

“Follow in the footsteps of John Muir and develop your insights into nature
and human nature; let *Walking Distance* be your guide.”

ALLISON CHIN, President, Sierra Club

ROBERT AND MARTHA MANNING

WALKING DISTANCE

Extraordinary Hikes for Ordinary People

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The Camino de Santiago traverses some of the most beautiful pastoral landscapes in Europe.

WALKING DISTANCE

Extraordinary Hikes for Ordinary People

Robert and Martha Manning

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Front cover photograph by Robert Manning (Colorado Trail)

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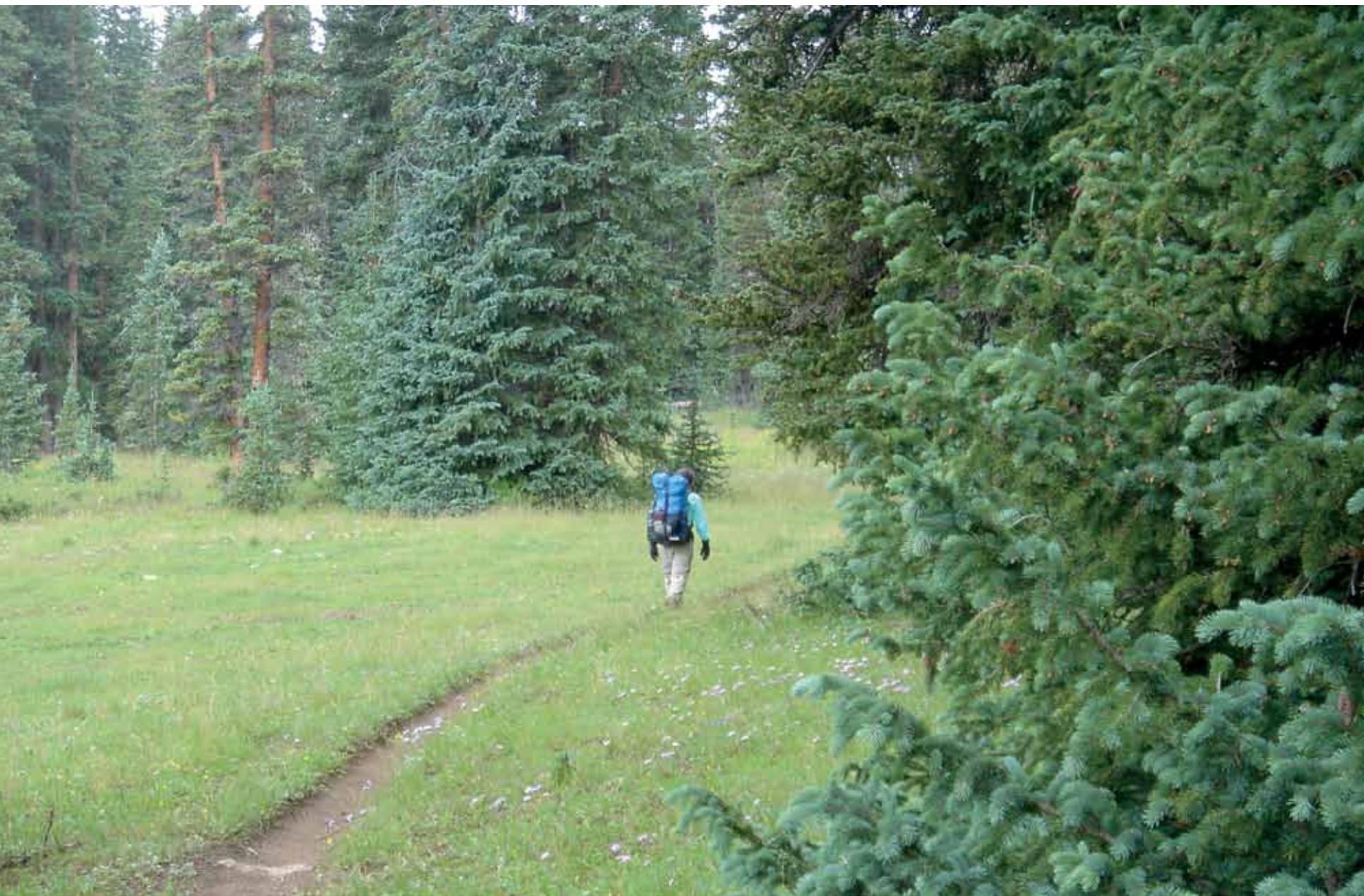
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To those who manage and maintain the trails we walk—thanks for all your good work.



The nineteenth-century prophets of Romanticism sent legions of walkers out of their gardens and into the wider and wilder landscape where they searched for beauty and solitude. (Colorado Trail)

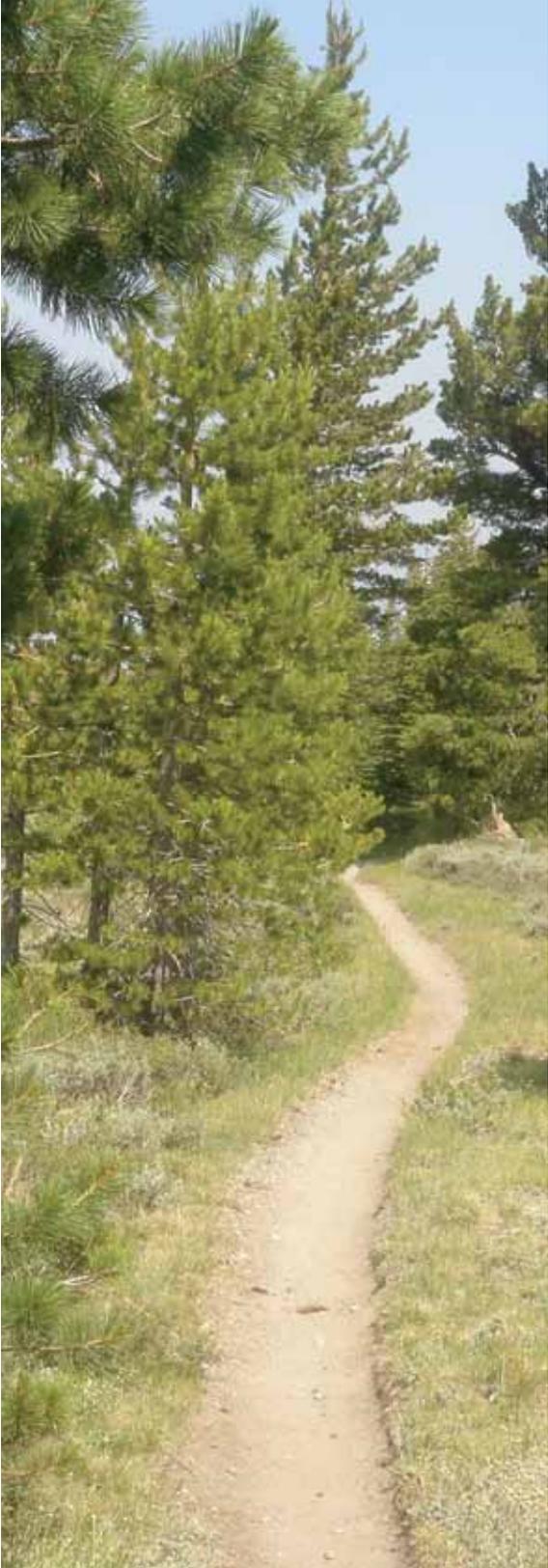


***Now shall I walk
Or shall I ride?***

***"Ride," Pleasure said:
"Walk," Joy replied***

—W. H. Davis

***Many long-distance trails offer walkers close inspection of archaeological sites not otherwise accessible.
(Inca Trail)***

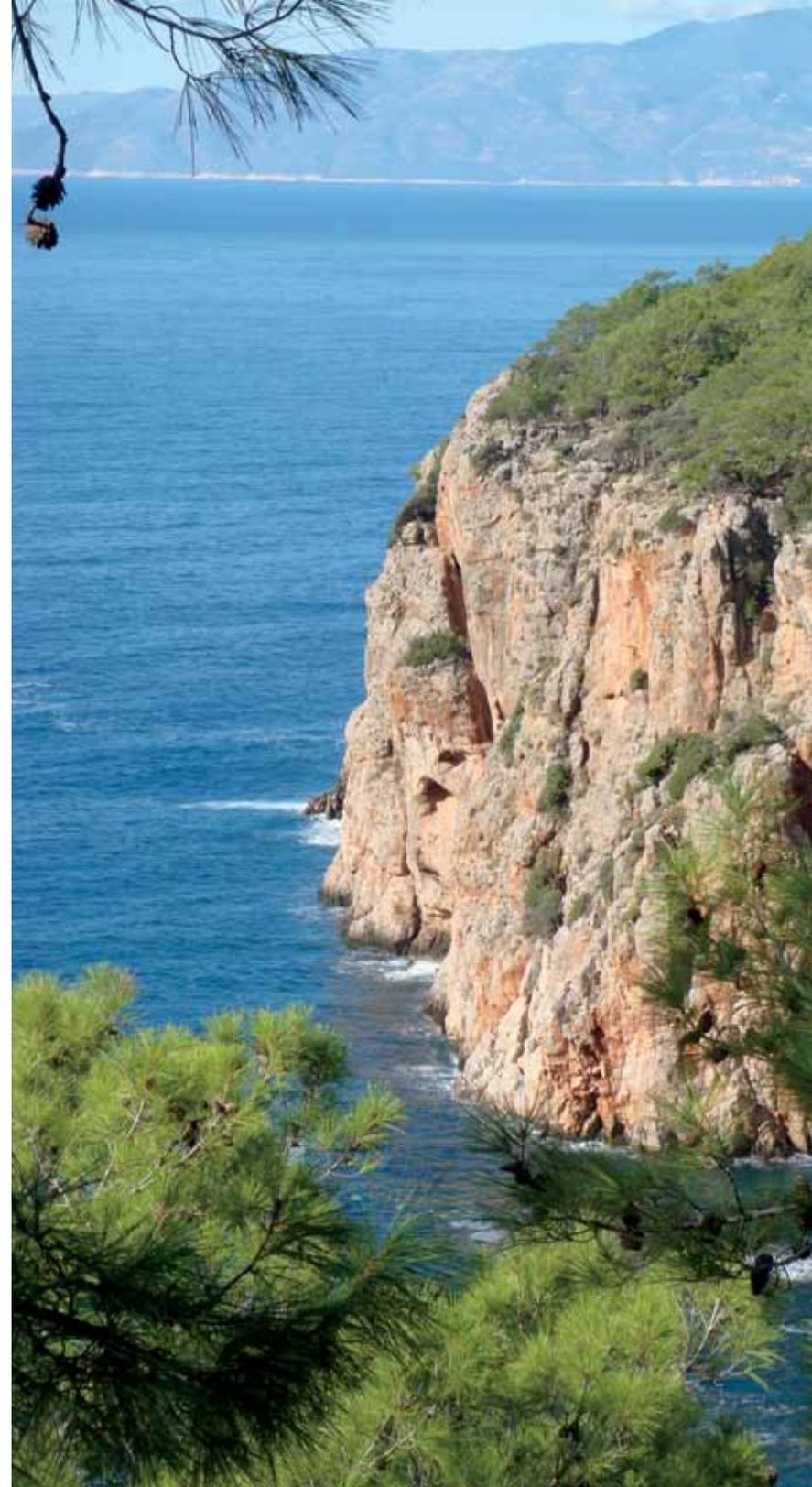


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Coastal walks feature the dynamic and dramatic interface between land and sea. (Lycian Way)



