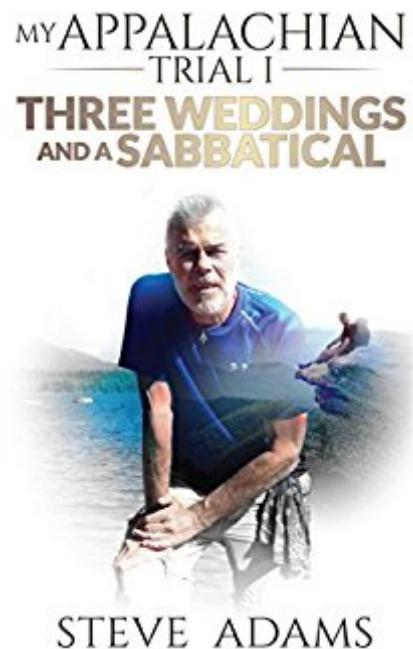


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My Appalachian Trial I: Three Weddings And A Sabbatical



Synopsis

Steve Adams, a retired, overweight, 61-year-old Brit, who had never hiked in his life, decided one day that he wanted an adventure. Not willing to settle for just any old adventure, he decided to hike the entire length of America's Appalachian Trail, a beguiling attraction for many hikers, both home-grown and from all corners of the globe. Stretching from Georgia to Maine, taking its travelers on a whimsical journey through national forests and parks, along ridges and over mountains, the A.T. is the longest hiking-only trail in the world. The Appalachian Trail is physically strenuous and emotionally taxing, involving a commitment of about six months to complete the entire 2,200 miles: only one in four of the people who start in Georgia will actually complete the hike. Steve was completely unprepared for the myriad challenges that the trail offered him, but took them on with gusto. *My Appalachian Trial I: "Three Weddings and a Sabbatical* tells Steve's story of the hike from its origins, details his careful preparation and tentative first steps, and follows his faltering progress and eventual growth as a hiker. Often intimate, sometimes profound, and occasionally profane, *My Appalachian Trial I* explains why Steve was drawn to such an iconic trail, how he embraced it, and what happened when things went wrong.

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Customer Reviews

First of all I have to declare a family interest: Steve is my brother. When he told me of his plan to walk the Appalachian Trail I was a little surprised he was even considering it. Although he was always the sporty one in the family he had never before declared an interest in hiking. As he says himself, "What sort of an idiot takes up hiking for the first time over the age of sixty?" It was a bit like taking up boxing by challenging Mike Tyson to a fight. Yet I'm pleased to be able to report honestly that despite his obvious and understandable misgivings, I never seriously doubted that he could do it. Steve has a "can do" attitude that reveals itself on every page of this excellent and very funny account of his journey, even when it looks as if he's saying, "no can do", and sometimes even, "no bloody clue." This is classic British self-deprecation of course, as here, where he tells us how he envisaged beforehand writing a fascinating blog of his adventure: "Each night I'd be updating my blog with stylish, thrilling stories of the day, with just the right balance between journaling and commentary. I'm sure that it will surprise nobody that none of this happened and my entire plan went to rat shit within the first 20 miles." Poking fun at himself in this way makes the reading experience far more enjoyable for the average walker, or even non-walker. It's as if he's saying, look: if I can do this, anyone can. Which they can't, of course. But he encourages his readers to wonder whether they might be able to handle it. "I'm just going for a walk", he reasoned with himself when times got tough. I was walking myself in 2014, on the North Yorkshire Moors, so I'm not entirely unfamiliar with the joys and otherwise of hiking.

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