

Introduction



I HAVE ALWAYS LOVED WHAT WALT WHITMAN CALLED “the open road.” I love the way it pushes me into new dimensions, propels me to take greater risks. I love the fear, the uncertainty, the obstacles, the adventures, the unknown lands, smells, sounds, friends, and sometimes lovers I have met. I love the *power* of the road; and how, as Whitman said, the road expresses me “better than I can express myself.”

I have been fortunate to research and produce television documentaries in various parts of the world and often solo-adventure during my time off: black-water rafting through caves in New Zealand, trekking in the Andes, driving cattle in Wyoming. All of these experiences have shaped me, but one extended odyssey changed me more than any other.

Over a six-year period, I journeyed in the footsteps of several of my literary heroes. Along the way, I discovered that each of these writers also had been transformed by travel. They all celebrated the places they visited, immersed themselves in them, and were

forever changed by them. During this quest, I also found that I liked the “me” the open road had taught me to be. I wanted to reclaim her; bring her home.

I began talking with other travelers who also had felt changed by their journeys: people I’d met on past trips, or on television productions, old friends, and friends of friends. The process of hearing their stories became like travel itself. People seemed anxious to share their experiences and to recommend others who might have explored a similar path. Ultimately, I spoke with or received stories from almost seventy contemporary travelers who had glimpsed untapped aspects of themselves while away. People who had felt empowered and enriched by journeys that had enhanced their own lives, and their relationship with the world. I began to wonder: How could we take these lessons gleaned on the road and integrate them back home so that we could live richer, fuller lives every day?

A Map to this Book:

How to Start Your Journey 🍌

All of the stories in this book explore ways in which travel has changed people’s lives, and how travel, or a travel state of mind, can transform our everyday living. In this book, you will journey to many parts of the world, meet a cross-section of travelers and follow in the footsteps of legendary writers to some of their favorite places: To D.H. Lawrence’s Italy, Henry Miller’s Greece, Isak Dinesen’s Africa, Ernest Hemingway’s Cuba, Mabel Dodge Luhan’s New Mexico, Ed Abbey’s Arizona, and Jorge Luis Borges’s Argentina. You will meet travelers from a variety of countries, backgrounds, and ages, all who have been shaped by travel.

You will explore eight central themes. As I stepped, temporarily, into the lives of historic writers and talked with modern travelers, I realized the road had taught us common lessons: how to discover greater self-esteem, take more risks, and buck convention while celebrating our individuality; how to slow down and live in the moment, and connect with the power of nature while finding our wild side; lessons about feeling sexy, stepping into our courage, and living an abundant life. Each chapter in this book focuses on one of those eight life-enriching qualities, and the section “Kindle the Spirit of Travel and Life” highlights additional qualities that travelers have experienced on their journeys.

Each chapter concludes with “Tips at a Glance.” These are highlights from the “Full Collection of Tips” located at the end of the book. These suggestions provide opportunities to cultivate richer, fuller living on and off the road and they include ideas from fellow travelers and legendary writers. The “Tips Summary” is a list that you can tear out, or photocopy, to take with you on your next trip, or stash in your briefcase or purse for everyday living.

You can venture into this book several ways: You can read just the stories or tips. You can reference the “Full Collection of Tips” as you complete each chapter, or read them all at once, perhaps for a rush of inspiration before a future journey. Or you can read the book from beginning to end.

Have fun with these stories and suggestions. Some ideas will work for you. Others may not. Some may be thoughts you tuck away for later years. Let them inspire your own experimentation as well. Just as my literary heroes offered me a jumping off place to discover my own passions, I hope the tales and tips within this book will provide a springboard for you and help you to enjoy a richer life experience.