Introduction

About ten years ago we decided to walk the aptly named Long Trail in our home state of Vermont. This was the first long-distance trail in America, running 273 miles along the spine of our beloved Green Mountains from Massachusetts to the Canadian border. Many small country roads cross the trail, and this allowed us to walk it in sections, often a day or two at a time, as schedules and weather permitted. The trail took us to places that reminded us of why we're so fortunate to live in Vermont and to portions of the state we'd never visited. We looked forward to every opportunity to get back on the trail, and we used the map in our guidebook to keep track of our progress by coloring in the sections we'd just completed. It was immensely satisfying to color in that last section; we'd finished what we set out to do—a long and sometimes challenging walk the length of our state. We'd enjoyed the adventure of walking one of the world's great long-distance trails and now had a much richer sense of the place we live, one that comes only with the pace and intimacy of walking. But we missed our weekends on the trail and started looking for other walks ...

Since then, walking has played an increasingly important part in our lives. Like most people, we walk every day, but now we try to be more deliberate about it, walking to work and back, around our neighborhood, to the market. Walking is so simple for most people, but paradoxically it can also be profound: the evolution and mechanics of walking are unique parts of what make us human, walking is infused in our history and culture, and walking is such a personal and often joyful way to know the world.

Our walking over the last ten years has taken us to many places to hike the world's great long-distance trails. For the purposes of this book, our definition of a long-distance trail is a named trail that can be walked in a few days to a few weeks. While the notion of a long-distance trail might

sound intimidating, it shouldn't. Our purpose in preparing this book is to emphasize the accessibility of walking in general and walking the trails we describe in particular. As the subtitle of our book suggests, these are extraordinary hikes for ordinary people. The trails we describe in this book are well marked and managed. Many offer commercial services, if wanted, including accommodations, rides to and from trailheads, even guides and luggage transfer. These trails can be walked, in their entirety or in sections, by *ordinary* people like us—and you.

“The sum of the whole is this: walk and be happy; walk and be healthy. The best way to lengthen out our days is to walk steadily and with a purpose.”

—Charles Dickens

If you haven't tried long-distance walking, we hope this book will encourage you to consider it. And if you're already a confirmed walker, we hope the book will stimulate your thinking about where to walk. The first part of the book includes three chapters that address why, how, and where to walk; we hope this will help prepare you for your walking adventures. The second part of the book—its heart—describes our favorite walks on six continents. These are walks through the great cultural landscapes of the world where nature and culture are intertwined in harmonious, pleasing, and sustainable ways. We've made a deliberate effort to offer a diversity of choices in terms of attractions, geography, and length, and the presence, type, and level of commercial services. We've been purposeful in not including any of world's super-long-distance trails such as the 2,200-mile Appalachian Trail, as walking these trails is not feasible for most (ordinary) people. However several of the trails we include are parts of these very long-distance trails; for example, the southern third



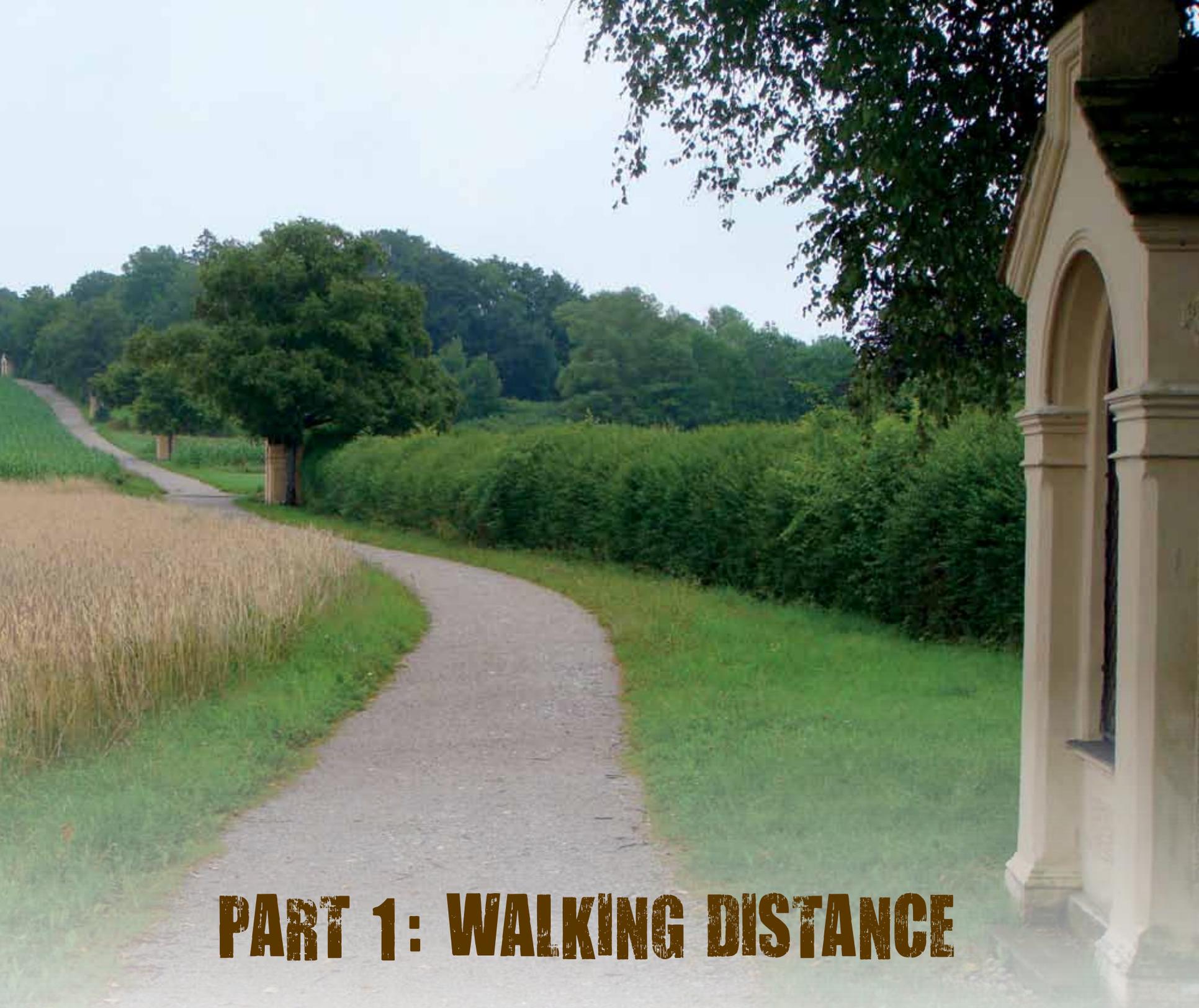
*Local foods help fuel walkers along many long-distance trails.
(Cape Winelands Walk)*

of the Long Trail is part of the Appalachian Trail (one of the best parts in our opinion!).

Long-distance walking is good for you and good for the earth. It promotes personal health and is one of the most basic and sustainable forms of recreation. In our increasingly complex and frantic world, walking is a way to simplify our lives. Walking guru Colin Fletcher wrote that walking is the yin that can complement the more hectic yang of our everyday lives. Walking is also adventurous; one is never quite sure what's around the next bend in the trail and every day brings new and sometimes unexpected experiences. We sense a growing yearning among many people for more "authentic" experiences and walking allows more intimate and genuine contact with local places and people. Walking vacations can also help protect local places through their economic impact, especially when using local services such as B&Bs, small inns, and refuges and eating local foods. But most of all, walking is a joyful celebration of life and the diverse, beautiful, and curious world in which we live.

We hope we'll cross paths with you soon.

Bob and Martha Manning
Burlington, Vermont

A scenic landscape featuring a winding gravel path that curves through a lush green field. To the left, there is a field of tall, golden-brown grasses. A large, leafy tree stands prominently in the middle ground. In the background, a dense forest covers a hillside under a bright, overcast sky. On the right side of the frame, a portion of a light-colored stone building with an arched opening is visible. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

PART 1: WALKING DISTANCE



The long-distance trails described in this book are well-marked and managed. (Cotswold Way)

“Walking distance” is a double entendre: it usually means that places are close enough to easily be walked, but it can also suggest walking a long way. We use it both ways in this book. We want to encourage readers to walk from place to place along the world’s great long-distance trails, appreciating the best that nature and culture have to offer, and walking a relatively long way in the process. But why would one walk rather than ride? How should one prepare for long-distance walking? And where would one walk? The three chapters comprising Part 1 of this book attempt to answer these questions. They set the stage for Part 2, the heart of the book, which describes thirty of the world’s great long-distance trails.

Previous page: Churches and other historic buildings are common along many long-distance trails. (King Ludwig’s Way)

Why Walk?

Why walk, indeed? History can be read as a millennia-long struggle to free ourselves from the need to walk. Freedom from walking has always been highly coveted, coming first to the rich and powerful; slaves carried their masters, knights rode horses, the rich owned carriages, and the upper and now middle classes drive cars. Today, only the less fortunate are forced to walk. Most people prefer to sit and ride rather than walk, or so it's been.

But things are changing, as some people are now *choosing* to walk instead of ride, and this is most pronounced in leisure time as a form of recreation, and maybe something even more substantive. The choice to walk is in response to an apparent yearning to be more active and healthy, to do things in a more sustainable way, and to be more directly in touch with the world around us. The deliberate pace of walking allows us to more fully sense the world, to see its richness of detail, to touch, hear, smell, and even taste it. Like the more general "greening" of leisure, recreation, and travel, often called "ecotourism," the choice to walk is based on principles such as appreciation of natural and cultural diversity; direct and authentic contact with people and the places they live; a need to slow our everyday, hectic lives; protection of the distinctive places that make our world so interesting; and investment in these places through direct economic benefits.

