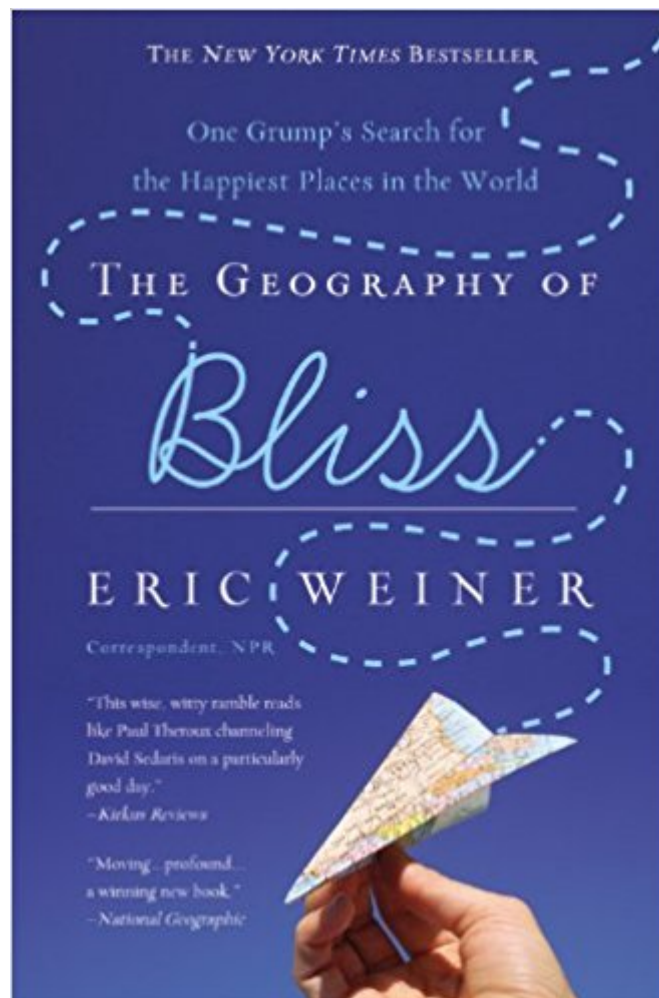




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The Geography Of Bliss: One Grump's Search For The Happiest Places In The World



Synopsis

Part travel memoir, part humor, and part twisted self-help guide, *The Geography of Bliss* takes the reader across the globe to investigate not what happiness is, but WHERE it is. Are people in Switzerland happier because it is the most democratic country in the world? Do citizens of Qatar, awash in petrodollars, find joy in all that cash? Is the King of Bhutan a visionary for his initiative to calculate Gross National Happiness? Why is Asheville, North Carolina so damn happy? In a unique mix of travel, psychology, science and humor, Eric Weiner answers those questions and many others, offering travelers of all moods some interesting new ideas for sunnier destinations and dispositions.

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Fortified with Eeyoreish fatalism, “I’m already unhappy. I have nothing to lose.” Weiner set out on a yearlong quest to find the world’s unheralded happy places. Having worked for years as an NPR foreign correspondent, he’d gone to many obscure spots, but usually to report bad news or terrible tragedies. Now he’d travel to countries like Iceland, Bhutan, Qatar, Holland, Switzerland, Thailand and India to try to figure out why residents tell positive psychology researchers that they’re actually quite happy. At his first stop, Rotterdam’s World Database of Happiness, Weiner is confronted with a few inconvenient truths. Contrary to expectations, neither greater social equality nor greater cultural diversity is associated with greater happiness. Iceland and Denmark are very homogeneous, but very happy; Qatar is extremely wealthy, but Weiner, at least, found it rather depressing. He wasn’t too fond of the Swiss, either,

uncomfortable with their quiet satisfaction, tinged with just a trace of smugness. In the end, he realized happiness isn't about economics or geography. Maybe it's not even personal so much as relational. In the end, Weiner's travel tales – eating rotten shark meat in Iceland, smoking hashish in Rotterdam, trying to meditate at an Indian ashram – provide great happiness for his readers. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

If there's one truth that emerged from reviewers' various takes on *The Geography of Bliss*, it's that happiness is subjective. Every critic seemed to find something that really irked him or her about this book: Weiner's persona seems affected, he indulges in "psychobabble," he remains aloof about himself, he comes across as an obnoxious reporter. Yet everyone seemed to enjoy his book, admiring Weiner's original approach to the subject, his balance of research and experience, and the characters that illustrate the lessons on happiness Weiner accumulates during his journeys. In short, all the critics' happiness was alike, but they were also all unhappy in their own way. (Sorry, Tolstoy.) FYI: Weiner lives in Miami, Florida. Copyright © 2004 Phillips & Nelson Media, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Beautiful, entertaining, and full of practical wisdom. A blend of biography, geography, and culture along the lines of humorous story telling. Eric, just like in his newer book "Geography of Genius", doesn't offer you a recipe or a framework for his findings. He handholds you and takes you in a journey to discover things on your own. Yes, he tells you what he believes and finds, but you don't necessarily reach the same conclusions. You are free to wonder and come up with your own perspective. I enjoyed every bit of it!

O M G: did not have that good a laugh in reading for a long time. What a wonderful sense of humor ! Don't understand the negative reviews, except for the fact that people maybe take themselves a little too seriously (or are just too grumpy)? And I'm glad I don't know 'Bryson' either ! I try to ration myself to a chapter / country a day. Would definitely read thru on an intercontinental flight. Combine an unorthodox approach to a search for what make people happy (clarification; not necessarily the author himself !!), with a knack for humor to immediately disarm the potential seriousness and possible pretense of the search, and you go page by page, from observation to observation, stopping at a thought, pretty much like the tasting of a good wine, but a different one all the time. He happens to visit a country I'm well familiar with because of my being born and growing up there, and

I can tell you, Eric Weiner totally cracks me up, and if you read between the lines, gets it right at the same time, somehow ! Trying to define what 'Happiness' might mean in each case, and by adding the various perspectives up, allows the reader to explore the subject with him, at every step along the way. Scepticism is immediately balanced with relativity and humor, and the realization that he needs to keep himself 'open' and 'floating' in his search. I could go on and on, but will not; see for yourself; this book is so hilariously well-written, that it can induce the very state it is trying to define, in the reader ! Enjoy !

Interesting read, but I wish I had got the book from the library. It's not a book I need to own. Some of the chapters (one for each country the author focuses on) are fascinating, but I found in the chapter on Slough, a city near London best known for being the location of Heathrow International Airport, irritating. I know Britain well, and have passed through Slough frequently. As a result, the author's quips that were meant to be clever and funny came across to me as silly. It made me wonder if I would respond similarly to his essays on other countries if I had known more about them as well.

I'm a perpetually happy person. I also love data and research. So this book seemed like it would be an easy read. And it was. But in slow bites. I wanted to savor each country, ponder the quotes from people all around the world who think (or don't think) about happiness. The writing style made this especially enjoyable. Travel the world with Eric and find out what happiness means to you.

Eric Weiner, after a decade of writing about ugly places, cheerless people, and dreadful events decided he wanted to find happiness in the world. He researched the meaning of happiness and the locations most recognized for blissful people and, after ranking them, set out to visit and write about them. The Geography of Bliss is an accounting of his findings after traveling to locations in ten countries where, according to researchers, happiness abounds. But, according to Weiner, in this amusing and insightful book, life is never full of joy even in locales famous for happiness. His first stop was in the Netherlands to interview researchers at the World Database of Happiness in Rotterdam. He was given figures to rate locations on a scale from 1 to 10 (10 being the happiest). Meticulous scientific studies provided him with information about the sociology of happiness. He found that most people of the world consider themselves happy, but the ratings don't necessarily back them up. The author outlines contradictions and misconceptions about happiness and rates different lifestyles, occupations, political leanings, economic structures, and even climatic conditions against one another. He finds anomalies; happy countries tend to have high suicide rates, people

with children are no happier than child-less couples, wealthy people are only slightly happier than poor ones. Weiner is able to convey this fascinating background information in clear and intuitive writing. Weiner then physically travels to the locations rated highest on the happiness meter where, along with his personal observations, he interviews residents and governmental figures and creates essays that are startling, amusing, and entertaining. The author has an amazing ability to blend his thought processes with his actual findings, thus creating a more insightful and personal chronicle. That, combined with his ability to recreate the dialogue and depict the personal face of those he interviews, makes this a book to savor for those who appreciate good writing. Schuyler T. Wallace

At first I wasn't sure about this book but the more I read it the more I liked it. This took me to the places with the author. It was a description of how different countries experience happiness.

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