



Drive Nacho Drive

Brad Van Orden , Sheena Van Orden

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On an afternoon just like many before it, Brad Van Orden sat at his desk. When a coworker meandered past his window, Brad succumbed to an impulse and blurted out the most outlandish thing he could think of—"Hey Steve, let's drive your hippie bus to Tierra del Fuego." This prompted Steve's halfhearted response: "I don't think so." But this got Brad thinking. What if we just dropped everything and left? Isn't there more to life than this? He messaged his wife with a question: "Want to do this?", to which she immediately responded: "Yes!" They clearly had no idea what they were getting themselves into. Drive Nacho Drive tells the hilarious and sometimes harrowing story of what happens when Brad and Sheena Van Orden trade in the American Dream for a year on the roads of Central and South America aboard "Nacho", their quirky and somewhat temperamental Volkswagen van. As a result of questionable decision-making skills and intermittent bad luck, Brad and Sheena repeatedly find themselves in over their heads. Whether negotiating cliff-hanging roads in rebel territory, getting caught illegally smuggling a transmission in a suitcase over international lines, mounting a stealth mission to steal Nacho back from a deranged Colombian auto dismantler, or clinging to the side of a vegetable truck while descending a 16,000 foot Andean pass, there seems to be no limit to the predicaments that these two can get themselves into. With Drive Nacho Drive, the Van Ordens deliver a thoughtful, hilarious, and mouthwatering depiction of adventure and misadventure on the Pan-American highway—one that will leave you simultaneously shaking your head and holding your sides, while asking yourself, isn't there more to life than this?

Drive Nacho Drive Details

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JoEllen Baham says

A pleasure to read

Brad Van Orden is a natural born story teller. His humor is seemingly unquashable even when unhappy with circumstances. Sheena also has a great voice. Their adventures are so interesting and varied. I don't usually review because I am no good at it but I really enjoyed this and will continue on their odyssey with them holding my breath for the next hairpin curve.

Jesse R Johnson says

I really enjoyed this book. Made me envious of the couple in the book. What a great adventure. Good read.

Jackie says

The best part about this book was to have a list of potential scout out locations for future travels. However, it lacked depth and was focused a bit too much on the mechanical problems versus supplying actual insights into the journey (besides trials which can be expected) or really anything amazing that happened. Also, the chapters which were written by Sheena just seemed a bit of a random toss in. Think I'm done reading travel books for awhile now.

Sarah says

Drive Nacho Drive is the tale of VW bus "Nacho," its passengers Brad and Sheena, and their sojourn from Arizona to Argentina. Brad and Sheena, tired of their conventional lives, quit their jobs in order to drive around the world. This book is the story of the first year or so of their endeavor. It is a fast-paced tale, full of fun and colorful anecdotes about the people, places, food, and sights encountered along the way.

The story took a little while to get going. But once Nacho got on the road, author Brad found his stride. (Sheena writes in along the way with her own chapters, but Brad authored the bulk of the book.) It's obvious that Brad isn't a writer, and that bothered me at first, like when he used the word "scalded" when he meant "scolded." Ultimately, the story was so good, I was able to overlook the lack of proofreading.

Much of the book's first half centers around the trio's auto-repair woes. Brad is an engineer, and I was amused at the detailed way in which he describes Nacho's many problems. Later, however, following a hilarious and ultimately successful attempt to smuggle illegal VW parts into Colombia, Brad eventually is able to fix Nacho properly. Car repairs are mercifully missing from the second half of the book.

Brad and Sheena obviously spend lots of time driving, but they travel slowly enough to get a feel for each country they visit, whether it's witnessing bizarre local festivals or just taking time to stop at food stands and

farmers' markets. Brad's chapters are often funny and even a little manic (some of his encounters with cops along the way made me laugh out loud). Sheena's infrequent contributions are an excellent counterpoint -- slower-paced and reflective. I enjoyed her vignettes about the food, people, and cultures they encountered.

If I had to choose a favorite part of the book, it was reading about Brad and Sheena's adventures in Peru. I had not realized what varied terrain and experiences Peru had to offer. Now I have to put another destination on my "someday travel" list.

I found *Drive Nacho Drive* to be quite the page-turner. Reading it was kind of like eating candy. The chapters are short and snappy, so "just one more" was my mantra. So if you are in the mood for fast-paced, adventurous, travel-porn brain candy, this most certainly is the book you need to read. I eagerly await their second book.

