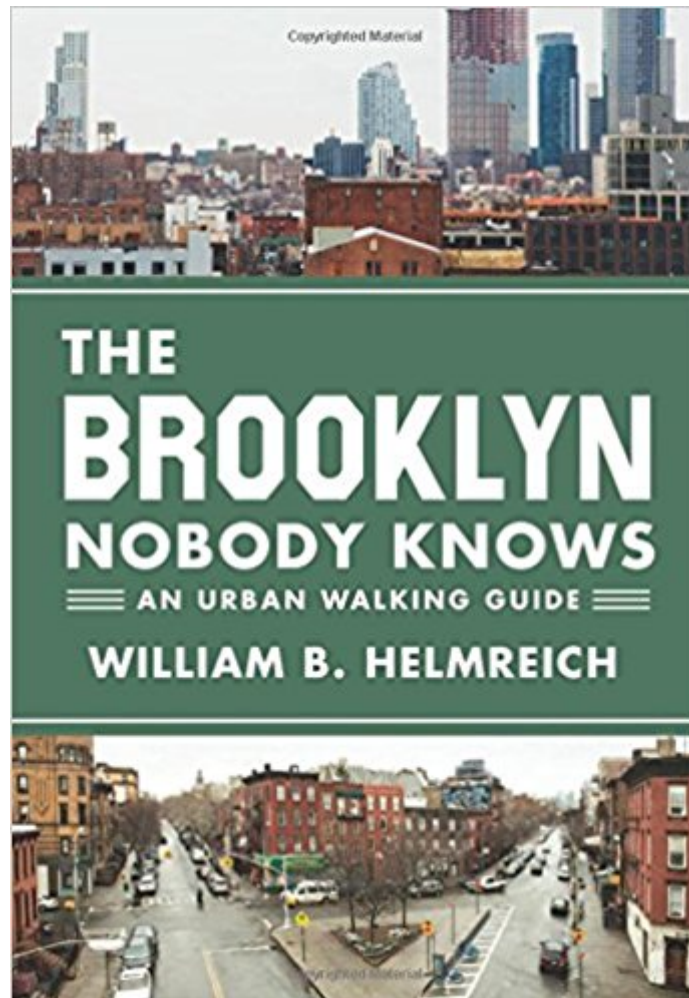




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# The Brooklyn Nobody Knows: An Urban Walking Guide



## Synopsis

Bill Helmreich walked every block of New York City—6,000 miles in all—to write the award-winning *The New York Nobody Knows*. Now he has re-walked Brooklyn—some 816 miles—to write this one-of-a-kind walking guide to the city's hottest borough. Drawing on hundreds of conversations he had with residents during his block-by-block journeys, *The Brooklyn Nobody Knows* captures the heart and soul of a diverse, booming, and constantly changing borough that defines cool around the world. The guide covers every one of Brooklyn's forty-four neighborhoods, from Greenpoint to Coney Island, providing a colorful portrait of each section's most interesting, unusual, and unknown people, places, and things. Along the way you will learn about a Greenpoint park devoted to plants and trees that produce materials used in industry; a hornsmith who practices his craft in Prospect-Lefferts Gardens; a collection of 1,140 stuffed animals hanging from a tree in Bergen Beach; a five-story Brownsville mural that depicts Zionist leader Theodor Herzl—and that was the brainchild of black teenagers; Brooklyn's most private yet public beach in Manhattan Beach; and much, much more. An unforgettably vivid chronicle of today's Brooklyn, the book can also be enjoyed without ever leaving home—but it's almost guaranteed to inspire you to get out and explore one of the most fascinating urban areas anywhere. Covers every one of Brooklyn's 44 neighborhoods, providing a colorful portrait of their most interesting, unusual, and unknown people, places, and things. Each neighborhood section features a brief overview and history; a detailed, user-friendly map keyed to the text; and a lively guided walking tour. Draws on the author's 816-mile walk through every Brooklyn neighborhood. Includes insights from conversations with hundreds of residents.

## Book Information

Paperback: 424 pages

Publisher: Princeton University Press (October 4, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 069116682X

ISBN-13: 978-0691166827

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 1.3 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 34 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #180,814 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #3 in Books > Travel > United

States > New York > Brooklyn #60 in [Â Books > Travel > United States > New York > General](#)  
#126 in [Â Books > Travel > United States > Northeast > Mid Atlantic](#)

