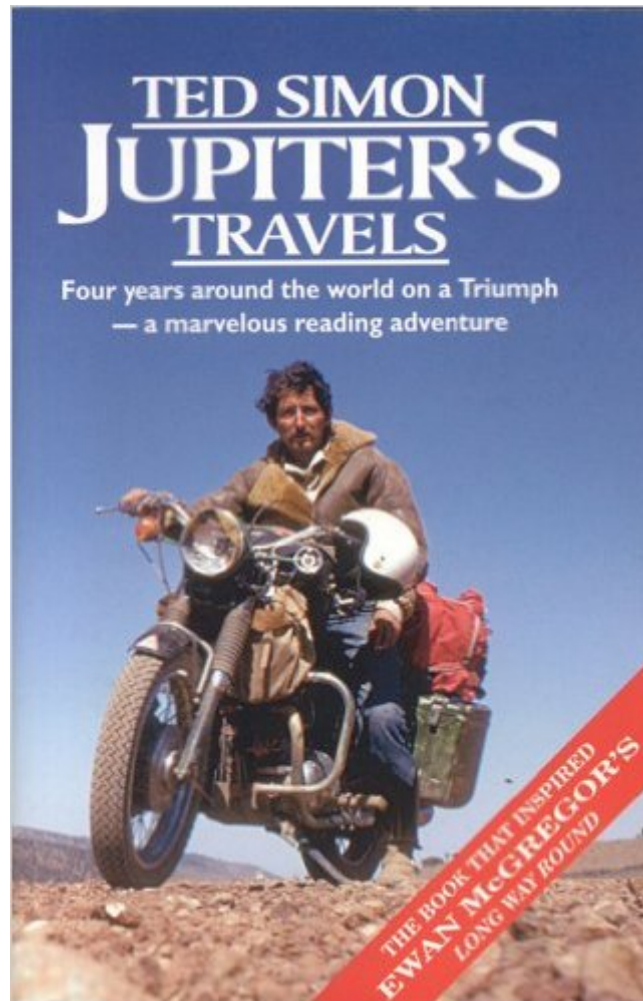


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Jupiters Travels: Four Years Around The World On A Triumph



Synopsis

Simon rode a motorcycle around the world in the seventies, when such a thing was unheard of. In four years he covered 78,000 miles through 45 countries, living with peasants and presidents, in prisons and palaces, through wars and revolutions. What distinguishes this book is that Simon was already an accomplished writer. In 25 years this book has changed many lives, and inspired many to travel, including Ewan McGregor.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book captures first hand the now little known adventure of a British journalist who set out to ride around the world on a motorcycle. It is an incredible story and something any reader should enjoy. Every teenager/student should be issued with this book so that they can understand what adventure is [they should also be issued with Ernest Shackleton's story]. It is also a period piece capturing something of the flavor of the early 70s -- although not so obtrusively that it would offend those who scorn that period. The writing is direct and honest. The author does not shy away from ridiculing himself at times -- the linen suit incident still stays with me 15 years after I first read this book. This book provides insight into not just the authors thinking but the behavior of people in different cultures across the world (Ted came to accept problems calmly as help always seemed to come along). I read this book while in hospital and sadly gave it away to a fellow patient who I had been friendly with. It probably changed my life, as I still sometimes think of some of the incidents described. I will buy a copy for my son one day so that he will understand what adventure is.

[Contrast this to that dreadful "Zen & the Art of..." book]. Ted travelled around the world on a Triumph Trident (perhaps the last ever made) -- not a BMW or a Harley. No support team, cell phone or GPS satellite navigation. This book let's you share the experience.

Hard to determine how to rate this book. I just finished the last page...I have to admit that it's truly a travel book. ZMM by Pirsig is much more of a philosophy than a book about travel. Simon instead takes you through Africa and the Atbara desert, roads that had channels cut through them deep enough that he had to keep his legs up near the handle bars, various bribes at numerous country borders, and tea stops along the way for rest. He also intrigues you with a prison escapade in Brasil and a fever in India as well as waiting for rivers to drop in Austrailia while drinking stubbies and eating steaks with truckies at a local outback cafe. My negative comments are relatively simple: 1) No hard description of what he's up to in the beginning, just jumps right in, and all of a sudden you're in Africa. 2) A great lack of description of most of the mileage (runs from place to place sometimes). Perhaps this is a given for such a long trip. [Please don't be deterred by this... he's very descriptive for most of the journey.] 3) Lack of a map showing the whole trip. [Small maps are given in each "Chapter"- if the chapters could be called that.] Writing style compared to Pirsig is very different and much less refined, but in a way this also allows us to go along with Simon on his great adventure. The writing and the road-miles seem to roll together. And in this way I think it's true to form. I have to admit that it was a great book even with the minor faults above. And as far as the god-talk previously mentioned, it's easy to forgive someone who can recall his experiences, in most of the major countries on the globe, first hand a slight misplaced grandiosity. :^) Especially with how much he's been through by the end. From one rider to the other, my hat's off to Simon.

Jupiter's Travels stays with you long after you close the book. it is a classic travel narrative which belongs with the finest: Thesiger's Arabian Sands, Naipaul's An Area of Darkness, Chatwin's In Patagonia. Ted Simon's motto should be Carpe Diem. One day he decided to stop what he was doing to travel around the world on a Triumph motorcycle. The trip took him four years to complete. Ted shares with us his thoughts and feelings during the journey and his insights into many different cultures. What impresses me most, however, is Ted's openness towards the people he meets and their different modes of life, and his honesty with himself and with us, his readers. Best of all, before our eyes, he grows and becomes a wiser person. He changes and so do we!

I was thrilled by this book. All the way up until about the last 50 pages, anyway. This book is certainly not just a travel log of the author's exploits across the globe. Mr. Simon tries to give the reader an idea of what he was thinking all the way through his journey. I guess his thoughts were getting pretty weird as he neared the end of his journey. At one point in the book, he actually tells the reader that he thought he was God. I didn't buy this book to read about Mr. Simon's thought on God and all things divine. I wanted to hear about all of his adventures, the people he encounters, the challenges, his attempts to avoid highway robbers, or prison, or both. This book provides all those things with aplomb. Unfortunately for me anyway, it also includes what I think was unnecessary, unrelated, philosophy. A book like this should have a happy ending, and leave the reader bursting with desire to hit the road and get lost in the world. When I finished this book I felt sorry for the author and wished him good luck with all his problems. In short, the book was really good, but it would have been much better if the last 50 pages had been left out altogether.

Long before there was Ewan and Charlie (McGregor, and Boorman of 'Long Way Round' and 'Long Way Down' fame), there was Ted Simon. While this is truly a motorcycle adventure, it now reads more like a history and civics lesson from the 70's. The journey took place from '73 to '77 and this was initially published in '79. Mr. Simon's adventurous spirit and naivete carry him around the globe and lands him in some fantastic situations, not all of them good. His trip was patterned loosely on the 'Around The World In 80 Days' story, but there was no rush to complete the trek. A truly fascinating read that should be followed up by his companion title, 'Dreaming Of Jupiter'; where he retraces his journey almost 25 years later. Others have made similar treks, but Ted has a way of telling the tale that prevents you from putting his book(s) down!

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