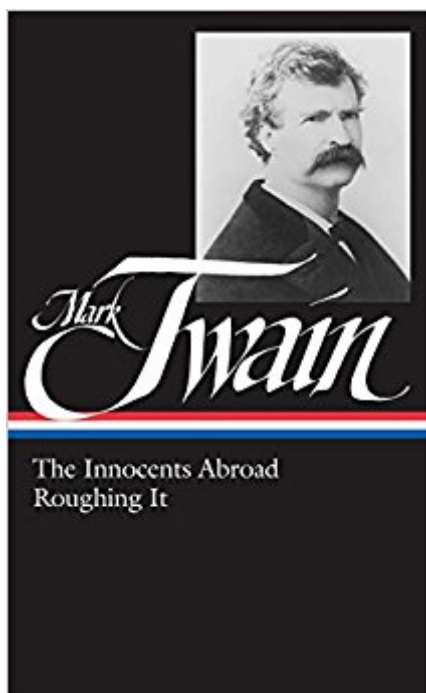


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Mark Twain : The Innocents Abroad, Roughing It (Library Of America)



Synopsis

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Customer Reviews

"A classic work . . . [that] marks a critical point in the development of our literature." --Leslie A. Fiedler, literary critic

"A humorous travel narrative . . . The Innocents Abroad sharply satirized tourists who learn what they should see and feel by reading guidebooks. Assuming the role of a keen-eyed, shrewd Westerner, Twain was refreshingly honest and vivid in describing foreign scenes and his reactions to them. He alternated serious passages . . . with risible ones. The humor itself was varied, sometimes in the vein of the Southwestern yarn spinners, sometimes in that of contemporaneous humorists such as Artemus Ward and Josh Billings, who chiefly used burlesque and parody and other verbal devices." --The Merriam-Webster Encyclopedia of Literature

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14 1.5-hour cassettes --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Interesting variation on Twain’s normal humor. Get out your maps and your magnifying glass as he travels around 19th century Europe, the Med, and the Holy Land. You’ve heard of large print editions? This is a microscopic print edition...like 6 pt type, but I forgive it because the book is really cheap. Twain pulls no punches, does not suffer fools gladly. The contrast of many places with today’s conditions in that part of the world is interesting. Of course some places and some people really haven’t changed that much...I don’t pull many punches either.

I feel like an idiot saying that a book by Mark Twain is boring or bad, but I just couldn’t stay interested. To be fair, the style of writing from the 19th century was difficult to stick with. Also, I gave up on the book just as they got across the ocean to Gibraltar--still very much in the beginning of the story. It is not an easy read because of the old-fashioned style of writing, and because what was humorous then is not now. Sorry Mr. Clemmens.

Twain accompanies and makes humor of a group of wealthy folks who charter a ship and travel thousands of miles from New York to Europe and the Holy Land...and other places. It is a true story of a trip that really happened...it was Twain’s first book and it made him wealthy. It sold more than any other of his books in his lifetime. An example of the humor: Twain was at the Sea of Galilee and wanted to ride in one of the boats some Arab fellows rented out there. The price was high...so high that Twain said now he knew why Jesus had walked across the water.

As other reviewers have said, a very funny and entertaining read, though you have to allow for the social climate of the day in his views of non-Whites, Catholics (who he probably saw as non-White as well), and Muslims. Both as a travel tale and as a window into the world as it was 150 years ago, a book I'm glad I read. It was fun to read about some of the places where we had just been in Italy and France. Hard to imagine such a trip in a world without phones (mobile or otherwise) or automobiles. Twain has much hilarious commentary on the sites, people, and his fellow travelers. And he isn't afraid to call it like he sees it. He also says many howlingly awful things, particularly about the impoverished Arabs he encountered along the way.

Really, probably my all-time favorite Twain. This must have been the freshest and most truthful look at Americans traveling abroad that anyone had ever seen or read at that time. Think "The Ugly American". However, what I found most surprising is that his comments about local culture ring true through to today. It's not disparaging or condescending (well, maybe a little towards his fellow travelers), just observing. Some reading it today may feel a little uncomfortable in this politically correct society we've created.

A fantastic travel book. Whether you've been to the places Mr. Twain describes, or plan to go there - you will find something fun and exciting in this book. His descriptions of the places are hilarious and realistic, and still ring true 150 years later. But I think the best parts are the little stories about his personal journey and insights. Highly recommended for anyone who likes to travel, to learn more about the world, or simply likes a good chuckle. This edition read well, and the illustrations add a nice touch - kind of like cartoons in the New Yorker.

Mark Twain rocks -- that's all there is to it. If you want to pep up your English or just enjoy a book written in the most colorful English ever written -- start here! Mark Twain is the master: "...there was still room to turn around in, but not to swing a cat in, at least with entire security to the cat." It is a long-winded book, with details about Jerusalem and Turkey. It is full of anachronisms, and they may be construed as racist even. Despite them, it's good to see an old book like this and peer into the past. It's a long one though, so plan more than a few sittings to get through this one.

Amazing how accurately Mark Twain penned this, for today. Though written 150 years ago about fairly affluent people on a Mediterranean cruise, it's full of very (sometimes too long) prose regarding many of the most famous areas in the world. He clearly sees, and shows, the arrogance of

most Americans when they travel abroad, but also the adventurous spirit that makes Americans the greatest travelers on the planet. He wrote the book as a series of newspaper articles, his extremely long descriptions of places can be forgiven when that is taken into account, for he was trying to describe areas and people to a population who had never seen the area. I had read it once, as a young person, didn't care for it, now read it again after a tour of Hannibal Missouri and a resurgence of interest in Twain. Glad I did, enjoyed it much more the second time through.

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