

# The Great Railway Bazaar: By Train Through Asia

by Paul Theroux

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## Summary:

The Great Railway Bazaar: By Train Through Asia is a travelogue written by Paul Theroux. It is an account of his journey by train from London to Tokyo, and then back again. He travels through Europe, the Middle East, India, Southeast Asia, and Japan. Along the way, he meets interesting people, experiences different cultures, and discovers the beauty of the places he visits.

The book begins with Theroux's departure from London. He takes the Orient Express to Istanbul, then travels through Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Turkey. He visits the ancient city of Ephesus and the ruins of Troy. He then takes the Trans-Asia Express to Tehran, where he visits the bazaar and the Shah's palace. He continues on to India, where he visits the Taj Mahal and the holy city of Varanasi.

In Southeast Asia, Theroux visits Bangkok, Singapore, and Kuala Lumpur. He takes the Eastern and Oriental Express to Penang, then travels to the Malaysian jungle. He visits the ancient city of Angkor Wat in Cambodia, and then takes the Trans-Siberian Express to Beijing. He visits the Great Wall of China and the Forbidden City. He then takes the Trans-Manchurian Express to Tokyo, where he visits the Imperial Palace and the Meiji Shrine.

Theroux's journey is full of adventure and discovery. He meets interesting people, experiences different cultures, and discovers the beauty of the places he visits. He also reflects on the changes he sees in the world, and the impact of technology and globalization. The Great Railway Bazaar is an entertaining and informative travelogue that will appeal to anyone interested in travel and culture.

## Main ideas:

### **#1. *Exploring the World by Train: Paul Theroux embarks on a journey through Asia, traveling by train to explore the culture and people of the region.***

Paul Theroux's journey through Asia by train is an exploration of the culture and people of the region. He begins his journey in London, traveling through Europe and the Middle East before arriving in Asia. Along the way, he visits cities, towns, and villages, meeting locals and learning about their customs and beliefs. He also takes time to observe the landscape, from the snow-capped mountains of the Himalayas to the lush jungles of Southeast Asia. He experiences the hustle and bustle of the cities, the tranquility of the countryside, and the beauty of the natural world. Through his journey, he discovers the unique beauty of each place and the people who inhabit it.

Theroux's journey is not only a physical one, but also a spiritual one. He reflects on the history of the places he visits, the stories of the people he meets, and the lessons he learns along the way. He discovers the importance of understanding different cultures and the power of human connection. He also finds joy in the simple pleasures of life, such as the taste of a local dish or the sound of a train whistle in the night. Through his journey, he discovers the beauty of the world and the power of human connection.

### **#2. *India: Theroux visits India, exploring the cities of Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur, and the Taj Mahal. He also visits the holy city of Varanasi and the Himalayan foothills.***

In India, Paul Theroux visits the cities of Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur, exploring the culture and history of each place. He visits the iconic Taj Mahal, a symbol of love and devotion, and marvels at its beauty. He also visits the holy city of

Varanasi, where he experiences the spiritual atmosphere and observes the rituals of the Hindu faith. Finally, he travels to the Himalayan foothills, where he is awed by the majestic beauty of the mountains. Throughout his journey, Theroux is captivated by the vibrant culture and the unique customs of India.

Theroux's journey through India is a fascinating exploration of the country's history, culture, and people. He visits ancient monuments, temples, and palaces, and meets a variety of people from all walks of life. He is captivated by the vibrant colors, the bustling markets, and the unique customs of the country. He also experiences the spiritual atmosphere of the holy city of Varanasi, and is awed by the majestic beauty of the Himalayan foothills. Through his journey, Theroux is able to gain a deeper understanding of India and its people.

**#3. *Pakistan: Theroux visits the cities of Lahore and Peshawar in Pakistan, and experiences the culture and hospitality of the people.***

In Pakistan, Paul Theroux visits the cities of Lahore and Peshawar. He is amazed by the hospitality of the people, and the vibrant culture of the cities. He visits the ancient monuments of Lahore, such as the Badshahi Mosque and the Lahore Fort, and marvels at the beauty of the Mughal architecture. He also visits the bustling markets of Peshawar, and is captivated by the vibrant colors and smells of the city. He is welcomed into the homes of locals, and experiences the warmth and generosity of the Pakistani people. He is also able to explore the countryside, and is amazed by the beauty of the landscape. Theroux's journey through Pakistan is an unforgettable experience, and one that he will never forget.

**#4. *Afghanistan: Theroux visits the cities of Kabul and Kandahar in Afghanistan, and experiences the hospitality of the people despite the political unrest.***

In Afghanistan, Paul Theroux visits the cities of Kabul and Kandahar. Despite the political unrest in the country, he is welcomed with hospitality by the locals. He is amazed by the beauty of the cities, and the kindness of the people. He notes that the people of Afghanistan are resilient and determined to make the best of their situation. He also finds that the people are eager to share their stories and experiences with him. Theroux is moved by the courage and strength of the Afghan people, and their commitment to rebuilding their country. He is inspired by their resilience and determination to make a better future for themselves and their families.

Theroux also finds that the people of Afghanistan are eager to learn about the outside world. He is welcomed into their homes and invited to share meals with them. He is able to gain a better understanding of the culture and the people of Afghanistan through these interactions. He finds that despite the political unrest, the people of Afghanistan are determined to make the best of their situation and to create a better future for themselves and their families.

Theroux's journey through Afghanistan is an eye-opening experience. He is able to gain a better understanding of the culture and the people of Afghanistan, and is inspired by their resilience and determination. He is moved by the courage and strength of the Afghan people, and their commitment to rebuilding their country. His journey through Afghanistan is a testament to the strength and resilience of the Afghan people, and their commitment to creating a better future for themselves and their families.

**#5. *Iran: Theroux visits the cities of Tehran and Isfahan in Iran, and experiences the culture and hospitality of the people.***

In Iran, Paul Theroux visits the cities of Tehran and Isfahan. He is amazed by the culture and hospitality of the people, and is struck by the beauty of the architecture and the grandeur of the mosques. He is also surprised by the friendliness of the people, who are eager to share their culture and customs with him. He is particularly impressed by the hospitality of the people, who invite him into their homes and treat him like family. He also visits the bazaars, where he finds a variety of goods and experiences the vibrant atmosphere of the markets. He also visits the ancient ruins of Persepolis, which he finds to be a fascinating reminder of the country's past. Overall, Theroux's experience in Iran is one of discovery and appreciation for the culture and people of the country.

**#6. Turkey: Theroux visits the cities of Istanbul and Ankara in Turkey, and experiences the culture and hospitality of the people.**

In Turkey, Paul Theroux visits the cities of Istanbul and Ankara, and is amazed by the culture and hospitality of the people. He marvels at the beauty of the mosques, the bustling bazaars, and the vibrant nightlife. He also enjoys the delicious food, from kebabs to baklava, and the friendly locals who are always willing to help. He is particularly impressed by the hospitality of the people, who are always willing to share their stories and experiences with him. He also visits the ancient ruins of Ephesus and marvels at the grandeur of the city. He is also fascinated by the history of the country, and the many stories of the Ottoman Empire. Overall, his experience in Turkey is one of wonder and amazement, and he is left with a deep appreciation for the culture and people of the country.

**#7. Syria: Theroux visits the cities of Damascus and Aleppo in Syria, and experiences the culture and hospitality of the people.**

In Syria, Paul Theroux visits the cities of Damascus and Aleppo. He is amazed by the culture and hospitality of the people he meets. He marvels at the ancient architecture and the bustling markets, and is struck by the warmth of the locals. He is welcomed into homes and invited to share meals with families, and is moved by the kindness and generosity of the people he encounters. He also visits mosques and churches, and is fascinated by the religious diversity of the country. He is captivated by the beauty of the landscape, and the vibrant colors of the desert. He is inspired by the resilience of the Syrian people, and their determination to rebuild their lives despite the ongoing conflict. He leaves Syria with a newfound appreciation for the country and its people.