Walking the great natural and cultural landscapes of the world is an ideal way to pursue all these objectives. Walking's deliberate, human-scale pace encourages a deep understanding and appreciation of nature and culture, and this ultimately leads to preservation of special places. Walking contributes to personal health and fitness and has relatively little environmental or social impact. The small scale of walking makes use of facilities and services provided by local people, and resulting economic benefits flow directly to these communities and places. And walking is one of the most democratic and accessible recreation activities, demanding no extraordinary athletic ability, requiring relatively little cost, and it's appropriate for nearly all ages.

But to more fully appreciate walking, let's take a brief stroll through history ...

Why Walk?



Pilgrimages represent one of the oldest forms of long-distance walking. (Camino de Santiago)



All parts of the world have great cultural landscapes where people and nature have been intertwined in distinctive, harmonious, enduring, and sustainable ways, and many of these regions can be walked on safe, well-marked, and managed trails. (Cinque Terre)

Walking Through History

The history of walking is a paradox; walking is integral to human development, but the practice of walking has declined precipitously. In important ways, walking is one of the things that makes us human. While scientists debate the origins of walking, it's generally agreed that walking on two feet or "bipedalism" emerged several million years ago as an evolutionary adaptation. There is more consensus on its implications. In her book *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*, Rebecca Solnit writes that "[t]he only given is that upright walking is the first hallmark of what became humanity" and "[w]hatever its causes, it caused much more." It freed what are now our arms, allowing humans to evolve into the ultimate tool maker, and our brains responded accordingly. Science writer John Noble Wilford writes, "Anthropologists and evolutionary biologists are now agreed that upright posture and two-legged walking—bipedality—was the crucial and probably the first major adaptation associated with the divergence of human lineage from a common ancestor with the African apes." And renowned paleoanthropologist Mary Leakey wrote:

One cannot overemphasize the role of bipedalism in hominoid development. It stands as perhaps the salient point that differentiates the forbears of man from other primates. This unique ability freed the hands for myriad possibilities—carrying, tool-making, intricate manipulation. From this single development, in fact, stems all modern technology. Somewhat oversimplified, the formula holds that this new freedom of forelimbs posed a challenge. The brain expanded to meet it. And mankind was formed.

To reject walking is to turn our backs on our evolutionary history and character. But just as importantly, walking is a miracle—a biological and mechanical marvel and an aesthetic triumph. Of course, most of us take walking for granted; it's simple, even "pedestrian." But in reality, it's a symphony between our highly developed nervous, skeletal, and

muscular systems; the balance and strength to hold ourselves upright on our two relatively small feet while moving one foot in front of the other for miles on end, over all sorts of terrain, without falling, and doing all this with little conscious thought. The aesthetics of walking were widely appreciated for the first time with publication in the 1870s of Eadweard Muybridge's photographic "motion studies," which used a battery of linked cameras to record the act of walking. Geoff Nicholson writes in his book *The Lost Art of Walking* that "for me the walking pictures reveal the magical nature of something we take so much for granted." We should appreciate and celebrate this gift by taking a daily walk.

While walking is thought to have contributed to development of the brain, there is no question that it has stimulated our thinking across recorded history. Aristotle is an early example, walking as he thought and taught in the Lyceum of ancient Athens. Other philosophers followed suit in what is known as the Peripatetic School (peripatetic meaning "one who walks"). More recent examples include the philosophers, poets, and writers of the Romantic Movement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau set the stage for Romanticism by questioning western society's march toward increasing industrialization and urbanism. Joseph Amato, in his book *On Foot: A History of Walking*, calls Rousseau "the father of romantic pedestrianism." Rousseau's principal books, *The Confessions* and *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, encouraged readers to return to nature and simplicity and were informed by his own long walks. He wrote that "[t]here is something about walking that stimulates and enlivens my thoughts" and "I can only meditate when I'm walking ... When I stop I cease to think; my mind works only with my legs."

Other great walker-writers of the Romantic period include William Wordsworth, Henry David Thoreau, and John Muir. Wordsworth walked extensively in England, particularly in the Lake District. His colleague Samuel Coleridge estimates that Wordsworth walked 180,000 miles over his adult life, often accompanied by his sister, Dorothy. Wordsworth had the remarkable ability to develop insights and compose his poetry

while he walked. Author Christopher Morley wrote, "I always think of him as one of the first to employ his legs as an instrument of philosophy." It's reputed that when a traveler asked to see Wordsworth's study at Dove Cottage, his home in the Lake District, his housekeeper replied, "Here is his library, but his study is out of doors."

"If you are seeking creative ideas, go out walking. Angels whisper to a man when he goes for a walk."

—Raymond Inmon

Thoreau took up the Romantic mantle in America, walking extensively throughout New England and more intensively around his home in Concord, Massachusetts, and his retreat at Walden Pond. Eloquent (but often cranky), he advanced his transcendental philosophy, urging Americans to preserve remaining pockets of nature and to walk in the landscape to find manifestations of god and higher truths. His essay *Walking* is his classic statement, in which he wrote, "I think I cannot preserve my health and spirits, unless I spend four hours a day at least,—and it is commonly more than that,—sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields, absolutely free from all worldly engagements." And in his sometimes arrogant but endearing way he wrote that "I have met but one or two persons in the course of my life who understood the art of Walking, that is, of taking walks,—who had a genius, so to speak, for *sauntering*."

John Muir carried the Romantic tradition westward, walking a thousand miles from Indiana to the Gulf of Mexico, then walking extensively in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California throughout much of his adult life. His walks offered him deep insights into human relationships with the natural world, and he used walking as a metaphor near the end of his life when he wrote that "I only went out for a walk, and finally concluded to stay out until sundown: for going out, I found, was really going in."

“... an unwalked city is a dead city; arguably it is no city at all.”

—Jane Jacobs

The rich set of ideas associated with walking, along with the very act of walking itself, have advanced an array of political causes. For example, the Romantic philosophy of Rousseau suggested an inherent value in the individual and this in turn offered a powerful argument against the tyranny of a wealthy minority. These ideas helped inspire the Women’s March on Versailles in 1789 to protest the scarcity and price of bread, and this was an important precursor of the subsequent French Revolution. Other prominent examples include Mohandas Gandhi’s 200-mile Salt March in 1930 (protesting British taxes), Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s 51-mile march in 1965 from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, to protest unjust voting laws (this route is now memorialized as the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights Trail), and Cesar Chavez’s 340-mile March for Justice in 1966 in California to protest treatment of farmworkers. It’s no coincidence that the autobiographies of King and Nelson Mandela are titled *Stride to Freedom* and *Long Walk to Freedom*, respectively. The marches noted above are a few of many over a long history of protests, demonstrations, and parades with strong political agendas: peace, civil rights, cultural pride, and much more. There have even been walks to protect walking as when several hundred people staged a mass trespass in 1932 on Kinder Scout in the Peak District of England, ultimately leading to legislation to assure the historic “right to roam.” Joseph Amato suggests that walking in this way adds important elements of “earnestness,” “solemnity,” and “humility” that help to advance political causes, and that walking is thus “a form of public discourse,” while Rebecca Solnit says that “walking becomes testifying.”

One of the political causes closest to many walkers is conservation. The prophets of Romanticism sent legions of walkers out of their gardens and into the wider and wilder landscape, where they searched for beauty and solitude. In this way, walking evolved into an attraction, not just a

means to an end. Of course, this meant that walkers needed wild places to walk in. Walkers banded together in what have become powerful social forces, such as the Scottish Rights of Way Society (founded in 1845), the Commons Preservation Society (founded in England in 1865), the Appalachian Mountain Club (founded in America in 1876), the Sierra Club (founded in America in 1892), Wandervogel (founded in Germany in 1896), and the Ramblers’ Association (founded in England in 1935, now known simply as Ramblers). These organizations have been instrumental in environmental conservation and preservation, and organize trips for millions of walkers each year.

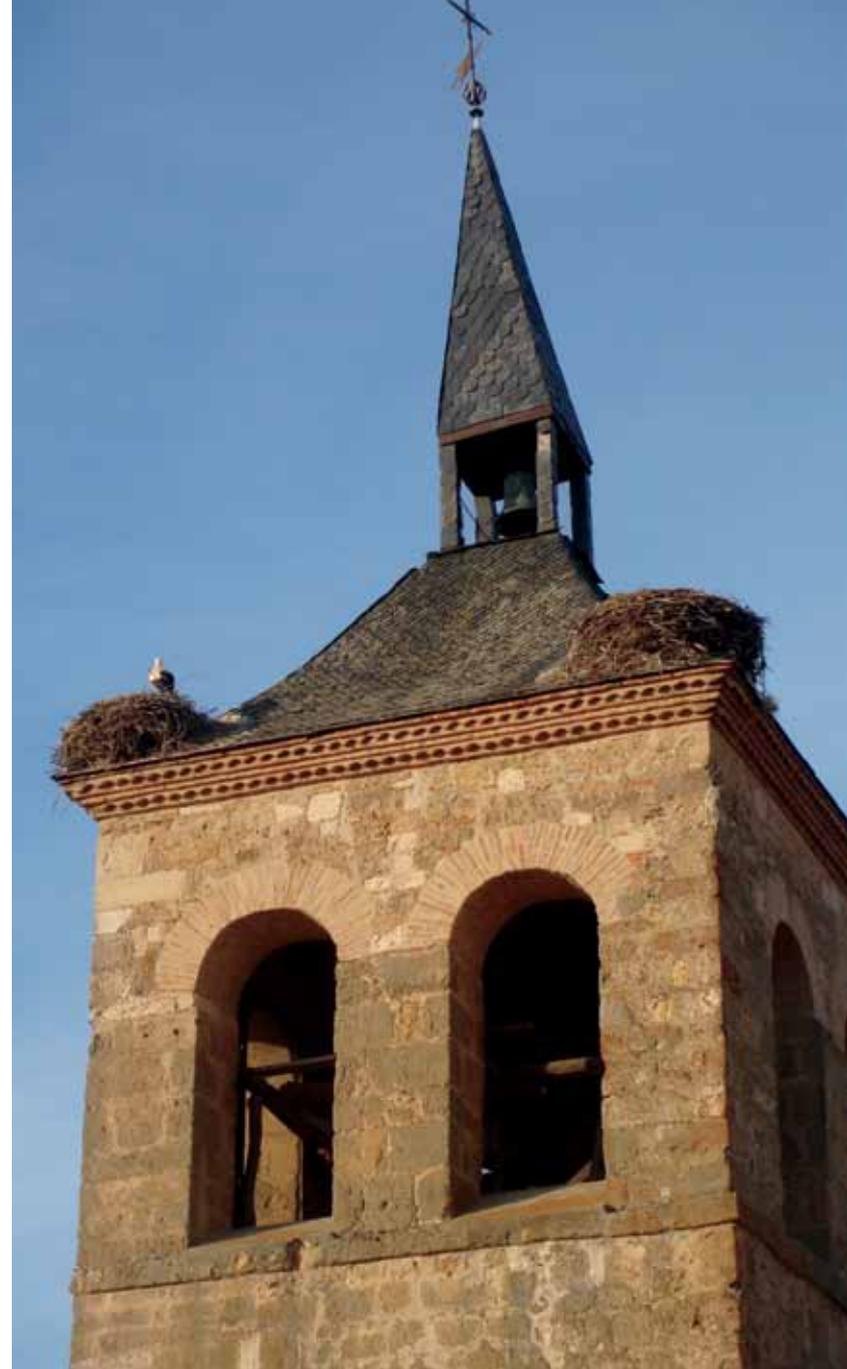
Walking and conservation have a parallel track in cities as well as in wilderness. (In fact, it’s not uncommon to read about urban areas as wilderness of a different kind.) Walking in cities also appeals to those with a sense of adventure. In Paris, it was the flaneur or bohemian who famously explored the city’s nooks and crannies and, in the words of Walter Benjamin, went “botanizing on the asphalt” in the nineteenth century. But Charles Dickens may have been the ultimate urban walker, logging as many as 20 miles a day in his native London, giving him welcome respite from his writing desk and providing his writing with observations of the often grim details of city life. The golden age of city parks in America—such as New York’s Central Park, Philadelphia’s Fairmont Park, and San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park—occurred during the same period as the Conservation Movement, and with similar causes and consequences: residents of densely populated cities demanded open space and safe, clean places to walk, and this led to development and conservation of many of the world’s great urban parks.

