly, a huge Rick Steves fangirl, but what a charming selection of travel stories from my favorite guidebook author! Rick's personality comes out in his stories about his European travels, from his formative trips to Europe as a teen, his first backpack journey on the cheap, his initial minibus tours, to his current life as a TV show host and tour company owner. He has quirky, fun stories and Europe comes alive as he introduces us to the locals that he trusts for views as he writes his books. Even though the book came out almost 20 years ago, the stories feel like a timeless look into my favorite continent.

Leslie Jenison says

This was a captivating book of short stories about Rick Steves' wanderings throughout Europe. I have skimmed a few of his travel books from time to time but have never read extensively. I do like his style of travel. In the book he admits that, due to his travel recommendations, some of the places he loved because of the "unspoiled" nature of the place become somewhat less-so after his readers find out about them. Still, his observations are so well-written and his desire to know the people and local culture of each place he visits make for a very appealing read.

Elizabeth says

While I like Rick's guidebooks (yes we were like those he described toting them across Europe) and I enjoyed the places he went a many of the stories, most of this book had a negative-sad feel. He lamented that while sharing these great places, they have now been changed (though in the postscript from 2009 he said much of his fear was unfounded and there was still charm) into the tourist traps he wanted his travelers to avoid. I also hated reading the parts about his wife knowing they are divorced now :(Also a lot of the conversations while sometimes forced and autobiographic or educational, often they just seemed like complaining about Americans (which there is plenty to complain about) or making money or things changing.

If you like travel stories and are a Rick Steves fan you will probably enjoy the book (and then let me know if you felt it was a negative as I did)

Will Plunkett says

When it comes to travel, I think a reader wants honesty more than fancy. Seeing his PBS shows, but now knowing his censors adjust what ends up in the broadcast, I expected him to be glowing in his reviews. But he is still fun (and sometimes funny) in this book as he is frank in his observations and recommendations.

I enjoy travelling, but I don't have to have the "authentic experience," or see the non-touristy stuff. Just being away from home in a well-known place can be enough for me.

Daniel says

Known primarily in his role as Europe travel guide through his TV series *Travels in Europe*, and through his series of guidebooks, Rick is, at heart, just another traveler who fell in love with Europe and has made his life around traveling to see his mistress. In *Postcards*, Rick treats us to a candid memoir of a trip through Europe, following the itinerary of one of the tours his company offers. This, however, is Rick the traveler, not the guide, and what we get from his pen are personal thoughts about the continent and its peoples, and memories of current and long-ago trips.

What's different, and great, about Rick is that unlike other travel writers, who focus on impressions and quirky events experienced throughout their travels, Rick is all about the people and the ambiance of a place. A good trip to Europe for Rick entails meeting colorful local characters in whatever city he is visiting, finding out-of-the-way sights and locations, and strolling alongside the locals, as if a 6-foot-tall white guy from Seattle did not look out of place. This travel philosophy, this "go local" mentality, is exactly what we desired when we were planning our own trip, a philosophy that we refined learning from Rick.

I like from *Postcards*, in particular, the memories of Rick's first solo-trip to Europe, back in 1973. Times have changed incredibly since then, and I was certainly older than he was when I first went to Europe, but the amazement of that first trip is the same. I recognize his wonder, and find it in my own journal. When he describes traveling across Europe by train, I know how the wind feels on my face as you lean out the window, the sound trains make when they go into a tunnel, the sight of countless tiny town merging into one long blur as the train darts through the countryside. Our trips may have been different (even if we visited various locales in common), but the feeling, the excitement, the wonder of travel is the same. It helps me relive a Summer three years ago when time did not exist and a whole continent was my playground. And that, as I said in my review below, is something I appreciate immensely.

Kelly says

I really wanted to like this book. I love Rick Steves' guidebooks and his podcasts. But I have to agree with the few other reviewers who said this book felt like such an ego-trip at points (from the postscript: "In Paris rue Cler is more rue Rick Steves than ever - busy with my readers but still a delight.") It was interesting to hear about how his tours developed but I didn't love it. Also, because of a note at the beginning of the book - "While some names, characters, and situations are fictitious, this book is accurate in spirit" - I spent the entire book trying to guess if something he was describing was entirely made up.

Kate says

Rick Steves actually wrote this book in 1999, but the paperback I bought (I think it was a deal on his website or something) had a postscript about some of the people and places he talked about, ten years later. The next best thing to traveling the world is a good armchair traveler read. If you're a Steves fan, you'll enjoy this one. It gives a hint here and there of a more irreverent guy - not the PC, white bread Rick of the PBS series. But, it's still very much in the Steves mode. Instead of snapshots and soundbites on TV, these really are like postcards. No particularly in depth or heavy observations of any one place, but enjoyable slices of life from

his European travels.

Blake Bouza says

Steves has a way of writing that really makes you feel like you're there. His detailed and exhaustive account of his first trip to Europe had ME feeling sympathetic pangs of the nervous breakdown he had afterward.

Akshata says

He claims at the very beginning that this is a conversation between him and you on a canal side cafe in Venice sharing a carafe of wine and with endless time to spare, and that's exactly what it turned out to be (although I'd prefer coffee in maybe Paris). His ten stories took me through ten beautiful places seen from the eyes of one who is there to soak in everything local - rueful about modernization and glowing about people and things that haven't changed. Each story needs to be read slowly, ruminated on, smiled at and then the page turned to the next one. However, all this dreamy reading aside, this book is not a narration of exactly how ONE trip turned out. His stories are based on three years of traveling this same circuit collecting material for this book, and also fictionalizing many incidents including flashback narrations of his youth, his first solo trip and setting up Europe Through The Back Door. Fair enough, such dreamy narration could not have come from one trip and 100% real life incidents :) Now back to reality!
