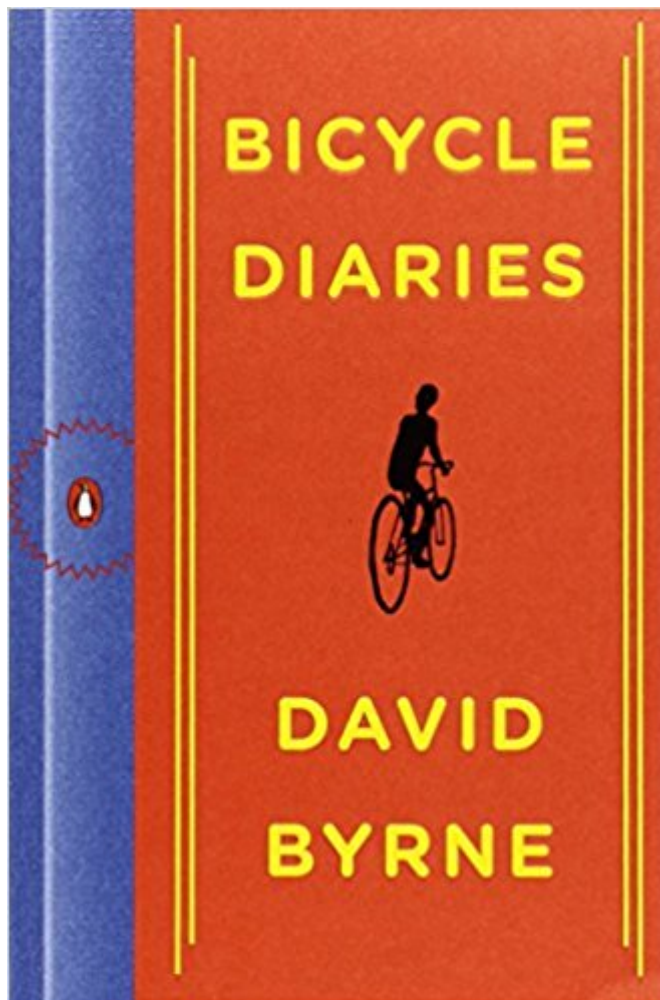


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# Bicycle Diaries



## Synopsis

A round-the-world bicycle tour with one of the most original artists of our day.ÂÂ Urban bicycling has become more popular than ever as recession-strapped, climate-conscious city dwellers reinvent basic transportation. In this wide-ranging memoir, artist/musician and co-founder of Talking Heads David Byrne--who has relied on a bike to get around New York City since the early 1980s--relates his adventures as he pedals through and engages with some of the world's major cities. From Buenos Aires to Berlin, he meets a range of people both famous and ordinary, shares his thoughts on art, fashion, music, globalization, and the ways that many places are becoming more bike-friendly.ÂÂ Bicycle DiariesÂÂ is an adventure on two wheels conveyed with humor, curiosity, and humanity.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Byrne is fascinated by cities, especially as visited on a trusty fold-up bicycle, and in these random musings over many years while cycling through such places as Sydney, Australia; Manila, Philippines; San Francisco; or his home of New York, the former Talking Head, artist and author (True Stories) offers his frank views on urban planning, art and postmodern civilization in general. For each city, he focuses on its germane issues, such as the still troublingly clear-cut class system in London, notions of justice and human migration that spring to mind while visiting the Stasi Museum in Berlin, religious iconography in Istanbul, gentrification in Buenos Aires and Imelda Marcos's legacy in Manila. In low-key prose, he describes his meetings with other artists and musicians where he played and set up installations, such as an ironic PowerPoint presentation to an

IT audience in Berkeley, Calif. He notes that the condition of the roads reveals much about a city, like the impossibly civilized, pleasant pathways designed just for bikes in Berlin versus the fractured car-mad system of highways in some American cities, giving way to an eerie post apocalyptic landscape (e.g., Detroit). While stupid planning decisions have destroyed much that is good about cities, he is confident there is hope, in terms of mixed-use, diverse neighborhoods; riding a bike can aid in the survival of cities by easing congestion. Candid and self-deprecating, Byrne offers a work that is as engaging as it is cerebral and informative. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Entertaining . . . newcomers will enjoy these off-the-cuff sketches from an unpretentious cultural polymath; acolytes will cherish a closer look at Byrne's weird, wonderful brain chemistry." --Time Out New York "Whether you are a cyclist or not, Byrne's insights into everything from outside art to aboriginal folklore are wry, witty, and more often than not, wise as well." --The Philadelphia Inquirer "Reading Bicycle Diaries makes cosmic indifference a lot easier to deal with." --The Seattle Times

