

Travels With Alice

Calvin Trillin

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Calvin Trillin : Travels With Alice before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Travels With Alice:

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This delightful book collects Calvin Trillin's accounts of his trips to Europe with his wife, Alice, and their two daughters. In Taormina, Sicily, they cheerfully disagree with Mrs. Tweedie's 1904 assertion that the beautiful town "is being spoilt," and skip the Grand Tour in favor of swimming holes, table soccer, and taureaux piscine. In Paris, they spend a day on the Champs-Elyses comparing Freetime's "le Hitburger" to McDonald's Big Mac. In Spain, Trillin wonders whether he will run out of Spanish "the way someone might run out of flour or eggs." Filled with Trillin's characteristic humor, Travels with Alice is the perfect book for summer travelers.

.com Calvin Trillin goes through life one step behind his appetite. He says he's just a Big Hungry Boy from the Midwest, but he's also one of the funniest American writers around, writing a palate pilgrimage through Europe and the Caribbean, where Trillin fantasizes of an Italian West Indies island of Santo Prosciutto "whose steep hills are green with garlic plants." Trillin gives free play to other obsessions (like taureaux piscine), but most of the travels are happily fueled by thoughts of breakfast, lunch, and dinner. From Publishers Weekly Syndicated humor columnist, author (*If You Can't Say Something Nice*) and New Yorker writer Trillin publicly refers to his wife Alice as the principessa when they travel: "I found it improved the service in hotels." With Alice and daughters Abigail and Sarah, he here roams through France, Italy, Spain and the Caribbean, his selective eye and broad interests picking up on whatever intrigues him. In southern France, for instance, he pursues the vanishing arcade game of babyfoot and develops an obsession with the provincial event called taureaux piscine , a form of bullfighting requiring a small plastic swimming pool. In a mildly curmudgeonly tone, Trillin reveals a skeptic's attitude toward the French language and manners, though he's willing to forgive much of a country that gave the world the French fry. Food is never far from his thoughts, whether it leads him to farmers' markets in Provence, to sampling ethnic specialties on a stroll through lower Manhattan, or taste-testing the latest fast-food offerings in Paris. If he were a stand-up comedian, these essays would be called routines; whatever one calls them, they're sure to raise a smile. The peripatetic, insatiably curious Trillin is invariably entertaining. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Readers who know Trillin's work are justified in expecting from him something quite different from the ordinary travel book, and they will find it here. In this gathering of 15 recollections of holidays, many of which were written originally for periodicals such as *The New Yorker* , Trillin offers himself as essayist rather than descriptive writer, interpreter rather than guide. With him most of the time were his wife Alice and two daughters, and their experiences--renting a house in the south of France, shopping at the Central Market in Florence, and hanging around the small French town of Uzes--provide the themes of a readable, unexacting book of pleasant rambles and a multiplicity of small happenings and human stories. Those who like bright, inconsequential chatter, with many diverse scraps of information thrown in, will enjoy this book. Previewed in *Prepub Alert*, LJ 6/1/89.- A.J. Anderson, Graduate Sch. of Library Information Science, Simmons Coll., Boston Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc.