



One Summer: America, 1927

By Bill Bryson

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One Summer: America, 1927 By Bill Bryson

A *Chicago Tribune* Noteworthy Book
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In *One Summer* Bill Bryson, one of our greatest and most beloved nonfiction writers, transports readers on a journey back to one amazing season in American life.

The summer of 1927 began with one of the signature events of the twentieth century: on May 21, 1927, Charles Lindbergh became the first man to cross the Atlantic by plane nonstop, and when he landed in Le Bourget airfield near Paris, he ignited an explosion of worldwide rapture and instantly became the most famous person on the planet. Meanwhile, the titanically talented Babe Ruth was beginning his assault on the home run record, which would culminate on September 30 with his sixtieth blast, one of the most resonant and durable records in sports history. In between those dates a Queens housewife named Ruth Snyder and her corset-salesman lover garroted her husband, leading to a murder trial that became a huge tabloid sensation. Alvin “Shipwreck” Kelly sat atop a flagpole in Newark, New Jersey, for twelve days—a new record. The American South was clobbered by unprecedeted rain and by flooding of the Mississippi basin, a great human disaster, the relief efforts for which were guided by the uncannily able and insufferably pompous Herbert Hoover. Calvin Coolidge interrupted an already leisurely presidency for an even more relaxing three-month vacation in the Black Hills of South Dakota. The gangster Al Capone tightened his grip on the illegal booze business through a gaudy and murderous reign of terror and municipal corruption. The first true “talking picture,” Al Jolson’s *The Jazz Singer*, was filmed and forever changed the motion picture industry. The four most powerful central bankers on earth met in secret session on a Long Island estate and made a fateful decision that virtually guaranteed a future crash and depression.

All this and much, much more transpired in that epochal summer of 1927, and Bill Bryson captures its outsized personalities, exciting events, and occasional just plain weirdness with his trademark vividness, eye for telling detail, and delicious humor. In that year America stepped out onto the world stage as the main event, and *One Summer* transforms it all into narrative nonfiction of the highest order.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

An Amazon Best Book of the Month, October 2013: It's amazing what a talented writer at the top of his game can do with a seemingly narrow topic. The title of Bill Bryson's latest sums up the simplicity of his task: to document the "most extraordinary summer" of 1927, beginning with Charles Lindbergh's successful flight across the Atlantic. Even though we know many of these stories--Lindbergh's flight, Babe Ruth's 60-homerun season, the Mississippi River flood, Al Capone's bullet-ridden reign over Chicago--in Bryson's hands, and in the context of one amazing summer of twentieth-century ingenuity and accomplishment, they feel fresh, lively, and just plain fun. The book is so jammed with "did you know it" nuggets and fascinating origin stories (the opening of the Holland Tunnel, the first Mickey Mouse prototype, the source of the term "hot dog"), the effect is like sitting beside a brilliant, slightly boozy barstool raconteur, who knows a little bit about *everything*. From a tabloid murder trial to a flagpole-sitting record to the secret origins of the looming Great Depression, *One Summer* offers a new look at a transitional period in history, re-introducing us to such characters as Capone, Jack Dempsey, Al Jolson, Charles Ponzi, and Herbert Hoover. Ultimately, this is a book about the moment when important things, for good or ill, began happening in the US. With a giddy narrative voice and keen eye for off-kilter details, Bryson has spun a clever tale of America's coming of age.

--Neal Thompson

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review On May 21, 1927, when Charles Lindbergh set off to be the first man to cross the Atlantic alone in an airplane, he profoundly changed the culture and commerce of America and its image abroad. Add to that Babe Ruth's efforts to break the home-run record he set, Henry Ford's retooling of the Model T into the Model A, the execution of accused anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti, and Al Jolson appearing in the first talkie, and 1927 became the pivot point when the U.S. began to dominate the world in virtually everything—military, culture, commerce, and technology. Bryson's inimitable wit and exuberance are on full display in this wide-ranging look at the major events in an exciting summer in America. Bryson makes fascinating interconnections: a quirky Chicago judge and Prohibition defender leaves the bench to become baseball commissioner following the White Sox scandal, likely leaving Chicago open for gangster Al Capone; the thrill-hungry tabloids and a growing cult of celebrity watchers dog Lindbergh's every move and chronicle Ruth's every peccadillo. Among the other events in a frenzied summer: record flooding of the Mississippi River and the ominous beginnings of the Great Depression. Bryson offers delicious detail and breathtaking suspense about events whose outcomes are already known. A glorious look at one summer in America. **HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** Bryson is the author of such best-selling books as *A Walk in the Woods* (1998) and *A Short History of Nearly Everything* (2008) and is sure to make a repeat appearance on the best-seller lists with his newest work. --Vanessa Bush

Review

"Bryson writes in a style as effervescent as the time itself... A wonderful romp."