Walking also has a strong spiritual dimension that is most evident in the pilgrimage. Pilgrims have been walking for centuries to holy sites around the world to seek spiritual guidance, to be healed, as a form of penance, or to fulfill religious obligations. The oldest and largest pilgrimage is the Hajj; all Muslims who are physically able and can afford to do so must travel to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, to participate in the Hajj at least once in their lifetime. Two-to-three million pilgrims annually

participate in the Hajj. It's thought the Hajj dates to the time of Abraham, around 2000 BC. Most pilgrims join others in large groups on their way to Mecca, and once there walk counter-clockwise seven times around the Kaaba, the holy building that Muslims face during prayer. Christian pilgrimages to Rome, Jerusalem, Santiago, and other holy sites began in medieval times. Today, many of these pilgrimages are walked for cultural as well as religious reasons. It's thought that mazes and labyrinths may have a spiritual origin and they are first mentioned in Greek mythology. Labyrinths are condensed forms of the Christian pilgrimage; they are often found in churches or churchyards. The labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral in France may be the oldest of this type, dating from the third century. Geoff Nicholson notes that there are currently a number of labyrinths in American prisons designed to instill peace and calm in those who choose to walk them.

The Fall and Rise of Walking

Despite the significance of walking in history, it's suffered a steep decline over the last hundred years in response to the revolution in transportation. While all forms of mechanized transportation have allowed increasing numbers of people to ride rather than walk—a choice most people have exercised when presented the option—it's the car that relegated walking to the back seat. Most people drive back and forth to work, to the store, running errands; most children take the bus or are driven to school, socializing them to mechanized transportation. In the process, we've transformed much of the world to accommodate the driver—and at a cost to the walker. City streets are straightened and widened for more and faster traffic, making walking difficult, unpleasant, and often dangerous. And vast suburbs have been developed on a car rather than human scale: distances from home to work and shopping are beyond the reasonable range of walkers and there are often no sidewalks. American historian Lewis Mumford wrote that the car is responsible for “the end of the pedestrian” and that “[i]n America we have pushed the elimination of the pedestrian to its ultimate conclusion—the drive-in market, the drive-in movie theater, and the drive-in bank.” Even vacations are often spent driving for pleasure. Offices and public buildings also discourage walking as most are equipped with elevators,



Long-distance trails often offer opportunities to observe iconic wildlife such as storks nesting in church steeples along the Camino de Santiago.



Mountain refuges offer walkers camaraderie and five-star views. (Alta Via 1)

escalators, and other “people movers.” Even the modern home with en suite bathrooms and other conveniences is designed to reduce walking; for example, multiple bathrooms reduce trips throughout the house.

The decline of walking has caused considerable angst among people who choose to walk (or who would like to have that choice). Rebecca Solnit suggests taking an ecological approach by considering walking an “indicator species for various kinds of freedoms and pleasures: free time, free and alluring space, and unhindered bodies.” In this context, walking might be considered “endangered.” She argues that modern transportation and technology lead us to transcend space and time, alienating us from the material world, and leaving us “disembodied.” “It is the unaugmented body that is rare now,” she writes, “and that body has begun to atrophy as both a muscular and a sensory organ.” Joseph Amato suggests that the car has altered our relationship with the world, making the walker “feel like a trespasser on the earth,” and that

in the process it has “transformed ... human senses of space, time, and freedom.” Social critic Marshall McLuhan warned us against allowing technology to rule our lives, observing that cars have transformed cities into places where traditional walking patterns now constitute illegal “jaywalking.” In science fiction writer Ray Bradbury’s short story “The Pedestrian,” the protagonist is roused by the cops because he’s found to be walking. Sociologist Jean Baudrillard observed, “As soon as you start walking in Los Angeles you are a threat to public order, like a dog wandering in the road.”

But this doesn’t have to be the future of walking, and trends suggest that walking is entering a new phase in which increasing numbers of people are choosing to walk for many of the reasons outlined above. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, most countries have established extensive systems of public parks, forests, and trails, and these demand exploration and the close inspection that is only

possible on foot. Government agencies and non-profit citizen groups continue their good work toward expansion of these places and the opportunities they present to walkers. All parts of the world have great cultural landscapes where people and the environment are intertwined in distinctive, harmonious, enduring, and sustainable ways, and many of these regions can be walked on safe, well-marked, and managed trails, served by public transportation and local facilities and services. Many cities are working hard and successfully to accommodate the needs of walkers through pedestrian malls, better sidewalks and lighting, and greenways to connect home, work, and recreation. Citizens groups such as First Feet in Seattle, PEDS in Atlanta, Philly Walks, Walk Austin, and Britain's Ramblers and Reclaim the Streets are helping to lead the way, as well as the New Urbanists, a philosophical school of planning that wants to place pedestrians at the center of an urban renaissance. Private enterprise is playing an important role as well by providing walkers better shoes and clothing, lightweight equipment, guidebooks, and a host of other commercial support services.

This increasing suite of walking opportunities is responding to changes in society. Obesity and related health issues are an epidemic in America and other places, and walking is an antidote, an exercise that is accessible to nearly everyone and universally recommended by the medical community. Parents are worried about their children losing contact with nature—what Richard Louv calls “nature deficit disorder”—and walking in parks and related areas can reconnect people with the environment. Adults of all ages caught in frantic lifestyles are looking for ways to slow the pace of life and walking offers life at a more human scale. Walking guru Colin Fletcher wrote that walking is the yin to life's more hectic yang, and we need to find a balance between the two.

Walking the Talk

Walking is simple; Geoff Nicholson writes that walking is analog in a digital world. But it can also be profound. We began this chapter by interpreting its title as a question: why walk? We can now restate the

“Walking is the natural recreation for a man who desires not absolutely to suppress his intellect but to turn it out to play for a season.”

—Leslie Stephen

title in declarative form: we walk because it's a celebration of our evolutionary heritage, it stimulates our thinking, it's a form of political expression, it contributes to conservation and sustainability, it deepens our understanding and appreciation of the world, it can be a means to explore spirituality, and it makes us healthier and happier in the process. But in today's world, walking is a choice we must consciously make; it's more conventional and easier (in some ways) to sit and ride. In an especially appropriate turn of contemporary phrase, we must “walk the talk.” By choosing to walk, we make a lifestyle choice, fulfill a commitment to ourselves and to the environment, and make a political statement about what we think is important.

This book is designed to encourage a particular kind of walking: long-distance walking—walking the great cultural landscapes of the world. Walk across England, around Mount Blanc, along the coastlines of North America and Australia; follow the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu; walk with pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela; walk among the world's great mountains—the Sierra Nevadas, the Rockies, the Appalachians, the Andes, and the Alps; walk through the Grand Canyon. And much more. Walk part or all of these trails, walk a few days at a time or for a few weeks, walk from inn to inn or backpack. These extraordinary trails are accessible to ordinary people. This book tells you how and describes many of the world's great long-distance walks.

A few years ago, we read some material from contemporary American comedian Stephen Wright who offers a string of social commentary. In his thoughts about walking, he says, “Everywhere is walking distance if you have the time.” This is funny, but it's also potentially profound. We'd change this aphorism only slightly: everywhere is walking distance if you *take* the time. We hope you'll find our book convincing and helpful.



Trails can be metaphors—literal and figurative pathways into nature and human nature, into history and natural history. (C&O Canal)

How to Walk

We're often asked how to do long-distance walks: how to prepare, make arrangements, select clothing and gear, find commercial services, and related questions. Most of it's pretty straightforward, and preparing for a long-distance walk is a vital and enjoyable part of the walking experience. This chapter offers some guidelines and tips about how to prepare for and enjoy long-distance walking. If you're already an experienced walker, scan through the chapter and read sections that interest you. If you're not yet experienced, well, start right here ...

Preparing Physically

You're intrigued with the idea of "walking distance," but how do you start? It's really pretty obvious: in order to walk a long-distance trail, you need to practice walking—more often and farther. Most people can walk just fine; getting in the habit of walking more builds strength and endurance, and a little time spent learning a few strategies and techniques will make the whole experience more pleasurable and successful. By walking more in your everyday life, you'll gain the confidence that comes with knowing first-hand that by continuing to place one foot in front of the other you *will* reach your destination. Better yet, you'll enjoy the journey and that's what it's really all about. In fact, for walkers, the journey *is* the destination.

Of course we have to start with the usual disclaimer: when beginning a new program of physical activity, or stepping up an existing one, it's recommended that you check with your physician. But, of course, most doctors *recommend* walking. Then it's time to incorporate walking into more of your life, aiming to gradually increase the time spent walking. Once you set your mind on walking, you'll find lots of opportunities. The next chapter on Where to Walk is full of suggestions.

Current medical recommendations suggest that healthy adults should walk at least ten thousand steps per day, translating to about 4 to 5 miles, depending on stride length. Pedometers can be useful in this regard; we love ours and use them almost every day. Ten thousand steps may sound like a

lot, but try your pedometer for a few “normal” days and see how many steps you average. Then increase your total a bit on a week-by-week basis. Be patient—it’s much better to have small improvements over a period of time than it is to overdo it at the beginning and end up discouraged or injured. When the situation allows, carry a pack to get used to it and to enhance the aerobic quality of walking, and include some walking on varied terrain. Ultimately, you should be able to walk about 3 miles per hour under ideal conditions, which will probably translate to about 2 miles per hour on the trail over the course of a day of walking.

