

The 'Only In' Guides: Series reviews

Hidden Europe magazine:

In a world where places become ever more similar, it is an absolute joy to stumble on the 'Only In' Guides. The author brings to the series the gaze of the enquiring outsider. A refreshing alternative to the prevailing tide of uniformity favoured by too many travel guides.

Nicky Gardner and Susanne Kries, www.eurocheapo.com:

Essential Reading: Maps and travel guides.

A guide to hidden corners, little-known places and unusual objects, says the blurb, nicely summarizing the emphasis of a series of guidebooks which we have recently discovered. "Only in Budapest" was published in 2006, with author Duncan J. D. Smith adeptly reviewing 84 offbeat and eclectic curiosities around the Hungarian capital. Now Smith has followed his Budapest debut with a trio of new titles. "Only in Berlin", "Only in Vienna" and "Only in Prague" bring a bit of Duncan Smith's distinctive style to three more central European cities, with in each case 84 hidden gems being unveiled.

We learned that a mosque not far from our Berlin home is the oldest in Germany, discovered monster water lilies in Prague and found out about old Turkish cannonballs embedded in the stonework of Vienna buildings.

The Internet may have revolutionized our travel planning, but decent maps and first rate guidebooks are still a must. Yet the latter are often not written with an eye for detail, and that's where the 'Only in' Guides series really appeals to us. The author reveals the entire history of a city and its hinterland through 84 detailed snapshots of the urban landscape, every one of them well worth a visit.

In a way, Duncan Smith's approach is similar to our efforts with "Hidden Europe" magazine gently trying to get beneath the skin of a place and identifying spots that are genuinely offbeat and not on the regular tourist circuit. And all the better as almost all the sights mapped out by Duncan Smith in his guidebooks come with no admission charges.

A reader:

Your books are exactly what I want in a guide: not too much detail – one can always get that afterwards if required – but more than enough to make a visit to a particular site worthwhile, plus simple instructions on how to get there.

www.amazon.co.uk:

Eminently easy to read, citing genuinely interesting corners, with generous historical background.

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Duncan Smith brings to the 'Only In' series the gaze of the enquiring outsider.

Zsuzsi Szollosi, Budapest:

I am a huge fan of your books. If doing the research brings you half as much joy as the books bring to me, you can call yourself a very happy person.

Mike Gerard (Travel writer):

They provide a nice twist on the conventional guidebook theme.

Chris Moss (Travel writer)

Good format your books, simple, clear and readable.

Luca Benazzi (reader):

Your travel guides are some of the best ever written.