—*The New York Times*

"...A skillful lesson on the dynamics and personalities that shaped today's America and on how far the country has evolved from a gaudy era fondly but imperfectly recalled."

—*Wall Street Journal*

"There are two kinds of readers: those who love Bill Bryson and those who haven't met him yet... Colorful, rollicking and sweet, this is Bryson being Bryson. Which is to say: marvelous."

—**People**

"A glorious look at one summer in America...Bryson offers delicious detail and breathtaking suspense about events whose outcomes are already known."

—**Booklist, Starred Review**

"This splendid book, written in the breezy and humorous style that has come to be Bryson's trademark, is sure to delight readers steeped in the history of the period as well as those looking to acquaint themselves with it for the first time."

—**The Associated Press**

"Bryson will set you right in this canter through one summer of one year that—once you've turned the final page—will seem more critical to American history than you might have reckoned before... [He] is a master of the sidelong, a man who can turn obscurity into hilarity with seemingly effortless charm—and *One Summer* is an entertaining addition to a body of work that is at its best when it celebrates the unexpected and the obscure... This is a jolly jalopy ride of a book; Bryson runs down the byways of American history and finds diversion in every roadside stop."

—**Financial Times**

"...Bryson himself is captivated by the events of summer, 1927. And why not? They included Charles Lindbergh's solo flight over the Atlantic, Sacco and Vanzetti's execution, Gutzon Borglum's start on the sculpting of Mt. Rushmore, the Dempsey-Carpentier fight, and Babe Ruth's 60 home runs—all of which Bryson covers in characteristically sparkling prose."

—**Publishers Weekly**

"As a historian, Bryson is the antithesis of stuffy. He's a storyteller, pure and simple, and *One Summer* is a collection of a great many tales about people and events, centered on (but not limited to) a single season in a single year... Bryson could have written a book just as interesting about the summer of 1949 or 1913. That's because his subject isn't really a year. It's human nature in all its odd and amazing array."

—**Chicago Tribune**

"The book's strength is in showing the overlap of significant events and the interaction of personalities."

—**Library Journal**

"What comes across clearest in Bryson's lucid, lighthearted narrative is the pure energy and crazed optimism of the era. Sure, the rollicking party would end, but it was fun while it lasted—as is Bryson's *One Summer*."

—**Minneapolis Star-Tribune**

"...*One Summer* wins you over by the sheer weight of its encyclopedic enthusiasms."

—**The Telegraph**

"Bryson is a marvelous historian, not only exhaustively accurate, but highly entertaining. If you avoid textbook histories because they seem too dry, pick up *One Summer*, or any other of Mr. Bryson's books. They are intelligent delights."

—**Liz Smith, The Huffington Post**

"Highly recommend *One Summer: America, 1927* by Bill Bryson—interesting, entertaining visit to an incredible year."

—**John McCain**

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Deloras Pinkston:

Why don't make it to be your habit? Right now, try to prepare your time to do the important behave, like looking for your favorite publication and reading a reserve. Beside you can solve your long lasting problem; you can add your knowledge by the guide entitled One Summer: America, 1927. Try to make the book One Summer: America, 1927 as your friend. It means that it can for being your friend when you sense alone and beside those of course make you smarter than ever. Yeah, it is very fortuned for you. The book makes you far more confidence because you can know almost everything by the book. So , let us make new experience and also knowledge with this book.

Sara Burns:

Now a day individuals who Living in the era everywhere everything reachable by interact with the internet and the resources inside can be true or not involve people to be aware of each data they get. How individuals to be smart in having any information nowadays? Of course the reply is reading a book. Looking at a book can help men and women out of this uncertainty Information mainly this One Summer: America, 1927 book because book offers you rich facts and knowledge. Of course the knowledge in this book hundred % guarantees there is no doubt in it you probably know this.

Kyra Franson:

The event that you get from One Summer: America, 1927 is the more deep you rooting the information that hide inside the words the more you get enthusiastic about reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to recognise but One Summer: America, 1927 giving you enjoyment feeling of reading. The author conveys their point in a number of way that can be understood simply by anyone who read the item because the author of this guide is well-known enough. This book also makes your current vocabulary increase well. Making it easy to understand then can go together with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We highly recommend you for having this particular One Summer: America, 1927 instantly.

Carl Johnson:

What is your hobby? Have you heard this question when you got college students? We believe that that issue was given by teacher for their students. Many kinds of hobby, All people has different hobby. Therefore you know that little person like reading or as looking at become their hobby. You need to know that reading is very important and also book as to be the thing. Book is important thing to increase you knowledge, except your current teacher or lecturer. You see good news or update regarding something by book. A substantial number of sorts of books that can you choose to adopt be your object. One of them is One Summer: America, 1927.

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