If you’re heavier than you’d like, think about how much easier it would be to walk with less stress on your body—and start losing weight. Walking is a good way to shed pounds, almost universally recommended, inexpensive and enjoyable. Walking is an especially good exercise because it helps you lose weight, and when you lose weight the walking becomes easier, a reinforcing cycle. A rough calculation is that a 150-pound person burns 100 to 125 calories per mile when striding purposefully.

If you’re already an experienced walker, just keep on walking! We’ve found that the more we walk in our daily lives, the more we enjoy our long-distance walks, and using our pedometers faithfully on a daily basis helps us feel confident that we’ll be successful on our long-distance walks. Walking along any of the great long-distance trails described in this book feels shorter than covering a similar distance at home because there’s so much of interest along the trail. And when you’ve done your walking “homework,” you can relax into your long-distance walks with the assurance that you can do them. Preparation and confidence breed success. If you feel you need more guidance in your walking program, we recommend consulting some standard references, including Therese Ikonian’s *Fitness Walking* and Maggie Spilner’s *Prevention’s Complete Book of Walking*.

Planning a Long-Distance Walk

Ultimately, you’ll want to leave the comforts of your neighborhood and head out—perhaps to one of the long-distance trails we recommend

***“Afoot and lighthearted
I take to the open road.”***

—Walt Whitman

in this book. We suggest starting slowly by choosing one of the less challenging walks or maybe walking a section or two of one of the longer trails. We started our long-distance walking by day-hiking sections of the Long Trail in our home state of Vermont.

When we’re exploring the possibility of walking a trail, we usually start with an Internet search and see what information we can gather. Most long-distance trails have Web sites and these include helpful information such as support services and amenities in nearby towns. If there’s an organization that supports and manages the trail (a government agency or non-profit group), they can be wonderful sources of assistance. A little more searching might come up with a company that leads walks or you may find diaries (blogs) of people who’ve walked the trail. An Internet search combining “guidebook” with the name of the trail leads to even more information. Pretty soon you’ll find much of what you need to know about the trail that interests you. We’ve compiled a list of useful references, including Web sites and guidebooks, at the conclusion of each of the trail descriptions in Part 2 of this book.

Planning the route and logistics of long-distance walking can be an important part of the experience. We’ve enjoyed many hours at home poring over maps and guidebooks, planning and anticipating our upcoming walking adventures. However, commercial services can be used to simplify the process. Though we don’t recommend particular businesses, examples of some that operate on an international scale include Backroads, Boundless Journeys, Classic Journeys, Country Walkers, HF Holidays, Mountain Travel Sobek, REI, Ryder-Walker, Sherpa Expeditions, Wayfarers, Wilderness Travel, and World Walks. But there are many others at the regional, national, and international levels



Boardwalks are sometimes constructed to help protect native vegetation and to keep walkers dry. (Overland Track)

and they range from basic to luxury. Membership organizations such as the Sierra Club and Ramblers also offer popular walking trips. Commercial companies cover a wide range of services and can support you whether you walk independently or with a group. There are bare-bones businesses that simply take you to the start of the trail and/or pick you up at the end. Some companies book accommodations for you and transport your bag from lodging to lodging. Some offer the services of a local guide in addition to lodging and baggage transport; you can book a guide just for you or make new friends by walking with a group. And finally, there are commercial companies that do everything from meeting you at the airport to pouring a glass of local wine after a day on the trail.

Commercial services will often personalize the trip for you. If you want to skip some trail sections, ask if that's possible—and if the company will arrange transport for you over that distance. You can squeeze a long trail into a short time period by doing what might be called “best of” trips; on lengthy walks like the Coast to Coast Trail (which is traditionally walked in two weeks), a company might offer six days “hitting the highlights.” These shortened trips can be a good way to experience the essence of a trail.

A convenience for walking long-distance trails is to mail yourself resupply packages containing food, fresh clothes, and other items. Post offices will hold mail addressed to your name plus “General Delivery,” and accommodations will usually hold packages for guests.

Be aware that permits are required to walk several of the long-distance trails included in this book, and we've noted this in the respective trail descriptions. In some cases, permits may need to be reserved well in advance and this needs to be taken into account when planning some long-distance walks.

Clothing

We use lightweight multi-use clothing on our walks. We want to be comfortable but carry as little weight in our packs as possible. And we want our clothes to be field tested before a trip; if something's going to chafe, for example, it's better to find out ahead of time. There's an old saying among

walkers that “cotton kills,” and cotton is a poor choice for anything you wear while walking; once wet, it tends to stay wet, conducting heat away from your body and potentially leading to hypothermia (a dangerous drop in body temperature). This long drying time is a real disadvantage if you want to wash anything at night, too. Wear clothing made of synthetics as these materials tend to wick moisture away from your body and dry much faster. Outdoor stores and catalogs are full of this type of clothing. Arc’teryx, Columbia, Eddie Bauer, ExOfficio, Granite Gear, Marmot, Mountain Hardwear, Patagonia, and The North Face are among the popular brands.

Shop for clothes that have built-in adaptability, clothes that can be used for more than one purpose. For example, hiking pants that zip off just above the knees to become shorts give you 2-for-1 versatility. Use a lightweight rain jacket as a windbreaker or as the outer layer of clothing to keep the warmth in when needed. Plan your clothes to allow you to dress in a series of layers so you can adjust your clothing quickly in response to changes in weather and activities—take your vest off when walking uphill, for example, and put it back on at the end of the climb. We try to limit ourselves on long-distance walks to two basic sets of clothes—one for walking and one reserved for after we’ve cleaned up at the end of the day. We hand-wash our walking clothes as often as possible, usually every night since they’re fast drying. Long-distance walkers tend to emphasize function over fashion.

We often walk in long sleeves and long pants to protect ourselves from the sun, even if the weather is warm (special sun-block pants and shirts are very lightweight and their wicking properties are cooling). We recommend that everyone wear a hat with a wide brim and liberally apply sunblock to protect against sun damage, a special problem for anyone who enjoys the out-of-doors.

The most important item of clothing is boots/shoes. If your feet are happy, chances are the rest of you will be happy, too. Although some outdoor outfitters still push heavy-duty expedition type boots constructed of leather, please don’t buy them unless you’re going on an expedition.

“You can’t see anything from a car; you have got to get out of the god-damned contraption and walk.”

—Edward Abbey

The trend is to lighter footwear, and we endorse this, often walking in trail running shoes; they’re like running shoes with beefed-up soles. Shop at the end of the day when feet are probably a little swollen and shop only where there are salespeople to help you with the fitting. You should fit your boots/shoes with medium thickness socks, but should also carry thinner socks in your pack for use at times when your feet may be swollen. We always have two or three choices of socks in our packs so we can do a lot of adjusting as conditions dictate, even sometimes wearing unmatched socks to meet the individual needs of our feet. Wear your new boots/shoes on your training walks as much as possible. If anything needs to be adjusted, it’s best to deal with it at home.

There’s another old adage among walkers: “There’s no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing.” Think about where you’re going as the key to what you’ll need. Mountaintops have entirely different weather than valleys, for example. If you’re hiking somewhere like Scotland, you’ll want “real” rainwear made of breathable, waterproof fabric. If you’re going somewhere that precipitation is unlikely—Tuscany in the summer—perhaps a lightweight inexpensive poncho is adequate. Any time you’re going out for a walk, consider “What if ... ?” and bring clothing to match. Being too cold, too hot, wet or otherwise unsuitably prepared could be very uncomfortable—and even dangerous. It’s not much of a burden to build in a margin of safety in your pack, especially if your clothing is selected to be lightweight and multi-purpose.

Gear

Of course, you’ll need some equipment for long-distance walking, and the kind you’ll need depends on the type of walking you’re doing. Obviously,

if you're staying in B&Bs or other commercial accommodations, you'll carry a different assortment of things than if you're backpacking. And if you're having your luggage transported, you'll carry even less. In every case, your gear has to be functional, but it doesn't have to be heavy! We don't consider ourselves "gear heads" and don't suggest you have to keep up with the very latest trends. But the evolution (maybe even revolution) to lighter weight equipment demands attention.

Since you'll carry your gear in a pack, let's start there. Day hikes and walks where you're sending luggage from one lodging to the next require only a daypack. If you find it uncomfortable to wear a pack on your back, consider one of the lumbar packs on the market; this may be just the solution you need. If you're backpacking, you'll need a larger pack that can accommodate your needs for several days. Whatever your pack needs, consider the lightweight options. When we first started backpacking, our conventional external-frame packs weighed 7½ pounds apiece—empty! Several years ago we converted to an ultra-light pack that weighs 1½ pounds, saving 6 pounds on our backs and feet for each of the thousands of steps we take each day on the trail.

If you're backpacking, you'll need a tent and sleeping bag. We had what we thought was a lightweight tent that weighed 4 pounds, but replaced it with one that weighs 2 pounds. Our new sleeping bags weigh 2 pounds each. We've continued to replace old gear with ultra-light versions and other walkers often stop us on the trail and ask about our small, obviously lightweight packs and the gear they contain. These folks are invariably overloaded and struggling while we're operating with a more comfortable workload (and maybe having more fun). When backpacking, we now carry less than half the weight we used to and have no loss of utility or safety. The new gear is less rugged than the old, but the cost of

"A vigorous five-mile walk will do more good for an unhappy but otherwise healthy adult than all the medicine and psychology in the world."

—Paul Dudley White

Most long-distance trails can be walked in sections that may include one to a few days at a time. (Camino de Santiago)

exercising a little care with it is well worth the reward. An ideal pack weight doesn't exceed 10 percent of body weight, but you won't be able to approach this ambitious guideline without lightweight gear. Small companies on the Internet are often good sources of ultra-light gear; examples include GoLight, Gossamer Gear, and Tarptent.

If you're staying in a B&B, inn, or hotel, you have the luxury of leaving the bedding to them. If you're staying in a refuge or hut, usually all you'll need is a sleeping sheet (sometimes called a hostel sheet). This is like an uninsulated sleeping bag with a pocket for the pillow. You sleep in the sack and use the pillow and duvet provided by the refuge. We prefer the sacks made of silk because they are lighter and pack smaller; consider getting an oversized one if you're a larger person or like more "wiggle room."

If you're camping, you obviously need a sleeping bag and insulated pad. Down sleeping bags are lighter, but are not recommended for wet weather conditions as they lose their insulating qualities when damp. Some sleeping bags are cut in a slim "mummy" shape; these weigh less because they require less material, but may not be suitable for someone who prefers more space. Some folks like the comfort of an air-insulated self-inflating mattress, but these are heavier than pads made of closed-cell foam. Does the comfort of the air mattress outweigh the disadvantage of its weight?

Keep asking yourself: Do I need this item for comfort or safety? If so, what's the lightest weight version of this item that will be useful? For example, we always carry small flashlights, and our old ones (bought at an outdoor-gear store) weighed 3.75 oz. apiece; each seemed quite small compared to the other flashlights at our house. But now we carry pinch flashlights (from the same store) that weigh 1/4 of an ounce. Saving less than 4 ounces per person may not seem like much, but the weight difference is appreciable in your hand, and the savings add up in the pack.



Please note: we're not advocating the extreme minimalist philosophy that some ultra-light backpackers have adopted. Their point sometimes seems to be to carry the least and walk the farthest fastest, and one wonders how much these ultra-light walkers appreciate the trails they travel. While we don't share their philosophy, we do appreciate their gear; we advocate adapting and appropriating it to more conservative—and enjoyable—uses.

It's easy to get consumed with the latest equipment and products, but we don't recommend this. Even Colin Fletcher, author of "the Bible" on walking gear, wrote, "Equipment and techniques are mere means to an end." Sometimes the choice of which item to purchase isn't obvious—and this is where a good outdoor-gear store can help. And folks who've done a lot of walking (members of walking groups, etc.) are full of opinions

and happy to share, and they may be the best source of all. The more experience you have, the more you understand what will work.

It can be useful to consult some reference books on equipment. *The Complete Walker IV* by Colin Fletcher and Chip Rawlins will tell you all you need to know (and then some!) about outdoor gear, particularly in a wilderness-oriented context. It's an excellent reference, though certainly not the kind of book most people read cover to cover. Other useful reference books on outdoor gear and related topics include John McKinney's *The Joy of Hiking*, Mark Harvey's *The National Outdoor Leadership School's Wilderness Guide*, and Andrew Skurka's *The Ultimate Hiker's Gear Guide*. For lightweight gear, we find Ryan Jordan's book, *Lightweight Backpacking and Camping*, useful, as is the Web site www.backpackinglight.com. The last two of these sources are focused on ultralight backpacking and can be



The deliberate pace of walking allows walkers to more fully sense the world, to see its richness of detail, to touch, hear, smell, and even taste it. (South Downs Way)

a little extreme for our tastes, but both have good ideas to cull, and they stimulate thinking about ways to reduce the weight you carry. Magazines can be good sources of information, too. For example, *Backpacker Magazine* and *Outside* regularly review outdoor clothing and equipment.

Don't feel you have to buy everything at a specialty store catering to walkers and other outdoors people. Sometimes you'll find the things you need at the grocery or hardware store. For example, we long ago replaced the special rain covers for our packs with plastic bags (trash compactor bags are best) from the grocery store that we use to line the *inside* of our packs—lightweight, cheap, and quite effective. We find the liners work better than the exterior covers anyway, and we only use them on days there's a threat of rain. Zipper bags, especially the ones designed for the freezer, are always handy for carrying food, medicines, and other small items; we like to stick a few extra in our packs. Small carabiners from the local hardware store were intended for key rings, but work beautifully to corral loose items in the pack.

Of course you'll want a first aid kit and making your own allows you to customize to your needs and to keep it light. One of our favorite products on all walks is flexible plastic first-aid tape (e.g., Nexcare) and we routinely pre-treat any place on our feet that might become a "hot spot" or blister. Another strategy is to use an anti-chafing product (primarily used by runners and bought where they shop) or lanolin (used by nursing mothers) to coat any sensitive areas that might chafe. Treat potential problems before they become real problems. In your first aid kit be sure to include a few of the kinds of medicines you use at home. If you regularly need an antacid, for example, you'll probably want a few doses during the course of your walking adventure. Always have various ways to treat your feet—they're your most important resource!

Prepare yourself with the place-specific information and supplies you'll need. Consider where you're going and what challenges might present themselves. If you're on a short practice walk where there are lots of other walkers, you probably don't need elaborate first aid supplies. But it's a different situation if you're walking the John Muir Trail. When we first decided to try some multi-day backcountry treks, we took a first aid course from our local

hiking club and it's been invaluable for peace of mind; we haven't had serious problems on the trail, but feel prepared. Paul Auerbach's books, *Wilderness Medicine* and *Field Guide to Wilderness Medicine*, and Tod Schimelpfenig's *NOLS Wilderness Medicine* are the standard medical references for the out-of-doors.

Walking (or trekking) poles have become popular in recent years. Lightweight and collapsible, they offer a bit of steadiness when needed and, by allowing the walker to transfer some of the load to the upper body, reduce leg fatigue and strain on creaky knees. We often take poles with us, but generally use them only for rough areas and steep downhill stretches. Reading a guidebook for the trail should give you a good sense of whether trekking poles are appropriate.

Water is one of the heaviest things you'll carry and you need adequate water to function well; we suggest taking full advantage when water is available to hydrate yourself. We always drink a little extra every morning, allowing us to carry a little less. Instead of loading up our packs with water for the whole day, we determine where we can get water along the trail (purchased or from a natural source) and plan to resupply accordingly. If we're getting water out of a stream or other natural source, we always purify it before drinking. We used to use a pump filter, but now treat with either iodine (which leaves a bit of a bad taste and is not recommended for extended use) or a chlorine dioxide two-part mixture especially designed for walkers, both of which are very lightweight. We also bypass conventional water bottles in favor of the bladders used in personal water-delivery systems; we just don't bother with the hose and mouthpiece. Again, we're going for the lightweight option.

Some walks require more specialized items in the pack. An area known for its birds might demand binoculars, and many walks are more fun if you can identify the flora and fauna; local identification guides can be very helpful and make the walk more interesting. In the height of insect season your time outdoors will be more pleasant with insect repellent and/or head nets at the ready.

“Walking would teach people the quality that youngsters find so hard to learn—patience.”

—Edward P. Weston

Look for stores that specialize in hiking and outdoor gear and that have a large selection and knowledgeable staff. We've found Eastern Mountain Sports (EMS), L. L. Bean, Mountain Equipment Co-op, and REI to be useful. All of these stores offer Internet catalogs.

Food

One of the delightful aspects of walking through landscapes that are new to us can be appreciating the “tastes” of the trail; every region of the world has its distinctive terroir. Savoring local food and drink can add a layer of sensory experience to walking, and we're always glad when we can supplement any food we've brought with us with local foods that are fresher and more flavorful. Regardless of whether the food you eat is purchased on the trail or brought from home, food is an important source of energy for walkers. In addition to planned meals, we encourage you to take calorie-dense snacks in your pack—and more of them than you think you'll need. One of us is a constant grazer when walking, so plastic bags of dried fruit and nuts are kept close at hand, and they're crucial in maintaining an even energy level. Eat before you feel the need and your walk will proceed more smoothly.

We used to eat commercially prepared freeze-dried meals on our backpacking trips, but never found any we really enjoyed, so now we shop in the grocery store for food for our walks. There are lots of dried options and the choices may be more palatable than the tasty-sounding camp meal. (Unfortunately, when you add boiling water to a foil bag that's labeled “Spicy Southwestern Chicken Taco,” what you end up with is *not* a taco!) We'd rather cook pasta with Parmesan cheese and red pepper flakes, a more pedestrian choice perhaps, but one that's

“My father considered a walk among the mountains as the equivalent of churchgoing.”

—Aldous Huxley

comforting and nourishing. We’ve sometimes admired the dehydrated meals prepared at home by fellow walkers. If bringing your meals from home is of interest to you, there are many books on the market; some of the best include *Lipsmackin’ Backpacking* by Christine and Tim Conners and *Simple Foods for the Pack* by Claudia Axcell. If your pack is as light as we suggest, you can afford a small weight allowance for some fresh food. Always take more food than you expect to eat because you’ll be hungry, and you’ll want a little extra just in case something unexpected makes the trip a bit longer.

Of course, if you’re walking inn to inn, or staying in refuges that offer meal service, most of your food is already provided, and the food we’ve most enjoyed is that purchased en route. Some of our fondest trail memories are the local foods we’ve eaten—cherries purchased along the Camino de Santiago, goat cheese on the Tour du Mont Blanc, olives and wine in Cinque Terre, monk-brewed beer along King Ludwig’s Way, fish and chips on the South Downs Way. We enjoy shopping in grocery stores in different parts of the world, another way to learn about other cultures. If towns are sparse along the route, peanut butter brought from home can add nourishment to an otherwise skimpy meal. We repackage all foods in plastic bags or other lightweight containers.

Wayfinding

Of course, you’ll want to take along maps, guidebooks, and a compass. Guidebooks can be heavy, but are sometimes divided into two sections, describing the trail in both directions. Once we’ve decided in which direction we’re going to walk, we cut out the unneeded section to lessen pack weight and bulk. Outdoor clubs and stores can help you gain

proficiency with map and compass. There are also several reference books that can be useful, including David Seidman’s *The Essential Wilderness Navigator* and Bob and Mike Burns’ *Wilderness Navigation*. Global Positioning System (GPS) technology can be very useful, but be aware that satellite coverage is not available everywhere. The long-distance trails we recommend in the second part of this book are generally well marked and easy to follow. However, walkers are obliged to be observant on the trail, watching for blazes, cairns, and other trail markings. John Brierley, author of the guidebook we used for the Camino de Santiago, reminds us, “When the mind wanders, the feet will follow.”

Walking a Trail in Sections

Most of the trails described in the second part of this book can be walked in sections that range from day hikes to several days. How can you make that work? First, using maps and guidebooks, look for obvious break points along the trail, usually roads that cross the trail. For example, roads roughly every 10 miles apart cross the first several days of the Colorado Trail near Denver and this enabled us to do a series of day hikes. Another option is to find a driver to shuttle you and there are commercial services available on many trails, some strictly for hikers, some offering related services. On our walk of the Colorado Trail, we wanted a ride into the town of Buena Vista, which is a short distance off the trail. We couldn’t find a listing for a commercial service, so we called the town Chamber of Commerce to ask for suggestions. At the end of the conversation the president of the Chamber said, “If none of these options work, call me back and I’ll give you a ride myself,” which we found both charming and most accommodating. One of her suggestions was a professional hunting guide, and we arranged for him to pick us up at a road crossing at an agreed-upon time. We had to move an elk hide out of the way to get in the truck, but that was part of the fun and it was an interesting ride as he told us all about his native Buena Vista. We’ve also gotten short rides from many B&B owners who were willing to drive a little in order to

guarantee a night or two of business. We've almost universally found local residents to be helpful; long-distance walking seems to resonate with many folks. People in the walking community sometimes call this "trail magic." Of course, when we ask for help, we're ready to pay a reasonable fee for services rendered.

When looking for someone to provide a ride or other services, first check if there is an organization that supports the trail, such as The Superior Hiking Trail Association, which manages the Superior Hiking Trail. We've listed these organizations at the end of each trail description in the next part of this book. These organizations can be a wealth of information about the trail and off-trail services as well. (Consider joining these organizations as a way to repay these efforts and help support the walking community.) Ask at your lodging and at places where outdoor equipment is sold and activities offered. A few times we've gotten a ride with fishing guides, for example. We've found that even small communities often have someone who performs this and related services. Perhaps a summer employee would like to supplement his or her wages.

