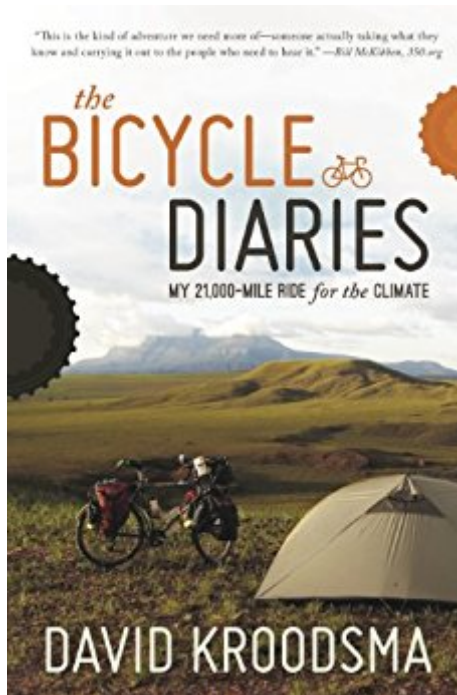


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The Bicycle Diaries: My 21,000-Mile Ride For The Climate



Synopsis

Climate researcher David Kroodsma dreamed of bicycling down his driveway in Palo Alto, California, and pedaling for months until he reached the tip of South America. When he finally planned his trip, he wanted more than just adventure; he also wanted to raise awareness about the impacts of climate change on the countries he would explore. So he set out on a well-packed bicycle with a business card, a laptop, and an eagerness to share his knowledge. His project, Ride for Climate, caught on; he gave over 100 school and assembly presentations, garnered dozens of newspaper accounts of his journey, and appeared on international television. During nearly two years of travel, Kroodsma witnessed the world from a seat of a bicycle. He traversed unique ecosystems, coastline settlements, and glaciated mountains. "While biking," he writes, "no windshield protects you from the rain, heat, or wind, and no wall divides you from the people along the road." Countless people, from subsistence farmers to petroleum engineers, sheltered him and shared their stories. These experiences transformed and personalized his understanding of climate change, and in *The Bicycle Diaries*, Kroodsma shares these unexpected insights through a gripping travel narrative.

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Customer Reviews

I was (am) impressed with the author's candid recounting of his mostly solo bicycle journey - a very amazing, lonely endeavor. As a father who just tried to complete a century ride with his 20-something son, I was especially impressed with his father linking up with him part-way through Central America. As a research scientist/engineer with a background in the carbon & nitrogen cycle I found some of his coverage of global climate change at times pedantic and other times simplistic, but definitely very readable overall and a fantastic summary with excellent proof points for those who have only received information from mass media previously. I am currently 2/3 of the way through the book and cannot wait to finish. The only point I would take issue with is when he said something along the lines of the world (or maybe just the US?) being a safer place today with respect to war than it has been in the past - as a retired Marine officer I found this shockingly naïve. We have been involved in a ground war in the Middle East for over a decade; many of his peers have lost life and limb during this "Long War", or if not physical injury, mental impacts that are more difficult to measure. Mr. Kroodsma is very lucky this has obviously not impacted his life directly. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in cycling and/or who want to learn more about climate change. This is one person's story, it should help the reader assess their own story.

Bicycle Diaries is a compelling story that takes the reader on a tour of the Americas that few will ever experience. I was most impressed with the authenticity of the narrative. David clearly relays the potential threats of climate change to the ecosystems and populations of the Americas, but he also comes to understand, respect, and accept the desire of poor communities to develop and struggles with how to deliver his message in a productive way. David is clearly changed by the journey and comes to promote a hopeful path forward - focused not on limiting the development of other countries but on finding a path forward that leverages innovation and clean energy to bring forth a brighter future for all. You do not have to be a bike enthusiast to enjoy this story.

This is a beautifully crafted mix of personal travel-log and thought-provoking look at how climate change may impact the Americas. It's inspired me to get back on my bike and find adventures of my own! It's also convinced me it's long passed time to get serious about solving climate change, as the stakes are far too high, particularly for many of the communities and ecosystems that Kroodsma

visited on his prolific journey. Kroodsma takes the climate change topic (which can seem a bit nebulous to me), and made it deeply personal through his adventure narrative of the people and places he visited. I hope he continues riding and writing for climate; the world needs more of both!

I love these kinds of adventure stories. I had to get past a lot of views that I did not share with the author to get to the good parts, his amazing adventure through some difficult terrain. Since I live in South America I was interested in his insights into all these different cultures. I thought he did a great job not being an "ugly American" . There was only one point, culturally, I thought he missed. The time he was very upset at one man for playing his music so loud at night, late into the night. That is SO a part of Latin America. There are no "quiet hours". If he had looked around no one else was bothered. But I felt his pain because I have a hard time getting used to that too. What I did appreciate, though, was the author's honesty even about his own views on climate change. I appreciated when he grappled with the larger implications of the oil industry. Although he did not like to see the harm that that kind of industry can make he honestly looked at everything he had and saw that because of the oil industry we can have bikes, nylon, helmets etc... So I liked the book and enjoyed riding vicariously with him through Latin and South America.

A well-written bicycle trek from California to the southernmost tip of South America, this book is more than a pat-yourself-on-the-back, feel-good travelogue. Author and bicyclist David Kroodsma begins his journey thinking he will take what he already knows about climate change, add to it what he learns from his journey, and try to open people's eyes to the need to change how we manage our physical resources in order to stop global warming. That is an admirable goal, but on his journey David actually learns much more. By the time he passes Tierra del Fuego, David still has strong views about what must be done to stop global warming, but he also realizes that without tackling global poverty and economic inequality issues, changes in energy policies and usage alone cannot possibly accomplish those goals. This is a lengthy, occasionally repetitious, but mostly thoughtful book, and I found it an interesting companion piece to our current-day headlines reflecting the US immigration crisis with children flooding our borders from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador - the same poverty-stricken countries David takes us through on his bicycle. This is a worthwhile read.

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