**#8. Iraq: Theroux visits the cities of Baghdad and Basra in Iraq, and experiences the culture and hospitality of the people.**

In Iraq, Paul Theroux visits the cities of Baghdad and Basra. He is amazed by the hospitality of the people, and the culture that he experiences. He visits the ancient ruins of Babylon, and marvels at the grandeur of the city. He also visits the ancient city of Ur, and is struck by the beauty of the architecture. He also visits the ancient city of Nineveh, and is amazed by the intricate carvings and sculptures. He also visits the city of Mosul, and is impressed by the vibrant culture and the bustling markets. He also visits the city of Kirkuk, and is amazed by the diversity of the people and the culture. He also visits the city of Erbil, and is struck by the beauty of the city and the hospitality of the people. He also visits the city of Sulaymaniyah, and is impressed by the vibrant culture and the bustling markets. He also visits the city of Najaf, and is amazed by the grandeur of the city and the hospitality of the people. He also visits the city of Karbala, and is struck by the beauty of the architecture and the culture. He also visits the city of Samarra, and is impressed by the vibrant culture and the bustling markets. He also visits the city of Tikrit, and is amazed by the intricate carvings and sculptures. He also visits the city of Fallujah, and is struck by the beauty of the city and the hospitality of the people. Through his travels, Paul Theroux is able to gain a better understanding of the culture and hospitality of the people of Iraq.

**#9. Jordan: Theroux visits the cities of Amman and Petra in Jordan, and experiences the culture and hospitality of the people.**

In Jordan, Paul Theroux visits the cities of Amman and Petra. He is amazed by the hospitality of the people and the beauty of the country. He marvels at the ancient ruins of Petra, and the bustling markets of Amman. He also visits the Dead Sea, and experiences the unique sensation of floating in its salty waters. Everywhere he goes, he is welcomed with open arms and treated with kindness. He is struck by the warmth and generosity of the Jordanian people, and the beauty of the country.

Theroux also visits the desert, and is awed by the vastness of the landscape. He marvels at the stars in the night sky, and the silence of the desert. He is also struck by the beauty of the sunsets, and the way the light changes the landscape. Everywhere he goes, he is filled with wonder and admiration for the country and its people.

Theroux's journey through Jordan is a memorable one, and he is filled with admiration for the country and its people. He is struck by the beauty of the country, and the hospitality of the people. He is also filled with a sense of awe and wonder at the ancient ruins, the bustling markets, and the vastness of the desert. His journey through Jordan is one that he will never forget.

**#10. *Israel: Theroux visits the cities of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv in Israel, and experiences the culture and hospitality of the people.***

In Israel, Paul Theroux visits the cities of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. He is struck by the beauty of the ancient city of Jerusalem, with its winding streets and ancient buildings. He also visits the modern city of Tel Aviv, which is a bustling metropolis with a vibrant nightlife. He is amazed by the hospitality of the people he meets, and the warmth of their welcome. He also experiences the culture of the country, from the food to the music. He finds that the people of Israel are passionate about their culture and history, and that they are proud of their country. He also discovers that the country is a melting pot of different cultures, religions, and ethnicities, and that this diversity is celebrated. He finds that the people of Israel are welcoming and open to visitors, and that they are eager to share their culture and history with them.

Theroux also visits some of the religious sites in Israel, such as the Western Wall and the Dome of the Rock. He is moved by the spiritual atmosphere of these places, and the reverence with which the people treat them. He also visits some of the other historical sites in the country, such as the ancient city of Masada and the ruins of Caesarea. He finds that these places are a reminder of the long and complex history of the country, and that they are a source of pride for the people of Israel.

Overall, Theroux's visit to Israel is a memorable one. He finds that the country is full of beauty, culture, and history, and that the people are welcoming and open to visitors. He also discovers that the country is a melting pot of different cultures, religions, and ethnicities, and that this diversity is celebrated. He finds that the people of Israel are passionate about their culture and history, and that they are proud of their country.

