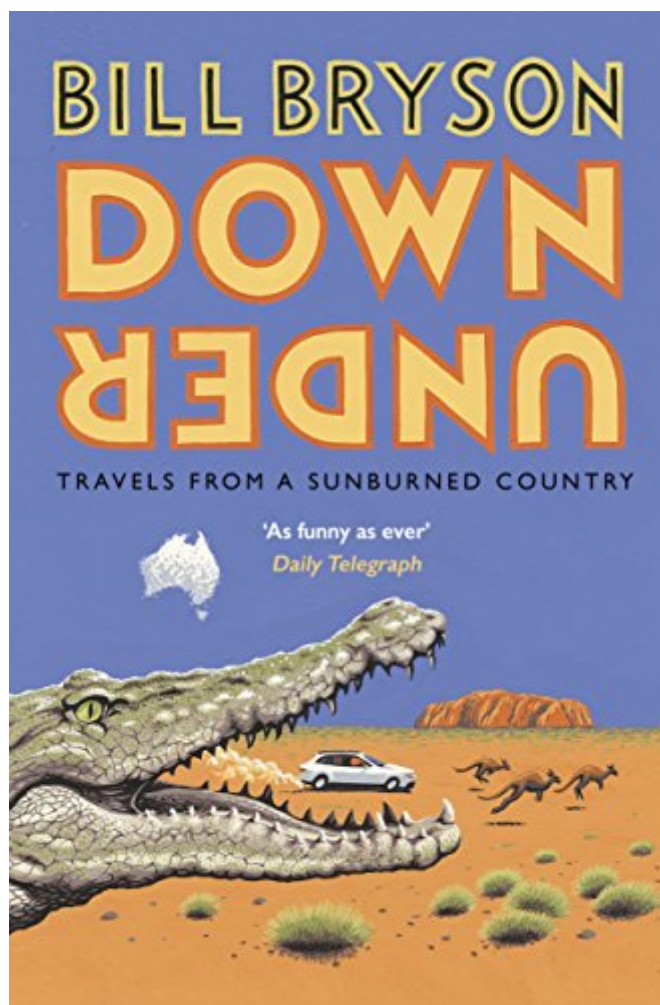


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# Down Under: Travels In A Sunburned Country (Bryson)



## Synopsis

It is the driest, flattest, hottest, most desiccated, infertile and climatically aggressive of all the inhabited continents and still Australia teems with life – a large portion of it quite deadly. In fact, Australia has more things that can kill you in a very nasty way than anywhere else. Ignoring such dangers – and yet curiously obsessed by them – Bill Bryson journeyed to Australia and promptly fell in love with the country. And who can blame him? The people are cheerful, extrovert, quick-witted and unfailingly obliging: their cities are safe and clean and nearly always built on water; the food is excellent; the beer is cold and the sun nearly always shines. Life doesn't get much better than this.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

My third Bill Bryson book. After "One Summer," I promoted Bryson to the role of "Whatever this guy writes, I'll read." Although "One Summer" focused on 1927, it was really a broad view of America at that time. "Sunburned" is about Australia, but in a very different way. Bryson tells us about places

and experiences he had in a sweeping jaunt through the regions of Australia, from the populated east coast, to the barren interior, to the beautiful west coast. He is witty, open, and wholeheartedly sold on Australia - the people and the land. I noticed that Aussies who've reviewed the book give it very high marks, which is a good sign. Bryson has a wonderful sense of humor. In some cases, I think he embellishes the truth, i.e., he takes an experience which deals in facts, but then adds quirks that will make the scene seem even more bizarre, or amusing, or frustrating than it probably was. I know this because I sometimes resort to the same ploy. I never waver from the truth, of course, but just make it sound a little more interesting and funky. One aspect that surprised me was that occasionally Bryson throws in a smutty remark. Nothing wrong with that, except it didn't quite fit in with the general tone. Although Bryson is in love with Australia, he doesn't hesitate to criticize when he feels criticism is due. He can't stand Canberra, for example, although that's balanced by his love of Perth. His take on the outback is unexpected. While he faces certain "difficult" situations in that area, he is constantly amazed at the vastness, intrigued by the uniqueness, and enthusiastic about the "amenities" (no matter how basic they might be.) This book is not a travel guide. You won't find a list of hotels or restaurants, but you will come away with a real sense of what Australia has to offer. And what it has to offer are experiences you will not find any place else on earth. Eat your heart out, Rick Steves. (4-1/2 stars).

This is one of my favorite books, at least a top ten. If you have never read this author's books, then start with this one, it is his best. This book takes you across Australia in a way I never could have gone. It is filled with wonderful facts and tons of humor. I have read the book many times and also listened to the audio book. The audio book is great because it is narrated by the author. You will finish reading this book with tons of knowledge on Australia, lots of laughs and a wonderment that any one can survive Australia.

I generally do not read much non-fiction, but I make an exception for Bill Bryson. I enjoyed this book so much that when I reached the end, I wanted to go back and start over! I've read other Bill Bryson books (*A Walk in the Woods*, *The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid*) and while both are good ((*Walk* is better), I think *In A Sunburned Country* is my favorite. It is clear on every page that Bryson finds Australia and its people both fascinating, admirable, and immensely likeable and makes this contagious to the reader. Bryson strives to give readers a coherent overall portrait of a country that is not easy to describe due to sheer size and vast distances and I think he does a great job! I felt like I was a tourist having a guided tour of Australia with a good-natured friend who has an

insatiable curiosity about the people and history of each place visited along with a born storyteller's ability to make it interesting and fun. Part travelogue, with a smattering of history, anthropology, geology, botany and biology thrown in, Almost like being there, but without the heat or the beer. I highly recommend it if you enjoy learning something new while you read for pleasure.

Author Bill Bryson takes readers on a walkabout through some of the most beautiful, the most dangerous, and the most breathtaking portions of Australia. Narrated by the author himself, In a Sunburned Country brings alive a world that many are not privileged to see in their lifetimes. Bill's enthusiasm, as well as his propensity towards mishaps, provide a charming backdrop to the interesting information and fascinating details. Whether readers are just interested in learning more about Australia, or are seriously thinking about a visit, I would definitely recommend In a Sunburned Country as a reference.

As usual, BB writes to entertain. Along the way, however, his incredible knowledge of actual facts get thrown in gratis. Along the way, there are innumerable eccentric characters, detailed descriptions of buildings, monuments, and vast expanses, even flora and fauna. He has a knack for describing his meals so vividly that you alternately enjoy them with him, or need to skip them when he does. I'll never get to Australia, but thanks to BB, I feel like I've come awfully close.

I have friends in Australia and this book was recommended as a good overall intro to the country, which I plan to visit for an extended time in the near future. I originally listened to it on tape, where it was read by the author and was very entertaining, but I bought the actual book both to share it with others and to keep for future reference. Bill Bryson speaks fondly of this continent and country, while pointing out some of the really strange and unique aspects of it with warmth and humor.

We've been to Australia three times and while my husband has read every guide within reasonable reach about every section of that "Land Down Under" he hadn't read this wonderful book. It had been recommended by friends and it was an excellent suggestion. I purchased this used copy from and it is a great book filled with history and vignettes about a fascinating island. This book was published in 2000, but its timeless - filled with one interesting story after another. Bill Bryson tells stories about people, places, plants and an Aussie Prime Minister that was walking along a beach one day and plunged into the sea and was never heard from again. Really! and this happened in 1967. I only wish I had read this book before we visited Australia (three times). Maybe someday

we'll return and I'll be "ready".

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