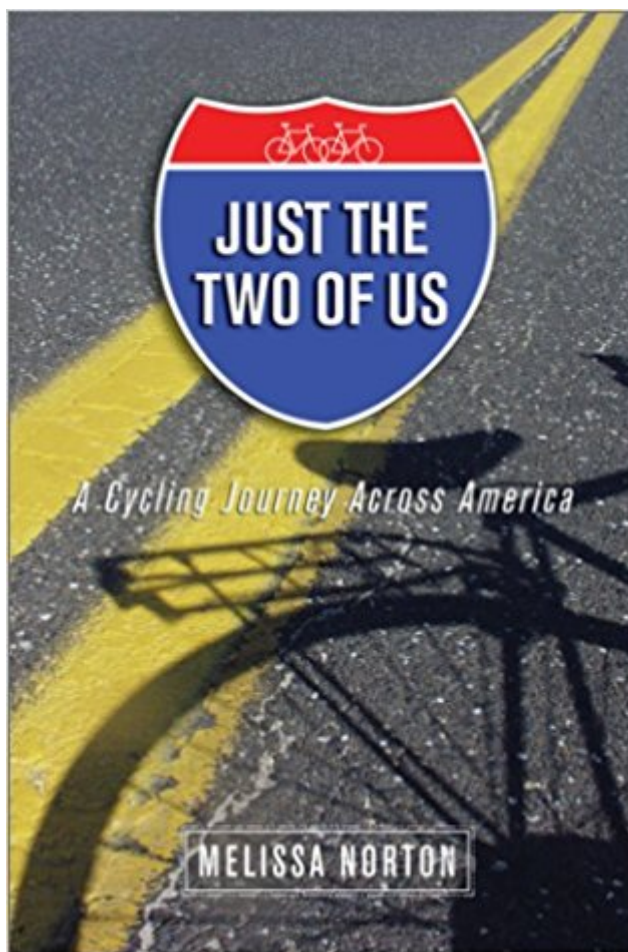




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Just The Two Of Us: A Cycling Journey Across America



Synopsis

Book by Norton, Melissa

Book Information

Paperback: 190 pages

Publisher: Chandler House Press (February 2002)

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Customer Reviews

Riding a bicycle 4,622 miles across the United States in 63 days is not that unusual, and it has been written about in such books as Stan Purdum's *Roll Around Heaven All Day* and Barbara Siegert's *Bicycle Across America*. What is unique about this trip is that it was accomplished by a wife and husband in their fifties. Using a journal format, Norton writes about the couple's trip from Astoria, OR, to Bar Harbor, ME, covering the grueling mountain climbs, whom they encountered, what they saw, where they stayed and what they ate (primarily at upscale inns and restaurants), the personal relations between husband and wife, and some useful tips on bicycle touring. Each chapter covers one leg of the journey and begins with a small map and itinerary. The black-and-white photographs are too small to be of any value, and the author is not a writer by trade (she is instead a retired math and computer science teacher), which, unfortunately, is evident. Still, Norton does keep the reader's interest, and the book has the potential to appeal to both the bicyclist and the armchair traveler. For all public libraries. John McCormick, New Hampshire State Lib., Concord Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

These folks cycled from one B&B to another. Nice descriptions of where they stayed. Was not what I was looking for.

This book was especially interesting to me since I rode my bike across the country with my husband in 1988. I still have my journal and want to get a book written about our trip! This author made her journal interesting and exciting to anyone who might decide to pick up her book - not just for bicyclists.

Still reading it. Started out a little slow but, it pick uP

It is a fun read and inspiring. Melissa and her husband did what they wanted to do: cycling across the U.S. in 63 days. They planned and just did it.

For me this book did not capture the spirit or essence of a bike tour. Did not allow me to connect with the places or people along the way. I found Free-wheelin' by Richard Lovett to be a much richer reading experience.

Just a quick overview here. Just the Two of Us tells of the Nortons' cross country tour from the northwest coast of the US to the East and is written in a very uninvolved style which leaves the reader with the feeling of reading one of those little leaflets you find in way stations. The writer obviously took time to write entries every day of their trip, but beyond that there is nothing further to engage the reader. There is nothing deeper than where they stopped and what they saw, no attempt to flesh out the manuscript and make their adventures interesting to the non-cyclist. So in a way, this is the perfect book for roadies. High five!

Just as the other 5 star reviewers, I enjoyed Melissa Norton's book. She mixes in the right amount of local information and experiences with personal experiences. Norton's book reads much more smoothly than Richard Lovett's book which just dragged. The dreamer thinking of a cycling adventure would do well to read Norton's book. She describes the planning that took place for this adventure to materialize, such as mapping out the journey and physically preparing. She shares the ups and downs that occur during such an adventure. The Nortons adventure was Inn to Inn and as 50 yr olds taking on this adventure, this was the way to go. I too enjoyed the pace of the book and felt like I was riding along with them. For anyone planning a bicycling trip Just the Two of Us is an excellent resource and very insightful.

Review of Just the Two of Us This is simply the best book I have read on cycling. From first-hand

experience, Melissa Norton captures the essence of cycling: why people do it; how they do it; and what the experience is all about. Just the Two of Us describes the process of a husband and wife team getting into cycling, building their cycling skills and experience by cycling over weekends. Weekend cycling extends to week long trips, and then to the ultimate: biking across the United States. Bikes are unpacked at Astoria, Oregon overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The adventure begins with the thrill of watching fisherman reel in 4 foot sturgeons at the mouth of the Columbia River. Norton makes the reader feel as if they are vicariously biking along with Dave and Melissa: seeing what they see, working up the hills, and coasting down the slopes at exhilarating speeds. Each chapter is introduced with the cities to be visited and the miles to be rode for the week. From the sunrise on June 15, the reader cycles with the Norton's along the Pacific Ocean, over the Cascades at McKenzie Pass, through the rich agricultural fields on the high plateau of Oregon, over the Rockies, trekking the long expanse of the plains of the Midwest, into the finger lake region of New York, and returning to familiar New England. Finally, we triumphantly ride with them into the Atlantic Coast town of Bar Harbor, Maine. By vicariously cycling with the Norton's, the reader meets the local people in the cities, their history, and the way they are. During the course of the trip, the reader learns a lot about cycling such as maintaining the bike, carrying gear, and safely riding among traffic. The pictures embedded in the book enrich the telling of the journey: landmarks are included, geographical perspective is integrated. I especially like the picture of the 13 percent grade sign shown on a steep "hill" in Vermont. Just the Two of Us is an exciting read. I highly recommend it. And, I hope that this will be just the first book from author Melissa Norton in sharing her experiences and thoughts about a most accessible and enjoyable sport. Richard L. Nolan
Lexington, Massachusetts
February 2002

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