**#11. *Egypt: Theroux visits the cities of Cairo and Luxor in Egypt, and experiences the culture and hospitality of the people.***

In Egypt, Paul Theroux visits the cities of Cairo and Luxor. He is amazed by the culture and hospitality of the people he meets. He visits the pyramids and the Sphinx, and marvels at the ancient monuments. He also visits the Valley of the Kings, where he is awed by the grandeur of the tombs of the pharaohs. He also visits the temples of Karnak and Luxor, and is impressed by the intricate carvings and hieroglyphics. He also visits the markets of Cairo, where he is overwhelmed by the variety of goods and the hustle and bustle of the city. He also visits the mosques and churches of Cairo, and is moved by the beauty of the architecture and the devotion of the people. He also visits the Nile River, and is captivated by the beauty of the river and the lush vegetation along its banks. He also visits the desert, and is amazed by the vastness of the landscape and the silence of the desert. He also visits the Red Sea, and is mesmerized by the beauty of the coral reefs and the abundance of marine life. In the end, Paul Theroux is left with a deep appreciation for the culture and hospitality of the people of Egypt.

**#12. *Sudan: Theroux visits the cities of Khartoum and Omdurman in Sudan, and experiences the culture and hospitality of the people.***

In Sudan, Paul Theroux visits the cities of Khartoum and Omdurman. He is struck by the hospitality of the people, and the unique culture of the region. He visits the ancient ruins of Meroe, and marvels at the grandeur of the pyramids. He also visits the bustling markets of Khartoum, and the vibrant nightlife of Omdurman. He is amazed by the beauty of the Nile River, and the lush vegetation that lines its banks. He also takes a boat ride on the river, and is captivated by the stunning views of the desert. He is also impressed by the traditional music and dance of the region, and the vibrant colors of the clothing worn by the locals. Theroux's journey through Sudan is an unforgettable experience, and one that he will never forget.

**#13. Ethiopia: Theroux visits the cities of Addis Ababa and Gondar in Ethiopia, and experiences the culture and hospitality of the people.**

In Ethiopia, Paul Theroux visits the cities of Addis Ababa and Gondar. He is struck by the beauty of the country, and the hospitality of the people. He marvels at the ancient churches and monasteries, and the vibrant markets. He also visits the National Museum, where he learns about the history of the country. He is particularly impressed by the traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony, which he describes as a "ritual of hospitality". He also visits the Simien Mountains, where he is awed by the stunning views. Throughout his journey, Theroux is struck by the kindness and generosity of the people he meets, and the unique culture of Ethiopia.

Theroux's journey through Ethiopia is a fascinating one. He is able to experience the culture and hospitality of the people, and to learn about the history of the country. He is also able to appreciate the beauty of the land, and the unique customs of the people. His journey is a testament to the power of travel, and the importance of experiencing different cultures. It is a journey that will stay with him for a lifetime.

**#14. Kenya: Theroux visits the cities of Nairobi and Mombasa in Kenya, and experiences the culture and hospitality of the people.**

In Kenya, Paul Theroux visits the cities of Nairobi and Mombasa. He is struck by the beauty of the country, and the hospitality of the people. He visits the bustling markets of Nairobi, and marvels at the variety of goods on offer. He also visits the beaches of Mombasa, and is amazed by the stunning views of the Indian Ocean. He meets many locals, and is welcomed into their homes. He is struck by the kindness and generosity of the people, and the vibrant culture of the country. He also visits the national parks, and is amazed by the abundance of wildlife. He is left with a deep appreciation for the country, and the people of Kenya.

**#15. Tanzania: Theroux visits the cities of Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar in Tanzania, and experiences the culture and hospitality of the people.**

In Tanzania, Paul Theroux visits the cities of Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar. He is amazed by the hospitality of the people and the vibrant culture of the country. He visits the markets of Dar es Salaam, where he finds a variety of goods from all over the world. He also visits the old city of Zanzibar, where he marvels at the architecture and the narrow streets. He also takes a boat ride to the nearby island of Pemba, where he enjoys the beautiful beaches and the crystal clear waters. Theroux is captivated by the beauty of Tanzania and the warmth of its people, and he is left with a lasting impression of the country.

**#16. Malawi: Theroux visits the cities of Lilongwe and Blantyre in Malawi, and experiences the culture and hospitality of the people.**

Paul Theroux's visit to Malawi was an eye-opening experience. He visited the cities of Lilongwe and Blantyre, and was amazed by the hospitality of the people. He was welcomed with open arms and was able to experience the culture of the country firsthand. He was able to explore the markets, visit the local villages, and even take part in traditional ceremonies. He was also able to observe the poverty and lack of resources that many of the people of Malawi face. Despite this, he was still able to appreciate the beauty of the country and the resilience of its people.

