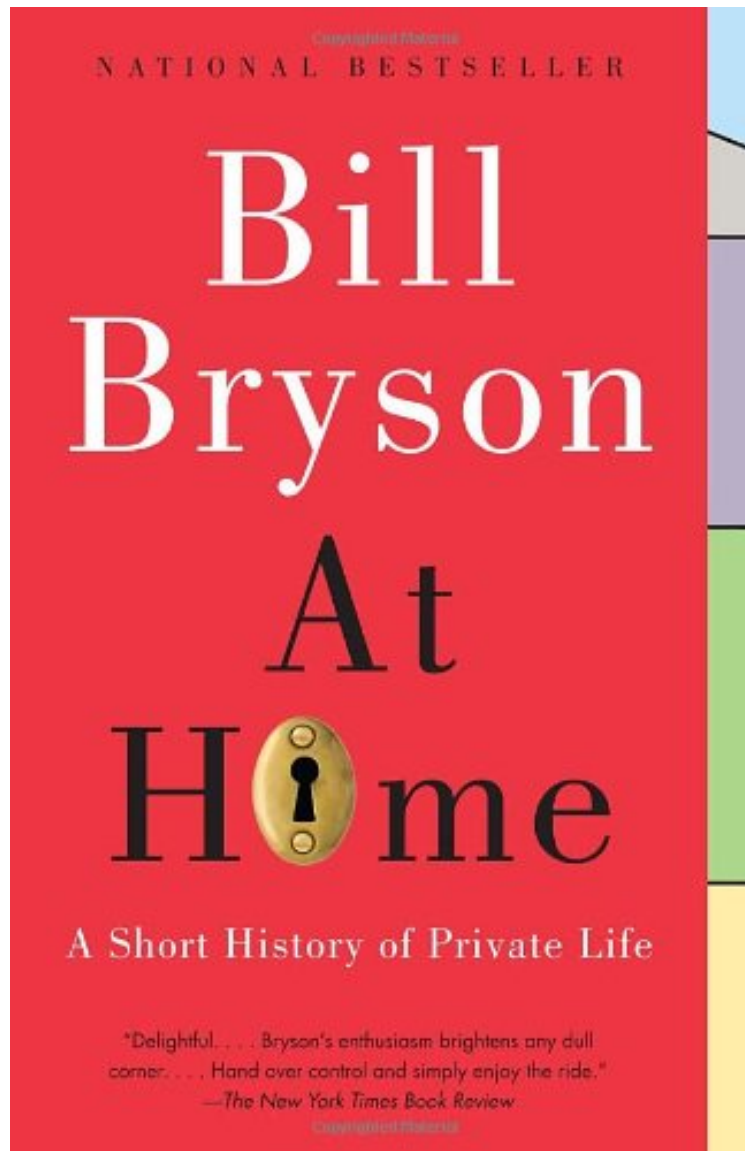


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At Home: A Short History of Private Life

Bill Bryson

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Bill Bryson : At Home: A Short History of Private Life before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised At Home: A Short History of Private Life:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Quite a nice book if you like this sort of thing By Zoya Geacintov I am really enjoying this book though I find I am forgetting what I've read almost as soon as I have read it! That is because there is SO much information in here! I enjoy Mr. Bryson's writing, it is like listening to a charming and well read friend. If indeed I prefer to own his books (rather than borrow from the library) so that I can jump in and out of the

conversation or refer back to them. This one in particular is crammed full of the intriguing histories of all sorts of unnoticed daily spaces and objects. I feel as if I know my ancestors better after reading and therefore know myself a bit more. Quite a nice book if you like this sort of thing! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Amazing book for the chronically curious By GreenPhoenix Bill Bryson makes history very accessible with this easy-to-read and beautifully illustrated book. Ever wonder about the evolution of the modern home? This is your book! Bryson takes us through every room and thoroughly explains how they developed from the simple, one-room huts of our ancestors to the multi-room, multi-story homes of today. Everything about every room is delved into, from plumbing fixtures and appliances to tines on forks and table manners. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. We enjoyed it very much By Busy Mom Bill Bryson never disappoints and this book is no exception. I read it several years ago, recommending it to everyone I knew. Such fascinating material for him to work with and he works with all material so well. When I saw it was available in an audio book I decided to buy it for an upcoming drive from Florida to New England. We enjoyed it very much. Nothing personal to the author but I know he's an American so I did find his British "ness" terminology a bit annoying. Having lived overseas for many years and knowing many people taught in British English, I full well know how easy it is to pick up their interesting terminology, still I found it somewhat difficult to put up with coming from a mostly American accent. . Overall though I enjoyed the audio version and I recommend it and the book itself highly.