Another way to walk long-distance trails in sections is to hike with others. If two couples are walking, they can start at opposite ends of a trail section and trade car keys in the middle. Or one person can be the designated driver while the others walk; the driver gets to explore the region off-trail, the others on-trail, and everyone shares experiences at dinner. Switch roles the next day. Public transportation is often a good option for positioning yourself to walk—to get to and from the trailhead or skip trail sections if wanted or needed. Options include buses, trains, ferries, taxis, and ski lifts—we've used them all. Think creatively as you look at your route and study your guidebook.

Walking Ethics

Walking is one of the most sustainable forms of outdoor recreation, having very little impact on the environment. However, that doesn't mean that walkers can be careless about the potential environmental impacts they



"Bear boxes"—steel lockers to store food—are often provided at campsites in bear country. (West Coast Trail)



Walkers often rely on many forms of local transportation. Here a local Sami guide provides a ride across a broad lake. (Kungsleden)

may cause. For example, walkers should generally stay on maintained trails to avoid trampling surrounding soil and vegetation, should never feed wildlife, and should dispose of trash in an acceptable way (use trash receptacles or carry it out with you). The ethics of walking generally follow commonsense guidelines. However, the old saying “take only pictures, leave only footprints” has been superseded by more advanced efforts to think through these ethical considerations. These guidelines can be useful to walkers in carrying out their obligations to the environment and future generations of walkers.

For example, the non-profit group Leave No Trace has partnered with trail management agencies such as the U.S. National Park Service to develop a set of seven principles that should guide walkers and other users of public lands:

1. Dispose of waste properly
2. Leave what you find
3. Minimize campfire impacts
4. Plan ahead and prepare
5. Travel and camp on durable surfaces

6. Respect wildlife
7. Be considerate of other visitors

These principles are discussed and illustrated in more detail on the organization's Web site (www.Int.org). A related program of ethics for walkers has been developed in Britain and is known as the Countryside Code. A series of five principles is suggested to help walkers respect, protect, and enjoy the countryside:

1. Be safe—plan ahead and follow signs
2. Leave gates and property as you find them
3. Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
4. Keep dogs under close control
5. Consider other people

These principles are discussed and illustrated on the Web site for the organization Natural England (www.naturalengland.org.uk).

There are also several good books that offer useful discussions of ethical practices that can help walkers be good stewards of the land. We recommend Guy and Laura Waterman's *Backwoods Ethics*, Will Harmon's *Leave No Trace*, and Rich Brame and David Cole's *Soft Paths*.

"Going" in the Woods

We find it surprising how often the subject of the "bathroom" comes up as we talk to people about walking. There may be opportunities to use conventional indoor facilities when trails pass through towns and other developed areas. "Going" outdoors is something we tend not to think of much anymore because it's gotten to be no big deal. Obviously, there are differences by gender, and most men seem to instinctively know to "find a tree"; all you have to do is get off the trail, turn your back, and you're fine.

Women seem to have a harder time of it. Try and get over your initial reluctance and your fear that you're going to get caught or seen—after thousands of trail miles Martha has been embarrassed only once, when she chose a bad site. Besides, most folks simply look away if they happen

to see someone off the trail tending to their needs. Here's a procedure for women that's trail-tested. Carry fresh tissues in a plastic bag in one of your pockets and an empty plastic bag in the other—zipper bags are best. Remove enough tissues for the task at hand as you're selecting your spot. Remove your pack and find a screened area. Wait for any foot traffic to pass and then, facing the trail, urinate as quickly and efficiently as possible. Keep your head down—it makes you less noticeable. Drop used tissues on the ground beside you, get your clothes back in place, and then pick up the tissues and put them in the other plastic bag. Next time you'll just add to this bag. If you always have clean tissues on the left and used ones on the right, there's no fumbling or confusion. If you don't want to walk around with a bag of used tissues, tuck them in your pack when you return to the trail. Feminine "urinary funnels" are available and some women swear by them (after practicing a bit at home); with a funnel you don't have to remove any clothing.

We use code phrases when we're in a group and one of us wants to take a bathroom break. "I'm going to step off the trail" works (and everyone knows what it means), but our favorite is "I'm going to take a wee break," a phrase we picked up walking in Scotland.

A few tips: always have extra tissues in zip lock bags in your pack. Tiny bottles of hand sanitizer are lightweight and a good way to freshen up, and, if used by everyone in the group, a good way to prevent the spread of germs.

If you are leaving some solid waste, please follow the Leave No Trace guidelines and dig a cat hole 6 to 8 inches deep and at least 200 feet from the trail, water, and campsites. Again, if you get everything set up ahead of time, there's little time spent in a vulnerable position.

Walking Companions?

Will you walk with someone? Maybe you have a walking partner in mind—a spouse, friend, or family member who is interested in sharing the experience. If not, consider joining hiking and trail clubs in your

area or find one online for the area you'll be visiting. Outdoor-gear stores sometimes sponsor group outings; at the very least they may suggest people and organizations in your community that are active in walking. An advantage of going with an organized outing is talking to other walkers—you'll learn so much from their experiences and (like us!) they'll love offering advice and tips.

Or maybe you want to enjoy the solitude of walking by yourself. We've met a number of solitary walkers on the trail and this seems to work well for them. Wordsworth, Thoreau, Muir, and other great walkers often went by themselves, thinking great thoughts along the way. But be aware that walking by yourself raises important safety issues; be sure to tell a friend or family member where you're going and when you expect to return (a good idea for all walkers).

Happy Trails!

Let's not make all this harder than it is—walking is pretty basic. Try to walk more often and farther in your everyday life to prepare for long-distance walking. Choose your clothing and gear to maximize utility and minimize weight. Smart food choices will enhance the whole adventure. You now know how to deal with the logistics of a long-distance trail and you know how to behave once you're there. By “practicing” at home, you'll be confident in your abilities and ready to go.

Two final pieces of advice. First, walk *your* walk—tailor walking to your individual needs and interests. Some people get great satisfaction out of testing themselves, walking challenging trails in long days. But others prefer to linger and stay closer to developed areas and this is just as valid. Some people backpack while others enjoy local inns and B&Bs. Some enjoy planning the logistics of their walks and others leave the details to commercial companies. How do you want to walk? We find

“The best remedy for a short temper is a long walk.”

—Jacqueline Schiff

that our tastes change from time to time and from trip to trip, and we've wound up doing many kinds of walks. You'll find that reflected in the trails we describe in the second part of this book.

Finally, we've discussed lots of logistics in this chapter—clothing, gear, food, etc. But the most important thing you can bring on a walk is a sense of curiosity about the interesting world in which we live. See places and meet people in the intimate way that only walking allows. We think you'll find this enjoyable and highly rewarding.

Where to Walk

Deciding where to walk is an important part of the walking experience—will you stroll among the ancient villages of Cinque Terre, join the spirit of gold rush prospectors as they scramble up and over Chilkoot Pass, follow in the footsteps of Alexander the Great along the Turquoise Coast of Turkey, walk John Muir's beloved High Sierra, or perhaps just walk around your neighborhood? In fact, planning a walk can be one of the most enjoyable parts of walking—researching the many alternatives that are available, reading guidebooks, consulting maps, making travel arrangements, and anticipating the walk. This book addresses long-distance walking primarily, but also offers encouragement to walk more in everyday life as a way to prepare for long-distance walks and to adopt a healthy lifestyle, add interest to life, and lessen our impact on the environment.

From Global to Local

“Think globally and act locally” is an old environmental adage that suggests we inform ourselves about environmental issues and then conduct ourselves accordingly in our everyday lives. Perhaps there's an analogous way of thinking about walking: you appreciate the joy and value of long-distance walking, so consider how you might walk more in your daily activities. Is it feasible to walk to and from your place of work? Or to the market? How about a stroll around your neighborhood

(or someone else's neighborhood) in the morning, in the evening, or on the weekend? When it's feasible, take the stairs instead of the elevator. Explore your local parks. Some folks are "mall walkers" and this can be a good option, especially when the weather's bad. Others use a treadmill or other exercise equipment to simulate walking. Walk outside when you can, even when the weather's less than ideal, as this will prepare you for the eventualities of long-distance walking.

By walking locally, we follow in the footsteps of great walkers like Henry David Thoreau. Thinking about his native Concord, Massachusetts, Thoreau wrote, "My vicinity affords many good walks; and though for so many years I have walked almost every day, and sometimes for several days together, I have not yet exhausted them." He continued:

An absolutely new prospect is a great happiness, and I can still get this any afternoon. Two or three hours' walking will carry me to as strange a country as I ever expect to see. A single farmhouse which I had not seen before is sometimes as good as the dominions of the King of Dahomey. There is in fact a sort of harmony discoverable between the capabilities of the landscape within a circle of ten mile's radius, or the limits of an afternoon walk, and the three score years and ten of human life. It will never become quite familiar to you.

Cities offer a different kind of wilderness and are best explored on foot; think of their sidewalks as a vast system of trails representing unlimited walking adventures. Follow in the footsteps of the nineteenth-century flaneurs who "botanized the asphalt" and contributed to the reputation of Paris as one of the great walking cities of the world. Phyllis Pearsall walked the 3,000 miles of the 23,000 streets of London in the 1930s. These are ambitious models. Pay close attention to historic canals and railways, as many have been converted into appealing trails that cover larger areas of geography. Increasing numbers of "greenways" now form linked systems of trails that connect home, work, parks, and attractions.



The long-distance trails described in this book are extraordinary, but can be walked by ordinary people. (Overland Track)



From Local to Global

Beyond the local is the greater world—states, provinces, regions, the globe. These are big places that should be walked on weekends and holidays and days stolen from work. All states, provinces, etc. have systems of parks, trails, and other reserves that offer years' worth of walking opportunities, and these may even include walks in the wilderness. Get in touch with your state or provincial parks department and ask for a list of parks and related areas. There's at least one book that describes trails and walks for nearly every state, province, and region. Many states and provinces have walking and trail clubs and related organizations; consider joining one and participating in organized walks, maybe even eventually giving back by leading one.

At the national and international scale, there are still more choices. Nearly all countries have extensive systems of national parks, forests, and other reserves that offer many lifetimes of walking adventure. Many countries have national-level trail systems and participate in international trail networks. For example, the U.S. has a National Trails System that includes all fifty states and totals nearly 60,000 miles. England and Wales also have a system of National Trails that includes fifteen trails totaling nearly 2,500 miles. Several European countries have a system of multinational long-distance trails called *Grande Randonnees* (often abbreviated GR) and these are very extensive; France alone includes over 37,000 miles. Australia has thirty-nine long distance trails totaling over 8,000 miles. And there are many great walking cities all over the world. A little time in your local bookshop or on the Internet researching walking opportunities will return great rewards. As noted in Chapter 2, there are many companies that offer guided and independent walks all over the world, and their catalogs and Web sites are also good sources of ideas.

No matter where you choose to walk—from around home to other continents—think of the world as a great cultural landscape waiting to be explored, places where nature and culture are intertwined in diverse and interesting ways. The harmony of nature and culture is a subtle but often overlooked refrain in the environmental literature. Our greatest

Long-distance trails are routed to include many iconic natural features. (John Muir Trail)

nature writers have made strong statements admonishing us to save the environment from human encroachment. Thoreau, for example, wished to “say a word for nature” and concluded that “in Wildness is the preservation of the World.” But a closer reading suggests that balance and moderation were his ultimate goals. The “half cultivated” bean field at his Walden Pond retreat is a useful metaphor of the need for elements of both nature and culture. “I would not,” he wrote, “have every part of a man cultivated, any more than I would have every acre of earth.” He went on to write, “The natural remedy [to the relationship between civilization and wilderness] is to be found in the proportion which the night bears to the day, the winter to the summer, thought to experience.” Contemporary environmental philosophers continue to warn about the false and potentially dangerous dichotomy between humans and nature.

Like Thoreau’s bean fields, trails can be metaphors as well. They are literal and figurative pathways into nature and human nature, into history and natural history. The landscape is natural (at least, for the most part), but the trails themselves are human entities, often with important historical meaning, and always with good intentions. They are gifts from one generation to the next, and they reflect the societies that create and nurture them (we call it trail building and maintenance in our mundane and understated everyday language). We’re well served to take the time to stop and more fully appreciate our trails and the cultural landscapes through which they pass. Just as we often botanize when we walk, stopping to identify and appreciate the beauty and complexity of the natural world, we should engage the cultural diversity of our outdoor spaces and places, recognizing and honoring the people who live, work, and play there, and the cultures that are reflected in the trails they’ve given us.

Long-Distance Walking

That brings us to the long-distance trails we recommend in this book. We’ve taken this assignment seriously and devoted ourselves to a

decade of “field work.” In the next part of this book we describe thirty of what we consider the world’s great long-distance trails; these are our favorites. As we noted in our Introduction to the book, we define a long-distance trail as one that is named and can be walked in a few days to a few weeks. We’ve purposively not included any of the super-long distance trails like the 2,200-mile Appalachian Trail because these are generally not an option for most ordinary people (including us!).

“Everywhere is walking distance if you have the time.”

—Steven Wright

However, several of the trails we recommend are part of these very long trails, often the best parts.

We’ve organized these trails in alphabetical order in the table at the end of this chapter. For each trail, we list its location, length, type of accommodations, availability of baggage transfer, ability to walk the trail in sections, and our assessment of the challenges associated with walking the trail. With regard to length, we suggest you read the description of the trails in which you may be interested in Part 2 of the book, because some of these trails are rarely walked in their entirety. For example, we’ve listed the length of the Kungsleden in the table as 270 miles (its full length), but few people walk this distance. The northern half of this trail is by far the most interesting and this reduces the effective length of the trail to about 120 miles, and we make that clear in the trail description.

We’ve described accommodations as falling into three categories: commercial (e.g., inns, B&Bs), huts and refuges, and backpacking/camping. Commercial accommodations provide private rooms and often include breakfast. Huts and refuges (there are other names for these facilities in some countries) are usually basic facilities that may include either private or communal sleeping, bathing, and cooking areas. Many serve breakfast and/or dinner. Some trails must be backpacked.



Mountain refuges are sited an easy day's walk apart along many long-distance trails. (Walker's Haute Route)

You'll notice from the table that many trails offer more than one kind of accommodation.

Baggage transfer refers to the option to send your luggage from accommodation to accommodation by commercial service, and this allows walkers to carry only a day pack. Most trails can be walked in sections that may include one to a few days at a time over at least part of their distance. Our rating of the challenges associated with walking each trail is subjective by its very nature, and most long-distance trails are highly variable almost by definition. We've used a range of challenge for many trails to reflect this. Challenge is usually a reflection of difficulty of walking (e.g., elevation, climbing and descending) but can also be affected by availability (or lack thereof) of facilities and

services and other issues. Again, the trail descriptions in the next section of the book offer more information about this.

We've been deliberate about including a great spectrum of long-distance trails in terms of length, attractions, geography, commercial services, and challenge. We advise starting with shorter trails or sections of longer ones and those that have less challenge associated with them. Walk within your abilities and enjoy success and the confidence it brings. Be clever by thinking about ways to add a walk to some of your other business or pleasure travel; the trails we describe are spread across six continents and fourteen countries. If time doesn't allow you to walk the whole length of a trail, walk part of it. We've had a long debate with ourselves about whether it's okay to walk just part of a long-distance trail

“Happy is the man who has acquired the love of walking for its own sake!”

—W.J. Holland

if you can't (or don't want to) walk it all. There's no denying the intrinsic satisfaction of walking the full length of a long-distance trail. But walking parts of these trails gives license to experience a diversity of the world's great cultural landscapes.

Please note that the trail descriptions in Part 2 are designed to tell you what you need to know in deciding which trails you'd like to walk. The trail descriptions include maps showing trail locations and offering a sense of the trails' landscape features and geography. We've walked all these trails (and others as well), nearly all of them in their entirety, and we've enjoyed them all. We hope we'll entice you to walk many of them. Once you've decided which trail to walk, you'll need a more detailed guidebook, a map, and related materials for that trail, and we suggest at the end of each description which guidebooks, Web sites, etc., will be most helpful.

We hope you find the accompanying table useful, that you'll find the trail descriptions in the next part of the book to be intriguing enough for you to try long-distance walking, and that you'll enjoy your walks as much as we do. Happy trails to you!



Just as we often botanize when we walk, stopping to identify and appreciate the beauty and complexity of the natural world, we should also engage the cultural diversity of our outdoor spaces and places, recognizing and honoring the people who live, work, and play there. (Colorado Trail)



Extraordinary Hikes

<i>Trail</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Length (Miles)</i>	<i>Accommodations</i>				<i>Baggage Transfer</i>	<i>Option to Walk in Sections</i>	<i>Degree of Challenge</i>
			<i>Commercial (e.g., Inns, B&Bs)</i>	<i>Huts/ Refuges</i>	<i>Backpacking/ Camping</i>				
Alta Via 1	Italy	93	Some	Yes	No	No	Most	Moderate–High	
C&O Canal	Maryland & Washington, DC, USA	185	Some	No	Yes	No	All	Low	
Camino de Santiago	Spain	480	Most	Yes	Some	Yes	All	Low–Moderate	
Cape Winelands Walk	South Africa	60	Yes	No	No	Yes	All	Low–Moderate	
Chilkoot Trail	Alaska, USA & British Columbia, Canada	33	No	No	Yes	No	No	High	
Cinque Terre	Italy	11+	Yes	Some	No	Not Needed	All	Low–Moderate	
Coast to Coast Trail	England	190	Yes	Some	Some	Yes	All	Moderate	
Colorado Trail	Colorado, USA	470	Some	No	Yes	No	Some	Moderate–High	
Cotswold Way	England	100	Yes	No	No	Yes	All	Low–Moderate	
Great Ocean Walk	Australia	60	Yes	Some	Yes	Yes	All	Low–Moderate	
Inca Trail	Peru	30	No	No	Yes	Porters	No	Moderate–High	
John Muir Trail	California, USA	210	Few	No	Yes	No	Some	Moderate–High	
Kaibab Trail	Arizona, USA	21	Some	Some	Yes	No	No	Moderate–High	
Kalalau Trail	Hawaii, USA	22 (Round- trip)	No	No	Yes	No	No	High	

*Nature can be dynamic and dramatic on the world's great long-distance trails.
(Lycian Way)*

Accommodations

<i>Trail</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Length (Miles)</i>	Accommodations				<i>Option to Walk in Sections</i>	<i>Degree of Challenge</i>
			<i>Commercial (e.g., Inns, B&Bs)</i>	<i>Huts/ Refuges</i>	<i>Backpacking/ Camping</i>	<i>Baggage Transfer</i>		
King Ludwig's Way	Germany	80	Yes	No	Some	Yes	All	Low–Moderate
Kungsleden	Sweden	270	Some	Yes	Yes	No	Some	Moderate
Long Trail	Vermont, USA	273	Some	3-sided shelters	Yes	No	Most	Moderate–High
Lost Coast Trail	California, USA	53	Some	No	Yes	No	Some	Moderate
Lycian Way	Turkey	330	Some	Some	Yes	No	Some	Moderate–High
Milford Track	New Zealand	33	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Low– Moderate
Ocala Trail	Florida, USA	71	Some	No	Yes	No	All	Low
Overland Track	Australia	60	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Moderate
Paria River Canyon	Utah & Arizona, USA	38	No	No	Yes	No	No	Moderate
South Downs Way	England	100	Yes	No	No	Yes	All	Low–Moderate
Superior Hiking Trail	Minnesota, USA	300	Some	No	Yes	Some	All	Moderate
Tahoe Rim Trail	California & Nevada, USA	165	Most	No	Yes	No	All	Moderate–High
Tour du Mont Blanc	France, Italy, & Switzerland	100+	Most	Yes	Some	Most (Except Refuges)	Most	Moderate
Walker's Haute Route	France & Switzerland	114	Most	Yes	Some	No	Most	Moderate–High
West Coast Trail	British Columbia, Canada	50	No	No	Yes	No	No	High
West Highland Way	Scotland	96	Yes	Some	Some	Yes	All	Moderate

“A book to read in the dead of winter so you’ll be longing for spring.”

BILL MCKIBBEN, *Wandering Home*

“*Walking Distance* is an eloquent invitation to join the walking and conservation community.”

JOHN JUDGE, President, Appalachian Mountain Club

“The best way to experience the world is through the intimacy of walking; walk with the Mannings and appreciate the world’s great cultural landscapes.”

GREGORY MILLER, President, American Hiking Society

Walking is simple, but it can also be profound. In a complex and frantic world, long-distance walking helps focus our lives. It is an elegantly sustainable form of recreation that deepens understanding of the world’s cultures and landscapes, stimulates thinking, and improves health.

In *Walking Distance*, Robert and Martha Manning invite readers to explore the joy of walking. Their book explains why, how, and where to walk and features first-hand descriptions of thirty of the world’s great long-distance trails, ranging from inn-to-inn walks to backpacking treks. Each entry—from Turkey’s Lycian Way to Vermont’s Long Trail—includes personal anecdotes, natural and cultural history, and practical tips. Every trail description is richly illustrated with color photographs and maps.

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The authors (South Downs Way)