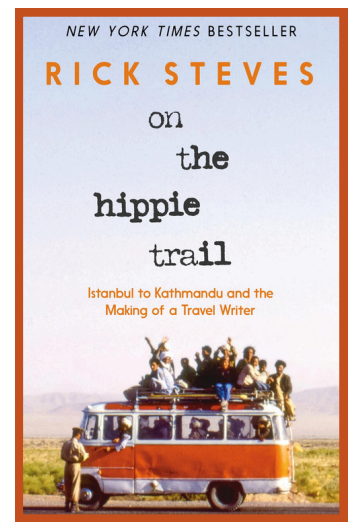


# On the Hippie Trail Reading Group Guide



## A cultural timeline of the Hippie Trail:

**1957-** The first British bus company to ply the route, The Indiaman, opens for business, taking travelers from London to Calcutta

**1968-** The Beatles visit India to train in Transcendental Meditation with the Maharishi, making Asia a popular travel destination

**1973-** The Bosphorus Bridge opens in Istanbul, connecting Europe and Asia by car

**1973-** Tony and Maureen Wheeler found Lonely Planet and publish the pamphlet *Across Asia on the Cheap*, offering travel recommendations for the Hippie Trail

**1978-** Rick Steves and Gene Openshaw travel on the Hippie Trail

**1979-** The Islamic Revolution in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan effectively close the route to Western travelers



## Discussion questions:

What quotes or sections in the book stood out to you?

Do you journal when you travel? Why or why not?

Rick sets out on the Hippie Trail looking for “something to wallop my norms.” Have you ever taken a trip that challenged your worldview and changed your perspective?

When Rick and Gene took their journey, information about traveling the Hippie Trail was scarce and mostly word-of-mouth. Now, information is available in guidebooks and on the internet. How has technology changed the way you travel? What are the benefits and drawbacks of living in a more connected world?

On page 51, Rick states that “I had never cared about, or even noticed, what I was now realizing was a big ethical issue: the giant difference between rich people and poor people.” Discuss the ways in which different forms of privilege show up in the book—how does it affect Rick and Gene’s travels, and what do they learn about themselves?

Rick and Gene spend a lot of time being uncomfortable, from stomach bugs to filthy hotel rooms. How important is comfort to you when you travel? Is there value in being uncomfortable?

On page 200, Rick remarks “There are no tourists here, only travelers.” What do you think is the difference between a tourist and a traveler?

If you could go back in time and travel on the Hippie Trail, where would you be most excited to visit and why?

If you could go on an “off the beaten path” trip today, where would you go and why?



### A Hippie Trail playlist:

- ♪ “San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Flowers in Your Hair),” Scott McKenzie
- ♪ “Somebody to Love,” Jefferson Airplane
- ♪ “Light My Fire,” The Doors
- ♪ “Me and Bobby McGee,” Janis Joplin
- ♪ “Purple Haze,” Jimi Hendrix
- ♪ “Revolution,” The Beatles
- ♪ “Love the One You’re With,” Stephen Stills
- ♪ “Imagine,” John Lennon
- ♪ “People Got to Be Free,” The Rascals
- ♪ “White Rabbit,” Jefferson Airplane