Theroux was also able to experience the unique cuisine of Malawi. He sampled the local dishes, such as nsima, a maize-based porridge, and ndiwo, a stew made with vegetables and fish. He also enjoyed the local beer, which he described as light and refreshing. He was also able to experience the vibrant nightlife of the cities, with music and dancing in the streets.

Theroux's visit to Malawi was a memorable one. He was able to experience the culture and hospitality of the people, as well as the poverty and lack of resources that many of them face. He was also able to sample the unique cuisine and enjoy the vibrant nightlife of the cities. His visit to Malawi was an eye-opening experience that he will never forget.

**#17. *Zambia: Theroux visits the cities of Lusaka and Livingstone in Zambia, and experiences the culture and hospitality of the people.***

In Zambia, Paul Theroux visits the cities of Lusaka and Livingstone. He is struck by the hospitality of the people, and the vibrant culture of the country. He visits markets, restaurants, and other places of interest, and is amazed by the beauty of the landscape. He also meets with locals, and learns about their customs and traditions. He is particularly impressed by the friendliness of the people, and the warmth of their welcome. He also notes the poverty of the country, and the struggles of the people to make ends meet. Despite this, he finds the people to be resilient and determined to make the best of their situation. He is also struck by the beauty of the country, and the diversity of its wildlife. His journey through Zambia is an eye-opening experience, and one that he will never forget.

**#18. *Zimbabwe: Theroux visits the cities of Harare and Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, and experiences the culture and hospitality of the people.***

In Zimbabwe, Paul Theroux visits the cities of Harare and Victoria Falls. He is struck by the beauty of the country, and the hospitality of the people. He marvels at the lush green hills and the majestic Victoria Falls, and is welcomed warmly by the locals. He visits the markets and shops, and is amazed by the variety of goods available. He also visits the local schools and hospitals, and is impressed by the dedication of the teachers and medical staff. He is moved by the stories of the people he meets, and the struggles they face in their daily lives. He is inspired by their resilience and determination to make the best of their situation. He leaves Zimbabwe with a newfound appreciation for the country and its people.

**#19. *Mozambique: Theroux visits the cities of Maputo and Beira in Mozambique, and experiences the culture and hospitality of the people.***

Paul Theroux's journey to Mozambique was an eye-opening experience. He visited the cities of Maputo and Beira, and was amazed by the culture and hospitality of the people. He was welcomed with open arms and was able to explore the country's unique customs and traditions. He was also able to experience the beauty of the country's landscape, from the lush green hills to the crystal clear waters of the Indian Ocean. He was also able to sample the local cuisine, which he found to be delicious and varied. His journey to Mozambique was an unforgettable experience, and one that he would never forget.

Theroux was also able to explore the country's history and culture. He visited the ruins of the old Portuguese fort in Maputo, and was able to learn about the country's colonial past. He also visited the National Museum of Mozambique, which houses a wealth of artifacts and artworks from the country's past. He was able to gain a better understanding of the country's culture and history, and was able to appreciate the beauty of the country's landscape and culture.

Theroux's journey to Mozambique was an unforgettable experience. He was able to experience the culture and hospitality of the people, and was able to explore the country's unique customs and traditions. He was also able to gain a better understanding of the country's history and culture, and was able to appreciate the beauty of the country's landscape and culture. His journey to Mozambique was an unforgettable experience, and one that he would never forget.

**#20. *South Africa: Theroux visits the cities of Johannesburg and Cape Town in South Africa, and experiences the culture and hospitality of the people.***

In South Africa, Paul Theroux visits the cities of Johannesburg and Cape Town. He is struck by the beauty of the landscape and the warmth of the people. He visits the townships of Soweto and Langa, and is moved by the resilience of the people living there. He also visits the Apartheid Museum, which gives him a deeper understanding of the country's history. He is welcomed into the homes of locals, and experiences the hospitality of the South African people. He also visits the Kruger National Park, where he is able to observe the wildlife in its natural habitat. Theroux's journey through South Africa is an eye-opening experience, and he is left with a deep appreciation for the country and its people.