

America Day by Day

Simone de Beauvoir

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Simone de Beauvoir : America Day by Day before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised America Day by Day:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great Impressions!By cookAs I wrote above, I read this book in the German translation and have also bought it in English. Many people will read this after I pass it on. It is extremely

well written. Her impressions are so correct and seen from a European eye, many positive and some negative. It is so well written, with such insight that I have decided to read more of her books. And she has written many! Simone travelled through America on a 4 week lecture tour at universities from one coast to the other. Her insight is so true to this day. I would highly recommend this book. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. America Through French Eyes By L. Richardson "America Day by Day" is a look at the experiences of Simone de Beauvoir, a French existentialist, as she traveled through the United States in the Spring of 1947. Beauvoir chronicles her experiences in journal form, and the reader is able to gauge her reactions to different regions and factions of American life first hand. We witness her awe at all the conveniences in a hotel lobby, and her disdain for the situation with blacks in the South prior to the Civil Rights movement, among other things. Beauvoir primarily mixes and mingles with intellectuals and journalists, but she also has meaningful interactions with college students and African Americans. Through this all, we see Beauvoir's positive and negative views of the United States--both the goodness in the nature of the American people and the ways in which American freedom and democracy is restricted by the aristocratic nature of society are featured. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Three Stars By John Still working on it.

Here is the ultimate American road book, one with a perspective unlike that of any other. In January 1947 Simone de Beauvoir landed at La Guardia airport and began a four-month journey that took her from one coast of the United States to the other, and back again. Embraced by the Cond Nast set in a swirl of cocktail parties in New York, where she was hailed as the "prettiest existentialist" by Janet Flanner in *The New Yorker*, de Beauvoir traveled west by car, train, and Greyhound, immersing herself in the nation's culture, customs, people, and landscape. The detailed diary she kept of her trip became *America Day by Day*, published in France in 1948 and offered here in a completely new translation. It is one of the most intimate, warm, and compulsively readable texts from the great writer's pen. Fascinating passages are devoted to Hollywood, the Grand Canyon, New Orleans, Las Vegas, and San Antonio. We see de Beauvoir gambling in a Reno casino, smoking her first marijuana cigarette in the Plaza Hotel, donning raingear to view Niagara Falls, lecturing at Vassar College, and learning firsthand about the Chicago underworld of morphine addicts and petty thieves with her lover Nelson Algren as her guide. This fresh, faithful translation superbly captures the essence of Simone de Beauvoir's distinctive voice. It demonstrates once again why she is one of the most profound, original, and influential writers and thinkers of the twentieth century. On New York: "I walk between the steep cliffs at the bottom of a canyon where no sun penetrates: it's permeated by a salt smell. Human history is not inscribed on these carefully calibrated buildings: They are closer to prehistoric caves than to the houses of Paris or Rome." On Los Angeles: "I watch the Mexican dances and eat chili con carne, which takes the roof off my mouth, I drink the tequila and I'm utterly dazed with pleasure."

From Publishers Weekly It has been a good year for the French existentialist and feminist, with the recent publication of de Beauvoir's love letters to Nelson Algren and now this account, published in the U.S. for the first time, of her four-month tour in 1947. De Beauvoir can be facile and condescending, as when she compares the "strained coldness of white American women" to "lively" black women, or writes: "And when you see these men dance, their sensual life unrestrained by an armor of Puritan virtue, you understand how much sexual jealousy can enter into the white Americans' hatred of these quick bodies." Often, however, de Beauvoir is more clever and subtle: "I sense that America is hard on intellectuals. Publishers and editors size up your mind in a critical and distasteful way, like an impresario asking a dancer to show her legs," she writes, and elsewhere, "Los Angeles is vast but porous. [Chicago] is made of a thick dough, without leavening." De Beauvoir's itinerary, set by lecture dates, is a bizarre combination of the banal (hotels, drugstores), tourist traps (Niagara Falls, the Grand Canyon, Las Vegas) and the dark underbelly of slaughterhouses, drug addicts and Bowery bums. But she inevitably returns to the same themes: black/white relations, political commitment and comparison of the U.S. and France. While she mentions Algren by initials, de Beauvoir gives no inkling of her passionate interest in him, attesting to her ability to compartmentalize romantic and intellectual pursuits. There is a natural cerebral quality to this book that prevents it from becoming ponderous. It will easily attract those interested in de Beauvoir, travel writing and the intersection of American intellectual and popular culture in the postwar years. First serial to *Condé Nast Traveler*. (Jan.) FYI: The New Press has published de Beauvoir's letters to Algren as *A Transatlantic Love Affair* (Forecasts, Sept. 7). Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Simone de Beauvoir (1908-86) spent four months in the United States in 1947. Traveling by car, train, and bus, she lectured from coast to coast at the most prestigious colleges and universities, immersing herself in the wonders and woes of American culture. This is the first American edition of her journal, published as *L'Amerique au Jour le Jour* in France in 1948 and translated and published in England in 1952. Writing from notes, letters, and memories, de Beauvoir details with vivid insight aspects of American life and culture including the New York Bowery, slaughterhouses and burlesques in Chicago, African American church services, racism, politics, films, jazz, Muzak, marijuana, and cocktail parties. She provides sharp sociological perspective on American women, adolescents, college students, public and private higher education, and the inertia of the late 1940s. Impressive, compelling, thought-provoking, and highly recommended. Jeris Cassel, Rutgers Univ. Libs., New Brunswick, NJ Copyright 1998

Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus sOriginally published in France in 1948, and here translated for the first time into English, this captivating journal records American culture as seen by the young, fiercely intelligent Beauvoir. Her observations rove in topic from the dream of rootedness to the giddy exhilaration of the car and the wind, and from the American obsession with material satisfaction to the nature of individual freedom. Beauvoir lands in New York in January of 1947, equipped with four flexible months, a promising letter of introduction from her companion, Jean-Paul Sartre, and *The Second Sex* not yet written. Though shes a literary sensation, shes anonymous on the street, which proves to be a huge advantage. Beauvoir travels from New York to Los Angeles and back by car, train, and Greyhound, relishing the lavish monotony of a landscape unlike Europe in its splendid stubbornness. Shes enchanted by the optimism and affability she finds around her, by the specific American poetryof the drugstore. She wanders into Chicagos bar-hopping morphine underworld with her lover Nelson Algren; she also mingles with the dreamy and disillusioned youth of Americas Ivy League. As the Red Scare accelerates, she grows preoccupied with the American fixation on liberty. Shes struck by our passion for solitude, coupled with our voyeuristic interest in the lives of the rich and famous. Sometimes she rants, clinging to her identity as a French intellectual while condemning the ghastly opulence of the US. Beauvoir remains both dazzled and disappointed by the extravagance of her subject, by the battle it is waging with itself, in which the stakes are beyond measure. Brainy and imaginative, critical and rhapsodicand not to be missed. -- Copyright 1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.