

Adventure Memoir for Readers' Advisors

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Speed Dating Through the Genres

RA in a Day

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Adventuring is heading off into the unknown, usually into the wilds of nature. Adventures are typically exciting, unusual and are often bold and risky with uncertain outcomes.

The combination of daring spirit and a questing nature is a hallmark of adventure memoirs. The adventure memoirist leaves home, family and friends to embark on an expedition whose risks are known to be high. Typically there is an end goal such as reaching the summit of a mountain or crossing an ocean.

Appeal factors:

1. Great Characters: real person, complex, flawed and not always likeable.
2. Great Stories: classic narrative arc
3. Extraordinary settings: often unusual places that are rare to visit
4. Activity & Learning: learn about the place and the activity
5. Pace, Tone & Style: fast-paced & thrilling or reflective
6. Inspiration: some readers will be inspired to go on their own adventures

Resources:

Awards

- The National Outdoor Book Awards
- The Banff Mountain Book Competition

Books

- *Book Lust* Nancy Pearl "Adventure by the Book: Nonfiction"
- *More Book Lust* Nancy Pearl "True Adventures"
- *Book Lust on the Go* Nancy Pearl "A is for Adventure," "Climb Ev'ry Mountain," "Hiking the (Fill in the Blank) Trail," "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," "See the Sea"
- *Genreflecting: A Guide to Popular Reading Interests* 7th ed. 2013 Cynthia Orr & Diana Herald "True Adventure"
- *Life Stories: A Guide to Reading Interests in Memoirs, Autobiographies, and Diaries* Maureen O'Connor "Travel and Adventure"

Magazines

- *Library Journal* – "RA Crossroads: What To Read After Cheryl Strayed's *Wild*" by Neal Wyatt
- *Outside Magazine*: "It's the Dawn of the Female Adventure Memoir," "The Outside Canon," "The 25 Essential Books for the Well-Read Explorer," and "The Choose-Your-Own-Adventure Summer Reading List"
- *National Geographic*: "Greatest Adventure Books"

Online Resources

- Book Riot: "20 of Your Favorite Adventure Memoirs"
- Good Reads lists: "Vicarious Thrills", "Wanderlust" & "Fantastic Women's Adventure Memoirs"
- Novelist: Getting Up to Speed in Adventure Fiction by Joyce Saricks; revised by Jessica Zellers
- Novelist Plus: "Extreme Endurance" list

Featured Adventure Memoirs:

Mountaineering & Climbing

Alone on the Wall by Alex Honnold, 2015
Annapurna by Maurice Herzog, 1951
Between a Rock and a Hard Place by Aaron Ralson, 2004
Breaking Trail: A Climbing Life by Arlene Blum, 2005
The Calling: A Life Rocked by Mountains by Barry Blanchard, 2014
Climbing Free: My Life in the Vertical World by Lynn Hill, 2002
Conquistadors of the Useless by Lionel Terray, 1961
Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer, 1996
Solo, Naga Parbat by Reinhold Messner 1980
Touching the Void Joe Simpson, 1988
Touching my Father's Soul by Jamling T. Norgay, 2001
White Spider by Heinrich Harrer, 1958

Sailing & Rowing

Adrift by Stephen Callahan, 1986
Kon-Tiki: Across the Pacific by Raft by Thor Heyerdahl, 1948
Rowboat In A Hurricane: My Amazing Journey Across A Changing Atlantic Ocean by Julie Angus, 2009
Rowing to Latitude: Journeys Along the Arctic's Edge by Jill Fredston and Doug Fesler, 2001
Sailing Alone Around the World by Joshua Slocum, 1900
South by Ernest Shackleton, 1919

Hiking, Dog Sledding & Running

Alone Across the Arctic: One Woman's Epic Journey by Dog Team by Pam Flowers and Ann Dixon, 2011
Being Caribou: Five Months on Foot with a Caribou Herd by Karsten Heuer, 2005
Born to Run by Christopher McDougall, 2009
Grandma Gatewood's Walk: The Inspiring Story of the Woman Who Saved the Appalachian Trail by Ben Montgomery, 2014
No Horizon Is So Far: Two Women and Their Extraordinary Journey Across Antarctica by Liv Arnesen and Ann Bancroft, 2003
Ultramarathon Man: Confessions of an All-Night Runner by Dean Karnazes, 2006
What I Talk About When I Talk About Running by Haruki Murakami, 2007
Winterdance: The Fine Madness of Running the Iditarod by Gary Paulson, 1994
A Walk in the Woods by Bill Bryson, 1998
Wild by Cheryl Strayed, 2012