



Across Islands and Oceans

James Baldwin

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Across Islands and Oceans is the memoir of twenty-five year-old James Baldwin and his epic two-year, solo circumnavigation in Atom, his trusty but aging twenty-eight foot sailboat.

Early on and "as broke as [he] dared to be," James determined not only to sail around the world, but also to hike across every island that he visits. His inland forays are unique in the literature of circumnavigators as he finds danger, humor, friendship and romance in places most sailors will never visit. James' story unfolds in his earnest exploration of distant lands and seas, his meditations on the people whose lives he touched, and his greater voyage to explore his own private ocean of solitude.

His adventure is not merely an attempt to seek thrills, nor even to tempt death, but rather a voyage of discovery as he set out in the direction of his youthful dreams to meet the life he imagined.

"Go seek what you will, where you will,
but be a seeker all of your life."

-James Baldwin

Across Islands and Oceans Details

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From Reader Review Across Islands and Oceans for online ebook

Jonathan Gudger says

Insightful, profound, practical, existential, amusing

Exactly the booking was looking for to vividly experience a circumnavigation second hand. Baldwin's narration is comprehensive, honest, colorful, and most of all very human. Taking his advice, I resolve to simply find a boat and take to sea (albeit with my wife more likely than solo). Paraphrasing: Seek what you will, but above all be a seeker of life.

Samuel Goldenbaum says

Really enjoyed Jame's story and honesty. Beautifull recollection of what must have been a testing journey both physically and spirritually. Only wish he had visited more places!

Thom Kay says

This is a very good book for both sailors and non-sailors, particularly if they are interested in both sailing as well as taking a compassionate look at the many cultures and lifestyles along the journey.

Alena says

This book was more than I expected; for some reason I thought it would be a simple account of a long sailing trip, unpretentious and, well, uncomplicated. It took me longer to read it than I originally thought, partly because the book is more than just a straightforward description of the trip. The author writing about his long voyage on a small keelboat when he was in his 20s reflects on its spiritual purpose and the way the experience changed him, though not quite reaching the point of becoming obnoxious and smug. The bottom line is simple - you learn much more about yourself and the places you visit when you go on a long trip alone; there is no point to be scared or postpone experience due to perceived obligations or lack of money. I am not quite sure what to make of a bottom line like this. I am tempted to make fun of the author for refusing to eat the fish that was quite literally falling into his fry pan because he decided to become a vegetarian for the duration of trip but I was still drawn in by the poetry of his intentions, even if I don't fully share them.

Sebastian says

Another great sailing book. Lets you dream about distant lands and your own journey to come. But don't forget that you are already on your way, every moment, here and now...

Arnie says

When I was younger, I spent a summer sailing on Lake Michigan. I've never returned to sailing, but I always said that, eventually, I would do so. This book captures the essence of the pursuit, chronicling an amazing voyage by an initially inexperienced sailor - but this book takes an amazing journey one "step" further by describing the author's experiences on land and the multiple cultures he interacts with. At times it's a bit wordy and perhaps a tad overdramatic/preachy, but you can't argue that it is not an emotional and very well-told journal of life on the seas.

Jeremy says

I was happy with this book. I picked it up wanting an escape story, an adventure that would take me out of the ordinary into the fantastic and foreign, and I got it. Mostly. At times, the author got a little preachy, complaining about the European influence on the native cultures of places like Polynesia, but that's OK, I think. He took me around the world with him in this book, and I think that gives him the right to speak his mind about what he saw and how he felt when he saw it, even if I didn't particularly enjoy those parts. That, and a few other moments I found tedious, is all that keeps this from getting five stars from me. I wish Baldwin hadn't waited thirty years to tell us about his trip, and I look forward to reading about his latter-day voyages.

Philski says

living my dream!

Gregory Lamb says

James Baldwin not only had a dream to sail the world, he fulfilled it and then some. "Across Islands and Oceans" is a complete account of a sailing adventure and a thoughtful reflection of the explorations that extend beyond the ports of call.

Baldwin not only sailed the oceans alone, enduring storms and torturous encounters with rugged lee shores, he also explored the interior of the islands he visited. His descriptions of landscape and culture and the relationships he forged with locals add a richness to an already adventurous story.

The personalities of sailing's greatest solo sailors are referenced throughout this book. Inspired by Joshua Slocum, Bernard Moitessier, Robin Lee Graham, among a few others, Baldwin worked in a land locked steel foundry to save enough money to finance his travels. His writing is exquisite and contains the thoughtful reflections of one who spends time thinking about the larger context of humanity.

If being transported on an armchair adventure via some good reading is what you're looking for, "Across Islands and Oceans" is sure to satisfy the most discriminating reader. It is by far the best in its genre.

Russell says

I wanna sailboat.

Jean-Michel Ghoussoub says

An inspiring example to become (or remain) a seeker.

Villan says**Awkward**

Maybe worth 2.5 stars, but I cant feel like I took away much from this book. Granted, there are a few nuggets of wisdom in regards to sailing, specially solo navigatiom, and minimalism, but you are forced to drudge through way too many lackluster anecdotes. On top of that, even though it was written 25 years ago, the views on women and "noble savages" (a term used repeatedly) are annoying AT BEST, and actually form a significant portion of the authors attention, both in writing and in his travels. Very strange.

Oscar Moreno says

I like reading about the stories at each port, hiking through a new island and meeting interesting people. The spirit of adventure is refreshing...

Alan Richards says

I loved reading this book. Apart from describing the sailing adventure, the author writes about the places and people he meets on the island stops on his circumnavigation. So much freedom!

Xavier says

Honest, raw and delightful clear writings. I did not quite expect those from this type of book. A wonderful surprise.