Bicycle Diaries by David Byrne Bicycle Diaries are a enjoyable collection of thoughts, views, and essays formed by The Talking Heads founder and front-man - David Byrne. Using his fold up bicycle David takes the reader on a trek through American Cities like Detroit, Pittsburgh, New Orleans, San Francisco, and New York. He shares interesting sights, and tells of adventures he stumbles upon. Art and music are all important subjects that are enlightened, and interpreted the way only David Byrne can do. Then it's off to foreign cities such as Berlin, Istanbul, Sidney, and London. Political history is often discussed when it comes to exotic soil. History facts are frequently entertaining, for example when Germany invented a weird sexless popular dance that the government attempted to insert into popular culture as a kind of immunization against Elvis's rock-and-roll gyrations. When biking in Australia, Byrne's experiences are recurrently captivating as we learn the land is full of unpleasant reminders of nature's indifference to humans. Poisonous snakes and frogs, spiky plants, toxic spiders, quicksand, and endless deserts, reminding us that we are just guests there. Byrne reminds us that when on a bicycle our human inner workings are manifested in three dimensions, all around us. Our value and hopes are easy to read, and right there in front of us, such as buildings, museums, temples, and shops. This mix bag of pleasure is gratifying and knowledgeable. The liberating - physical and psychological sensation is more

persuasive, than any practical argument about riding a bike. Observing and engaging the landscape with David Byrne will make the reader want to go explore the world on two wheels.

Social commentary and a "study" of cities from a bicycle. A decent book although not great. Not nearly as good as his book "How Music Works". This inspired me to explore my city on my bicycle: "I value the perspective I get from a bike, and the freedom, more than I realize." (Byrne, David. *Bicycle Diaries* (p. 132). Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.)

It's highly unusual for me to start a book and not finish it. This is one of those. The highly politicized nature of the author's comments and point of view make the book difficult to get through. I went into the book looking for the author's take on the progress of bicycling in the different cities and his wide experience on what works best in different settings. What I got was a diatribe on, "Why can't the whole world be more European." Disappointing.

Just ok. Not that interesting. Should've listened to the other reviewers.

I bought this bright orange diary 2 years ago and read it in patches when I had the time. It's about bicycling for sure but it could just as easily be retitled, "Urban Travel Blogging with David Byrne". The book was in desperate need of a stronger narrative or more cohesive thesis to thread together all the stories. Did Byrne want to tell us about travel, art, culture, and foreign countries or did he want to tell us about cities and how bikes should be integrated into urban planning? In some ways the book is as random as a bike ride. Despite this confusion there are nuggets of insight that are worth reading, like on pages 2, 124, and 289 - "Cities, it occurred to me, are physical manifestations of our deepest beliefs and our often unconscious thoughts, not so much as individuals, but as the social animals we are.....you don't need CAT scans and cultural anthropologists to show you what's going on inside the human mind; it's inner workings are manifested in three dimensions[in the city landscape], all around us. Our values and hopes are sometimes awfully embarrassingly easy to read. They're right there - in the storefronts, museums, temples, shops, and office buildings and in how these structures interrelate, or sometimes don't. ...Riding a bike through all this is like navigating the collective neural pathways of some vast global mind.....Endless variations on familiar themes repeat and recur: triumphant or melancholic, hopeful or resigned, the permutations keep unfolding and multiplying." "It's often said that proximity doesn't matter so much now - that we have virtual offices and online communities and social networks, so it doesn't matter where we are

physically. But I'm skeptical. I think online communities tend to group like with like, which is fine and perfect for some tasks, but sometimes inspiration comes from accidental meetings and encounters with people outside one's own demographic, and that's less likely if you only communicate with your "friends." ""....a lot of people in the United States seemed to believe that cities were soon to be things of the past, that modern life could only be properly lived in a suburban house with a yard, linked to the urban workplace - a clump of high-rise office buildings - by a network of highways. One place for working, another for living. L.A. and other similar cities were the wave of the future, and New York, to survive, would be forced to emulate their example. Or so it was thought.....As it turned out, most people are now leaning more toward [Jane] Jacob's realization that the formula of separating living and working inevitably results in little actual life taking place in either area. The suburbs became weird quiet bedroom communities where kids are bored out of their skulls. Their parents only sleep or shop there, so for them it doesn't matter - until junior gets into drugs or massacres his classmates."Also I enjoyed reading about Buenos Aires, Manila, Berlin, London, San Francisco and New York because I've never been to any of those places but I found the book difficult to read and only finished it because I approached it like a newspaper- something different each section and not necessarily connected with yesterdays news. Byrne is a great conceptual artist and one of my favorite musicians/singers but I think "Bicycle Diaries" should be rewritten either to talk exclusively about biking or retitled to emphasis Byrnes City/Travel experiences. The reader should be moving toward some goal that they look forward to attaining at the end of the book besides simply finishing. I think this book would have been better articulated(?) if it was serialized monthly for a travel magazine.

Enjoyable read.I like the author's no nonsense style of writing.

This could have been an awesome book about getting the opportunity to ride in so many places around the world, but it wasn't

Bought this for my dad. He loves David Byrne and loves this book.

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