

A Walk in the Woods by Bill Bryson

Martin County Library System Book Club Kit:

A Walk in the Woods by Bill Bryson

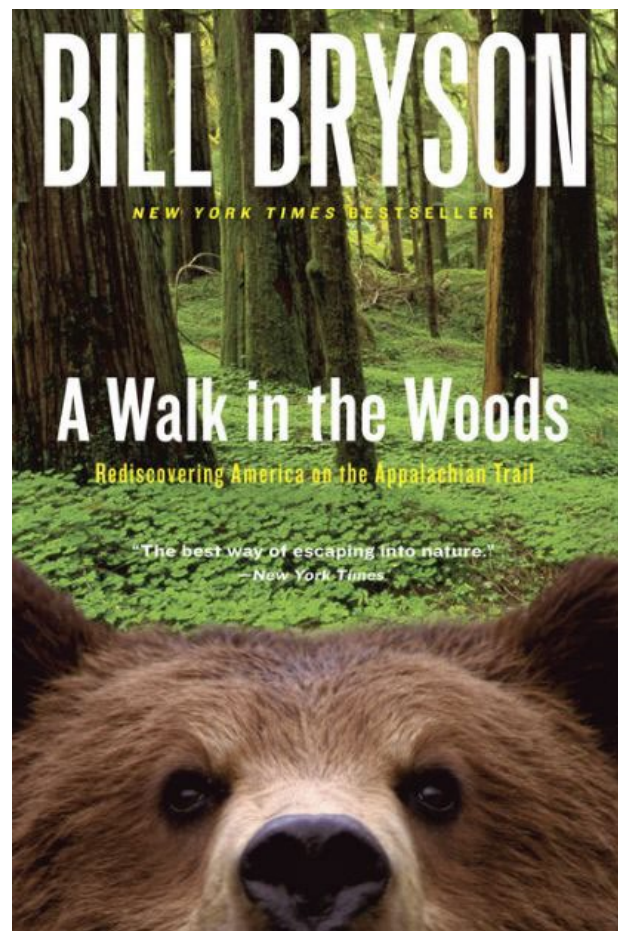
Included in the Kit:

- [Book summary](#)
- [Author biography](#)
- [Discussion questions](#)
- [Recipe suggestions](#)

Book summary

Back in America after twenty years in Britain, Bill Bryson decided to reacquaint himself with his native country by walking the 2,100-mile Appalachian Trail, which stretches from Georgia to Maine. The AT offers an astonishing landscape of silent forests and sparkling lakes- and to a writer with the comic genius of Bill Bryson, it also provides endless opportunities to witness the majestic silliness of his fellow human beings.

For a start there's the gloriously out-of-shape Stephen Katz, a buddy from Iowa along for the walk. But *A Walk in the Woods* is more than just a laugh-out-loud hike. Bryson's acute eye is a wise witness to this beautiful but fragile trail, and as he tells its fascinating history, he makes a moving plea for the conservation



also available to
download from Libby



A Walk in the Woods by Bill Bryson

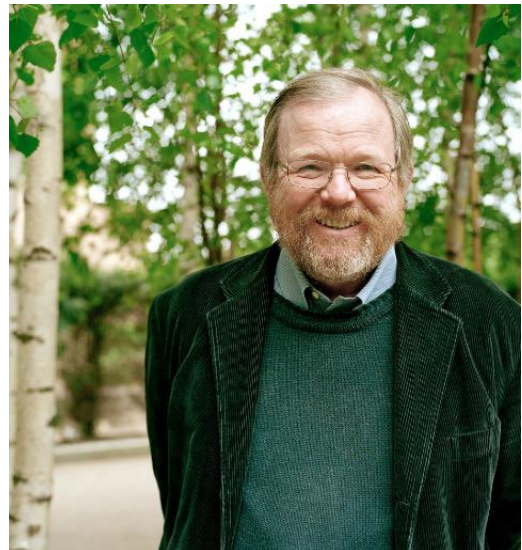
of America's last great wilderness. An adventure, a comedy, and a celebration, *A Walk in the Woods* is a modern classic of travel literature.

