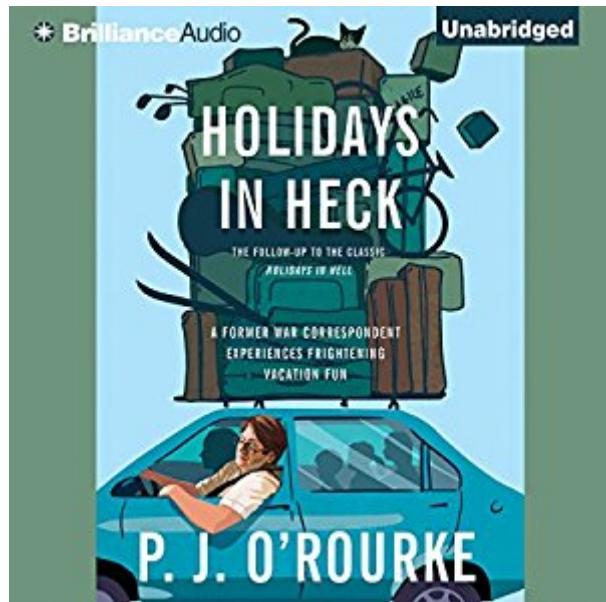


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# Holidays In Heck



## Synopsis

P. J. O'Rourke is one of his generation's most celebrated political humorists, hailed as "the funniest writer in America" by both Time and The Wall Street Journal. Twenty-three years ago he published the classic travelogue *Holidays in Hell*, in which he trotted the globe as a "trouble tourist," a chaos rubberneck, sight-seeing at wars, rebellions, riots, political crises, and other monuments of human folly. After the Iraq War - "too old to keep being scared stiff and too stiff to keep sleeping on the ground" - he retired from what foreign correspondents call "being a s\*\*thole specialist." But he couldn't give up traveling to ridiculous places, often with his wife and three young children in tow. Usually he was left wishing he were under artillery fire again. O'Rourke's journeys take him to locales both near (and nearly bizarre) and far (and far from normal). Having made a joke that Ski magazine takes seriously, he winds up on a family ski vacation - to Ohio. The highest point of elevation is the six-foot ski instructor his wife thinks is cute. Convinced by an old friend and one too many drinks that "a horse trek is just backpacking on someone else's back," he finds himself (barely) in the saddle, crossing the mountains to a part of Kyrgyzstan so remote that the Kyrgyzs have never seen it. He visits Kabul for the food and conversation (excellent lamb chops and a droll after dinner story about the mullah and the cow). He even takes his kids to his erstwhile home away from home, the bar at the Foreign Correspondents Club in Hong Kong. "'Would the little ones like something to eat?' asked the waiter. They serve food at the FCC? Who knew?' *Holidays in Heck* shows P. J. O'Rourke in top form - a little older, a little wiser, going to the bathroom a little more often, but just as darkly funny as he was in *Holidays in Hell*. Here is a hilarious and often moving portrait of life in the fast lane, as he's always lived it - only this time with the backseat driver that marriage entails and three small hostages to fortune strapped into the booster seats.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

There are those who say that P.J. O'Rourke isn't the writer he used to be: that he's turned into a flabby, lazy caricature of himself, soured on too much whiskey, too much life, and too much time spent in the company of the grumpy fringe (right-wing division). In fact, I'm one of those people; I was deeply disappointed by his last two books, *Don't Vote -- It Just Encourages the Bastards* and *Driving Like Crazy*, though the former, being almost entirely reheated second-tier laugh lines from Rush Limbaugh, was notably worse than the latter, which both reprinted some work from O'Rourke's younger days and gave him scope to write about something other than how much he hates liberals. *HOLIDAYS IN HECK*, though, somewhat restores my faith in O'Rourke: it's a collection of magazine pieces from the past decade, organized chronologically and unified by the fact that nearly every single one of them sees him go somewhere to do something. (The title clearly nods strongly towards O'Rourke's classic collection *HOLIDAYS IN HELL*, though, back in those days, he was a war correspondent, and so every single place he went was a hell-hole. The choices are much nicer and cushier this time around, befitting a man pushing sixty and dragging a substantially younger wife and three small children behind him.) Perhaps, like my father-in-law -- and like a million other fathers-in-law across this fine nation of ours -- O'Rourke has become one of those men with whom one must never discuss politics.

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