In these pages, the beloved Bill Bryson gives us a fascinating history of the modern home, taking us on a room-by-room tour through his own house and using each room to explore the vast history of the domestic artifacts we take for granted. As he takes us through the history of our modern comforts, Bryson demonstrates that whatever happens in the world eventually ends up in our home, in the paint, the pipes, the pillows, and every item of furniture. Bryson has one of the liveliest, most inquisitive minds on the planet, and his sheer prose fluency makes *At Home* one of the most entertaining books ever written about private life.

.com Best Books of the Month, October 2010: Bill Bryson (*A Short History of Nearly Everything*) turns his attention from science to society in his authoritative history of domesticity, *At Home: A Short History of Private Life*. While walking through his own home, a former Church of England rectory built in the 19th century, Bryson reconstructs the fascinating history of the household, room by room. With waggish humor and a knack for unearthing the extraordinary stories behind the seemingly commonplace, he examines how everyday items--things like ice, cookbooks, glass windows, and salt and pepper--transformed the way people lived, and how houses evolved around these new commodities. "Houses are really quite odd things," Bryson writes, and, luckily for us, he is a writer who thrives on oddities. He gracefully draws connections between an eclectic array of events that have affected home life, covering everything from the relationship between cholera outbreaks and modern landscaping, to toxic makeup, highly flammable hoopskirts, and other unexpected hazards of fashion. Fans of Bryson's travel writing will find plenty to love here; his keen eye for detail and delightfully wry wit emerge in the most unlikely places, making *At Home* an engrossing journey through history, without ever leaving the house. --Lynette Mong From Publishers Weekly Starred . Bryson (*A Short History of Everything*) takes readers on a tour of his house, a rural English parsonage, and finds it crammed with 10,000 years of fascinating historical bric-a-brac. Each room becomes a starting point for a free-ranging discussion of rarely noticed but foundational aspects of social life. A visit to the kitchen prompts disquisitions on food adulteration and gluttony; a peek into the bedroom reveals nutty sex nostrums and the horrors of premodern surgery; in the study we find rats and locusts; a stop in the scullery illuminates the put-upon lives of servants. Bryson follows his inquisitiveness wherever it goes, from Darwinian evolution to the invention of the lawnmower, while savoring eccentric characters and untoward events (like Queen Elizabeth I's pilfering of a subject's silverware). There are many guilty pleasures, from Bryson's droll prose--"What really turned the Victorians to bathing, however, was the realization that it could be gloriously punishing"--to the many tantalizing glimpses behind closed doors at aristocratic English country houses. In demonstrating how everything we take for granted, from comfortable furniture to smoke-free air, went from unimaginable luxury to humdrum routine, Bryson shows us how odd and improbable our own lives really are. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Bryson, author of *A Short History of Nearly Everything* (2003) and *A Walk in the Woods* (2009), lives in a Victorian parsonage built in 1851. He uses the old house with its long history and mundane domestic items to explore the evolution of the home. His detailed tour is a seamless meandering from room to room, subject to subject, with fascinating digressions. He touches on how the hall evolved from a grand room, the most important in the house, to just a place to wipe feet and hang hats; how rooms developed based on changing notions of utility and privacy; how the development of the fireplace led to the development of the second floor. He offers historical and cultural origins of the names of rooms and common household items: table, chair, cookware, bedchamber, closet, study. He details how the development of different materials bricks to make chimneys and coal for fuel changed housing construction. The chapter on the kitchen prompts a discourse on food contamination, ice and mason jars, cookbooks and measuring

utensils. A beautifully written ode to the ordinary and overlooked things of everyday life in the home. --Vanessa Bush