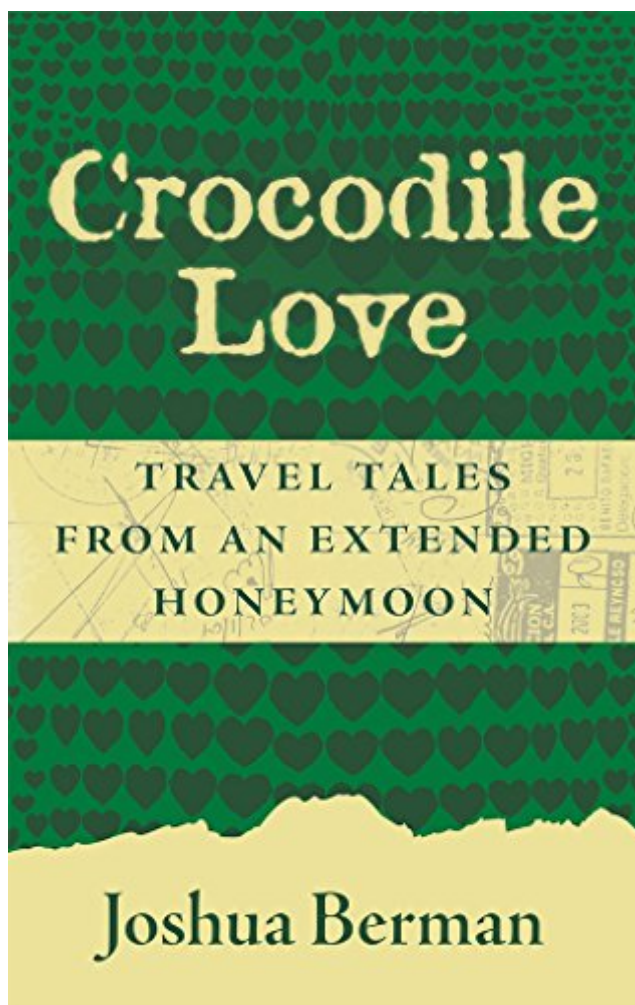


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Crocodile Love: Travel Tales From An Extended Honeymoon



Synopsis

"We wanted to go to hot, intense places together, to cities where open markets breathed that sweaty, fish-gutty, trash-burning smell that clings to travelers's memories forever. We had each whiffed it before, this odor of deep travel, but it was something else to embark as husband and wife to seek it together. We would pressure-cook our fragile new marriage, take it around the world, introduce it to new friends, and make it bubble and boil into everything we could be." In *Crocodile Love*, travel writer Joshua Berman recounts the quests, encounters, and mishaps of the extended, round-the-world voluntourism honeymoon he took with his wife, Sutay. Both are returned Peace Corps Volunteers who decided on a long, epic trip before settling down in the suburbs. The book journeys through Pakistan, India, Ghana, The Gambia, and beyond. Joshua Berman is a travel writer and columnist for The Denver Post. He is the author of five guidebooks for Avalon Travel Publishing: *Moon Nicaragua*, *Moon Belize*, *Living Abroad in Nicaragua*, *Maya 2012*, and in Spring, 2016, *Moon Colorado Camping*. His articles have appeared in The New York Times, National Geographic Traveler, and Yoga Journal. *Crocodile Love* is his first narrative travel book.