Source: Penguin Random House
(penguinrandomhouse.com/books/20552/a-walk-in-the-woods-by-bill-bryson)

Meet the Author

Bill Bryson's bestselling books include *A Walk in the Woods*, *The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid*, and *A Short History of Nearly Everything* (which won the Aventis Prize in Britain and the Descartes Prize, the European Union's highest literary award). He was chancellor of Durham University, England's third oldest university, from 2005 to 2011, and is an honorary fellow of Britain's Royal Society.

Source: Penguin Random House
(penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/3633/bill-bryson)





A Walk in the Woods

by Bill Bryson

Discussion Questions

1. One of the most interesting aspects of this book is the unlikely friendship between Bryson and Katz. What is the relationship based on? Consider, especially, the episode in Maine when Katz gets lost: somehow the friendship is altered. How does Bryson's attitude toward Katz change over the course of the book? How does Katz himself change? Or does he? What was Katz's motivation, anyway, to walk the AT?
2. The book offers an excellent microscope through which to examine the meaning of friendship—our own friendships. Do the two men remind you of friends who tested your patience, but who exhibited intense loyalty?
3. In fiction a journey usually symbolizes a journey of self-discovery—at the end the protagonist comes to learn something about him/herself. Although *A Walk* isn't a novel, do either of the men come to greater self-awareness by the end of their journey?
4. The tone of the book veers back and forth between humor and seriousness, even anger. In fact, the book is a sort of jeremiad against environmental threats to the great wilderness areas of the country. Is Bryson's anger justified? He criticizes, but does he offer solutions? Are there solutions?
5. Katz pokes fun at rural Southerners, which some readers find funny, others find offensive. You?
6. Bryson ponders the attraction of hiking: "You have no engagements, commitments, obligations, or duties; no special ambitions and only the smallest, least complicated of wants; you exist in a tranquil tedium, serenely beyond the reach of exasperation." If you're a hiker, backpacker, camper, are your experiences similar to or different from Bryson's? For those who aren't hikers, are there other avenues to "exist in a tranquil tedium"?

Source: LitLovers

(litlovers.com/reading-guides/13-reading-guides/fiction/1108-walk-in-the-woods-bryson)

A Walk in the Woods by Bill Bryson

Recipes

Lemon Meringue Pie

Prebaked piecrust

Filling:

- 1 cup white sugar
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 2 lemons, juiced and zested
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 4 egg yolks, beaten
- 1 (9 inch) pie crust, baked



Meringue:

- 4 egg whites
- 1/2 cup white sugar

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. To make the filling: Whisk 1 cup sugar, flour, cornstarch, and salt together in a medium saucepan; stir in water, lemon juice, and lemon zest. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring frequently, until mixture comes to a boil. Stir in butter. Place egg yolks in a small bowl and gradually whisk in 1/2 cup of hot sugar mixture. Whisk egg yolk mixture back into remaining sugar mixture. Bring to a boil and continue to cook while stirring constantly until thick. Remove from heat; pour filling into baked pastry shell.

To make the meringue: Beat egg whites in a glass, metal, or ceramic bowl until foamy. Gradually add sugar, continuing to beat until stiff peaks form. Spread meringue over pie filling, sealing the edges at the crust.

A Walk in the Woods by Bill Bryson

Bake in preheated oven until meringue is golden brown, about 20 to 25 minutes.

Source: allrecipes
(allrecipes.com/recipe/15093/grandmas-lemon-meringue-pie)

Old-Fashioned Ice Cream Soda

- 3/4 cup of chocolate syrup
- 1 cup of milk
- 4 cups of chilled soda water
- 8 scoops of chocolate ice cream
- whipped cream in a can

Place 3 tablespoons of chocolate syrup in each glass. Add 1/4 cup of milk and 1 cup of soda water to each glass. Stir until foamy. Add 2 scoops of ice cream to each glass. Top with whipped cream if desired.

Source: Camperlives Blog
(camperlives.co.uk/post/book-review-a-walk-in-the-woods-by-bill-bryson-and-a-great-ice-cream-soda-recipe)



This document may be reproduced upon request in an alternative format by contacting the County ADA Coordinator (772) 320-3131, the County Administration Office (772) 288-5400, Florida Relay 711, or by completing our accessibility feedback form at www.martin.fl.us/accessibility-feedback