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No Baggage: A Minimalist Tale Of Love And Wandering



Synopsis

No Baggage is a memoir that will resonate with adventurers and homebodies alike - it's at once a romance, a travelogue, and a bright, modern take on the age-old questions: How do you find the courage to explore beyond your comfort zone? Can you love someone without the need for commitment or any expectations for the future? When Clara Bensen arranges to meet Jeff Wilson on the steps of the Texas State Capitol after just a few email exchanges on OKCupid, it feels like something big is going to happen. Clara, a sensitive and reclusive personality, is immediately drawn to Jeff's freewheeling, push-the-envelope nature. Within a few days of knowing one another, they embark on a 21-day travel adventure from Istanbul to London - with zero luggage, zero reservations, and zero plans. They want to test a simple question: What happens when you welcome the unknown instead of attempting to control it? Donning a single green dress and a small purse with her toothbrush and credit card, Clara travels through eight countries in three weeks. Along the way Clara ruminates on the challenges of traveling unencumbered while realizing when it comes to falling in love, you can never really leave your baggage behind.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

No Baggage is a very focused memoir, occurring mostly within three weeks sprinkled with some brief flashbacks. The premise of the memoir is simple -- two people set off on a three week trip, with no firm plans, and packing less than the essentials. It's also a bit uncomfortable, as these two blithely ignore what has become the norm of luggage, places to stay, and itineraries and simply let events unfold. First, meet Clara, a young woman very recently recovered from a nervous breakdown

and life crisis. Briefly joining OK Cupid, Clara meets Jeff, a smart and unconventional university professor who loves to travel with a passport, a phone, a credit card, and few hundred dollars. Jeff has taken many trips this way, but usually solo, so when he invites Clara to join him traveling to Istanbul, it's a big deal. Or perhaps not, as both Clara and Jeff are torn between their desire to be uncommitted and their instant attraction to each other. So, with only the clothes they are wearing and what they can store in their pockets, the two start their trip by traveling to Istanbul. It's difficult at first to conceive how they travel with no baggage, no places to stay, and no formal plans. However, their lack of baggage becomes freeing, you can decide where you want to go next and be ready in 10 minutes. Relying on the Couchsurfing site, Clara and Jeff find more than a bed for a night or two, but meet kindred spirits willing to open their homes, and frequently share their social lives, with complete strangers. Some days are challenging and tiring, but most are fun adventures. As the trip progresses, Clara and Jeff wonder about each other and the relationship they've found, while Clara worries about her newly found mental health.

An absolutely amazing and terrifying idea. Even when I was young I could not have contemplated such a trust in the world. Clara, the author embarks with Jeff a fairly new dating prospect to spend 3 weeks abroad with no luggage. Nothing more than the clothes they are wearing, some spare underwear, cellphones and her purse. Of course the cell phones due to international lack of compatibility are only useful on WiFi. The place they start is Istanbul. The irony does not escape me that the book I reviewed prior to this, is the 100 year walk and the author there was retracing her grandfather's steps of the Armenian genocide, in this very same location. That author felt the oppressiveness of that government and was happy to get home. This author with so little luggage was nervous due to protests happening while she was there, but did not carry the same concern. I guess the universe brings what you expect. While reading the book, the author tells of a recent brush with mental illness, one where she was paralysed with fear and could not function day to day. When I think of the amount of trust this trip required I can help but think, I want what she is taking...Wow. This is a complete flip flop. Her parents struck me as free spirits and even they were concerned. Her companion Jeff was a divorced man, that had a 5 year old daughter, a professor that lived out of his office contemplating living in a dumpster (school project). While I applaud his lack of materialism and sense of freedom, as a divorced parent myself, I don't envy his ex-wife or daughter. He wanted freedom and parenting is being someone who can be depended on. I kept wondering (despite the author's applauding his role in his daughter's life) what their take on this was. Overall the writing is magnificent.

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