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Customer Reviews

:This is a damned good travel narrative, told by an author who knows the goal of travel isn't the destination, it's the journey. That's a good metaphor for life as well, and Crocodile Love manages to tell a love story in parallel. Or maybe the love story is the story, and travel is just a narrative. Anyway, that's the point: they go together. The Bermans' worldwide tour takes them through Pakistan, Northern India, Southeast Asia, and across Africa, and they travel the hard way, on local transportation and at the mercy of the petty bureaucrats that play too big a role in any world traveler's experience. There are the foibles of poor countries everywhere too: pit latrines, vermin, theft, uncertainty, and that very special type of harrowing fear that comes from knowing the bus you're riding was raked with gunfire only a day previous, for reasons only some weapon-toting sectarian understands. Add to that a dollop of mystery, some karmic intervention, and the pleasure of knowing more than ever as you sit under the Bodhi's tree, that you in fact know nothing at all. Through the voyage, the author and his wife learn to love each other. There are plenty of travel narratives out there, but they fall so often into the category of nonchalant boasting, drawing attention more to the writer and his exploits than to the people among whom he'd traveled. This isn't one of them. Instead, call it a paean to voluntourism, the act of making a trip out of volunteer work experiences that give you insight into the people whose countries you visit. Or call it the consequences of mindful travel, mindful living, mindful loving. What's the purpose of hurtling along from one backpacker hotel to the next if you're just rubbing elbows with other travelers? This is a riveting travel story, set among places the casual travel would never think of venturing (like the Gambia). But it's a compelling love story too. Because in love, as in life, the journey is all that matters, and there is no destination at all.

Joshua Berman, the author, has firsthand experience in the importance of being open to every facet of another culture. Before Berman got married, he served for two years in Nicaragua as a Peace Corp Volunteer. His time in Central America led to two professions: Spanish teacher and travel writer. As a travel writer, Berman has produced guidebooks for Belize, Nicaragua, and Colorado campgrounds, all published with Moon Handbooks. In addition, Berman is a travel columnist with The Denver Post. Crocodile Love: Travel Tales of an Extended Honeymoon is the account of Berman and Sutay's 16 month honeymoon across 16 countries in Asia and Africa. Most of their time is spent in Pakistan, India, Ghana, and The Gambia. Their adventures revolve around

bookend quests: Sutay's search for great-grandfather's legacy as the former Director of the elite Gordon College of Rawalpindi in Pakistan, and her return to the village of Sara Kunda, in The Gambia, where she had spent two years as a Peace Corp Volunteer. In between these missions, the newlyweds travel as tourists and volunteers. Their altruistic encounters humanize the people they work with along the way—and thanks to Berman's fine-tuned cultural sensitivities the narrative is never patronizing or condescending. He writes of the hardships and struggles of others straightforwardly. He tells their truths with understanding and compassion, thus bringing his readers into the light as well. The tale of their prolonged honeymoon is always engaging. Indeed, *Crocodile Love* is a page turner. What's more, Berman's sharp, sensory writing allows the reader to tag along. One can hear the sounds, react to the scents, taste the cuisine, feel the grit and grime of arduous travel, and envision everything clearly through his vivid descriptions. The quality of a great book, in my estimation, becomes evident when after months of having first read it, episodes whiff through one's mind to elicit a smile or even a momentary sense of wonder. In *Crocodile Love*, readers are lucky to have such a book.

Crocodile Love is an excellent read. Part Travel Tale, part Love Story, part Guide Book, it's a fascinating tale of two people who follow their own course and take a "service" Honeymoon. Berman does a good job taking the reader along many stories at once which keeps the flow interesting. This is a must read for anyone considering taking an extended journey to Pakistan, India or Northwest Africa as well as anyone as adventurous as these two kids were and is considering taking a non-traditional honeymoon. I particularly enjoyed Berman's honesty in telling the readers about being a newlywed and the trepidation and awesomeness which that entails. All newlyweds and/or travel junkies will love this book!

These well-told tales take you along on adventures in Asia and Africa that despite all of the uncertainties and hardships experienced along the way, the romance keeps developing. Joshua also reveals much about the people and cultures met in each region. Highly recommended and better than watching a romantic movie!

Inspiring, intimate, hilarious, thoughtful, and expansive. A breathtaking view of a year-plus trip, the challenging and gritty adventure of a newlywed couple, as seen through the lens of a husband one decade and three kids later. I couldn't put it down. Highly recommended, and would make a great gift for a newlywed or traveler in your life.

Even though the places covered - Pakistan, India and Ghana - are definitely not on my list of sites to visit, I found the story a delightful read. Berman does a masterful job of weaving a tale of his personal life with a travel narrative. My only criticism would be that in a few places, it jumped around a bit too much.

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