Laura says

It was okay, but not great. The writing is mediocre, and they needed a proofreader/editor. Some of the places they visited were interesting, and some of it was funny, but I'm not sure I would bother with their follow up unless they made some changes to their writing style. (Sheena's chapters were way better than Brad's.)

Chuck says

This is quite a book. A young couple quits their job and decides to travel from their home in Arizona to the southern tip of the Americas, Tierra del Fuego. This adventure is done in their vehicle that they named Ignacio or as close personal friends call "Nacho". The adventure begins in the U.S. and wanders through Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Bolivia, Argentina and ends at the end of the world in Tierra del Fuego. This adventure meant more to me because I could relive my experiences in many of the places that they visited, however, I got there by much more conventional means. The book has chapters written by both authors, namely Brad and Sheena. Brad spends a great deal of time centering on his mechanical throes with "Nacho" and Sheena loves to write about food which gives a good balance. Brad's writing is often hysterical due to his youth, his nerve and his cleverness. The people and the places that he encounters are all covered well and thoroughly. If you are interested in finding unusual food, drink, scenery, auto parts, bus drivers, friendly natives and police and officials with their hands out, this is the book for you. Truly a travel adventure. The book has no photos, however there is a website that has a few pictures. I was unable to locate the one mentioned in the book.

Mimi says

Brad and Sheena drove a VW Vanagon from Arizona to the tip of South America. While they were on the trip, they blogged about it. This is a self-published collection of their blog posts, and as such there are editing and spelling errors galore.

A pleasant travelogue, they are foodies so lots of discussion is had about what they ate along the way, and they are honest about some of their poor decisions. It'll be a fun Book Club discussion.

Claire says

Great insight into how people "manage" in foreign lands. It's about travel, finding your way, getting off the beaten path . . . far off, in some cases, and being open enough to see that you don't have to have a lot of stuff to enjoy life. Oh, and the food. Love their adventures in the world of food. You don't need to have a Vanagon to enjoy this read, but it doesn't hurt.

Brenda Wyss says

Loved the book, loved the story, loved the idea, just wish he had focused more on the places they went rather than the details of the car troubles they had.

Rebecca W says

Really fun travelogue, I felt like I was along for the ride on Brad and Sheena's adventure.

Dylan says

Don't read this book if you're looking for a literary masterpiece. Read this book if you're looking for adventure. I'm not sure about other editions, but in the edition I was reading, typos and the like were abundant. There were a few parts where it was obvious the text had simply been copied and pasted from the blog (it's rare that the words "click here" appear in print, but in my edition, they did materialize at least a couple of times.) But in the end, I enjoyed the book for the story and information. *Drive Nacho Drive* is more like a dinnertime conversation than something completely serious, and I liked that for this book. I've been wanting to make this journey for years, and hope to one day follow in the footsteps of Nacho. For now, I am satisfied by living vicariously through the story of Brad and Sheena. I actually hadn't heard of their blog before reading the book, but I'll certainly be checking it out now, and will be eagerly awaiting the second part of this tale.

jennyoseach says

I discovered the Drive Nacho Drive blog when I first started dreaming of driving the entire Pan American Highway. Brad has skill as a storyteller and a talent for highlighting the humor in every situation.

I've continued to follow their journey around the world in their VW van, and am never disappointed in the stories of their adventures (and misadventures). Fun and inspiring!

Carol Rode says

Great story.

Really well written and seeing all the troubles they had I would have probably quit and returned home. All the work he put in. Nacho, I was surprised it still kept going. All in all it was a very interesting book and now I can't wait to start his other book to end it all if it does.

Myra L Rice says

Arizona to the southernmost point of South America

Very well written account about an amazing trip! Brad and Sheena travel from Arizona through Central America then through South America to the southernmost point. I was very amazed at the proficiency of Brad at fixing their van several times!

Alejandro says

I felt that the book was written by people who traveled, but somehow did not fully bond with the world that they traveled through. There were instances in which they could have dug deeper and explained the economics of the places that they visited and even listed statistics to create a much deeper understanding. They, however, avoided doing this for the most part and instead focused on the traditional travel log style of writing. I think that there were some pretty memorable moments, but they are also hampered by slow monotonous talk. The author had a fascinating struggle with fishing, but never once thought to interact with locals on a deeper level regarding the matter. The book is also heavily written by the male traveler Brad and seems to include Shana (I believe that's her name) sparingly. I am curious to see what things they do on the next leg of their trip, but cannot help shaking the feeling that this is a very forgettable book in the long term.
