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Review: Lonely Planet Europe on a Shoestring guidebook

Transcript 014

May 2007

Linda: Hi, I'm Linda

Craig: And I'm Craig

Linda: And this is the Indie Travel Podcast episode 14 at indietravelpodcast.com. This week's show was recorded in Waidhofen an der Ybbs, in Lower Austria.

Craig: It's the second week of the month, so it's time for a review and it's our first book review: [Lonely Planet's Europe on a Shoestring guidebook](#).

Linda: Not so long ago, in March 2007, Lonely Planet put out an updated version of their [Europe on a Shoestring](#) guidebook. We haven't been able to read it yet, but we did get a lot of mileage out of the previous edition.

Craig: Yeah, in January 2006 we were in the final stages of packing up life in Auckland, New Zealand and starting to head out and travel. We knew we were heading to Europe but beyond that ... not much. We had sorted out all the documentation and had a tentative job in Malta.

Linda: Yeah, tentative is right, it was "if you show up, we might be able to give you some work, maybe.

Craig: As a going away present colleagues at my work bought me a copy of Europe on a Shoestring. Just as well they did: it's been a constant source of motivation and it's helped us find our feet and somewhere to sleep in thirteen of the forty-three countries mentioned in the 2005 edition.

Linda: Yeah, we've actually only been to thirteen of the countries! I still can't believe it.

Craig: Yeah, we're going to keep working on that. We're heading back to to the UK

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again and then to some new countries: Belgium, Luxembourg and Poland in the next couple of months.

Linda: Hopefully.

Craig: Yeah, well. Back to the book - It's a brick!

Linda: It is really quite big. It covers all of western, central and eastern Europe and Morocco and a bit of Russia. So we've been experiencing life on the road with this book for 14 months so we're going to quickly run through some of our impressions of it.

Craig: First the pros. Its scope is fantastic. It does have something to say about pretty much every major town and every city in everywhere in Europe. But what it does in scope it loses in depth. There isn't that much information. And contrasting it with specific guidebooks, it just doesn't stand up.

Linda: Secondly, the language section at the back, is really really useful. I think we've mentioned before that it's useful to have ten or so words in the language of the country you're going to. The language section at the back has about fifty words in each of the major languages of Europe.

Craig: And another pro is its hardiness. It is double-bound, which, as an ex-library shelver, I find kind of cool.

Linda: Geek.

Craig: Yeah, shut up. And, although we've ripped big chunks out of the spine, it's still holding together really well.

Linda: Yeah, it hasn't fallen apart yet. All right, on to the cons. One thing we find a bit frustrating it's just so huge. It's a really big book. Now, for the amount of information that is in that, it's fair enough, but it is quite heavy and bulky trying to fit it into your suitcase.

Craig: There's a map for most of the cities, and although the country maps are great,

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the city maps aren't really that useful. Just the scale they're on, it doesn't work. They've taken out too many landmarks. They're okay if you're really stuck, but most airports or stations have free ones, so pick up a local map when you get there.

- Linda: So the last con, one thing we noticed in some of the smaller guidebooks that Lonely Planet puts out, are itineraries for each country, and I think they're really great. But unfortunately they aren't in the [Europe on a Shoestring](#) book.
- Craig: It does have some suggested itineraries for doing blocks of Europe though, so for example, Scandinavian countries, or the Eastern bloc.
- Linda: All right, so let's talk about who this book is good for. There are quite a few people who could really make good use of this book. The first is someone who want to visit Europe, but doesn't know much about any of the tourist destinations. The fact that it's concise and covers a lot of ground gives you a good overview and you can research further from there.
- Craig: The second group of people are people just like us; you're spending a few years travelling in Europe. You don't really know where you're going to end up in a month, next week, and you have plenty of space in your itinerary for diversions. It comes in handy when you're completely out of money as well and you hole up in your apartment, or you sit in a ...
- Linda: Or your tent.
- Craig: Yeah, or your tent, or the back of your car, or you sit in a cafe for three hours drinking a glass of water, and you need something to read. So there's always somewhere new to read up on, it gives you something to dream about. And, you know, it can kind of make up and spur you on from whatever situation you get stuck in.
- Linda: The third type of person this guidebook might work for is someone who lives within distance of a budget airline's airport. If you have a weekend free, you can decide where you're heading with just a quick look in the book.

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Craig: It's not so good for people that're only heading to one part of Europe or have limited time in the countries they're going to. Get something more specialised guys. Or maybe use this and supplement heavily with internet access. And if you're on some sort of guided tour well ... life's wrapped up for you anyway. Save the weight.

Linda: Next week we're going to follow up on this review with any comments you send us during the week and also talk about how to get the most out of a guide book. Trust us, inexperienced travellers don't want to be without one, but you don't want to end up having a sanitised experience with all the package tourists either.

Craig: Yeah, hey, we're wrapping up the show, and we want to thank you guys, our listeners, for all of your support, we're amazed when we look at how many people are downloading the show. But we do have a special request this week. If you are shopping for this book, or shopping for anything else on amazon.com or amazon.co.uk, please consider coming by the site and clicking through one of our Amazon links before you make your purchase. You don't need to buy the thing that's advertised, but we do get a small commission and it doesn't add anything onto your price. It just costs the few seconds it takes to visit www.indietravelpod.com, uh www.indietravelpodcast.com first. You'd think I'd be really good at saying that by now.

Linda: You've had enough practise.

Craig: I know. Well, anyway we enjoy making the show, we're committed to producing it, whether we get any money from the ads or not. But if we could cover our costing hoh ... If we could cover our hosting costs, that'd make us very happy. If do you want to support us, but don't want to shop with amazon, please suggest our podcast to a couple of friends that might like it ... because podcast stats are better than interest, more beautiful than gold!

Linda: That's not a real quote.

Craig: Yeah, it is, it's from Craig Martin, you attribute that people.

Linda: Whatever. Anyway, that's the end of our show for this week. We'd love to hear

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from you so email Craig and me at mail@indietravelpodcast.com

Craig: At least you can say it.

Linda: I can say it. Or if you've used this Lonely Planet guide drop by the site and let us know your thoughts just leave a comment under this episode's post. If it's not on the front page you can search for it or check the archives under the "[review](#)" or "[research](#)" categories. So, until next week, travel well.

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