## Customer Reviews

2017 Finalist in Regional, ForeWord Reviews INDIEFAB Book of the Year

Awards"Helmreich's chatty Baedeker is a hefty, multifaceted deep dive into New York's popular and most populous borough. He trekked 816 miles from Greenpoint to Cypress Hills, organizing the borough's 71 square miles into 44 communities along the way. New Yorkers and tourists alike can discover the borough's only Cambodian temple, a 1652 farmhouse described as the city's oldest surviving structure and a former mansion transformed into an inn in Bedford-Stuyvesant."--Sam Roberts, New York Times"Even Brooklyn residents will learn something new in this inclusive book, the first of five planned New York City walking guides. . . . Helmreich's narrative focuses on the unusual and unknown, providing street maps . . . of Brooklyn's 44 distinct neighborhoods, equaling 71 square miles. . . . Crisp pictures, such as those of Mrs. Maxwell's Bakery--New York's largest party cake store--safety tips, and an impressive bibliography are welcome additions to an appealing work for locals, tourists, and urban explorers."--Library Journal"Both a sit-and-read title and one to consult on the go, Helmreich's guide is chock-full of Brooklyn-insider details from the author's own extensive walking explorations. It's the first of five planned volumes, one for each New York City borough."--Booklist"Helmreich's upbeat book is built around walking Brooklyn's streets day and night, and also talking to people he encounters. He sees Brooklyn as diverse and ever changing. . . . From Greenpoint to Coney Island, every section is given a chapter, with Helmreich focusing on less known aspects of these neighborhoods."--Leonard Quart, Berkshire Eagle"[Helmreich] knocks around all forty-four neighborhoods, all seventy-one square miles, and may well have wished a good day to each of the borough's 2.6 million inhabitants. Helmreich is smitten with Brooklyn; I'll even take the liberty of saying he loves the place, loves the whole city. He's the kind of guy who asks questions. . . . He knows there are parts of Brooklyn that can only be disarmed by common decency--not that he isn't commonly decent. . . . That takes a special, radiant aura of street credibility. He also knows the power of laughter, and when to laugh."--Peter Lewis, Barnes and Noble Review"Professor and historian William Helmreich follows up his successful tome *The New York Nobody Knows*--for which he canvassed every single NYC block, covering 6,000 miles--with a Brooklyn-specific edition, sharing stories of the unlikely characters and places he met along the way. (And yes, more books about the other four boroughs are coming, too)."--Amy Plitt, Curbed

"The Brooklyn Nobody Knows is a unique ground-level travel guide that opens up the human sides of New York's most dynamic borough, introducing the reader to the Brooklynites that bring life to its streets and neighborhoods."--Richard Alba, CUNY Graduate Center

"A superb guide to New York's most fascinating, endlessly changing borough. Written by a master ethnographer, The Brooklyn Nobody Knows will provide both the urbanist and the tourist with the sociological insight and street-level detail sure to make their wanderings through Brooklyn satisfying and pleasurable."--Roger Waldinger, UCLA

"This guidebook is a delight to read and it's going to be a big hit with Brooklynites and anyone else who is curious about the borough. Far more than the usual travel guide, it is just filled with insight. It makes me want to jump on the subway and head over to Brooklyn. I want to see all the idiosyncratic things it describes, from the City Reliquary, to the resurgence of the Syrian Jewish community, to the outlandish McMansions."--Harvey Molotch, New York University

My daughter is planning to move to Brooklyn next year, I hope she finds this helpful!

A very encouraging and challenging foot walker's travelogue. I look forward to what he does on the other four New York City boroughs he plans to write on.

Brilliant and fun.

Wonderful trip down memory lane if you grew up in Brooklyn

I was born and raised in Brooklyn and have lived here all of my 74 years. In that time I have traveled around Brooklyn extensively, in cars, public transportation, and on foot, and thought I knew just about everything there is to know about the borough. But I did not travel in a systematic way, covering every single block in every single neighborhood in a short time, visiting establishments, and striking up conversations with residents, as Professor Helmreich did. And of course Brooklyn is always changing. So, although there was much in his book with which I was familiar, there was also a great deal I did not know about, and learned from his fascinating work. It's not called "The Brooklyn Nobody Knows" for nothing. Prof. Helmreich discusses a bit of the history and describes and captures the flavor and feel of the diverse neighborhoods, their natural features, their houses and stores and businesses, including architectural styles, their recreational facilities, and their ethnic

and religious makeup, and introduces us to some very interesting persons. But Helmreich concentrates throughout on unique, unusual, and lesser-known facts and features of Brooklyn. Though Helmreich is a professor, his writing is not dry. The book is a relatively quick and easy read, conversational in tone, and quite enjoyable. Nevertheless, as one might expect, the book is also peppered with many scholarly insights about issues facing Brooklyn, as well as other urban areas of our nation.

This book is very disappointing in many way, and I'm sorry I bought it. As I skim it and focus in on areas and neighborhoods I know well, there are NUMEROUS mistakes; ( just one glaring one is calling Nassau Avenue Nassau Street, which is really confusing because ther IS a Nassau street in South Brookly and in Manhattan). So much has been missed in the very haphazard routes taken. This wouldn't be a problem if Mr Helmreich hadn't written blanket statements and overviews of entire areas. Many parallel and side streets to his walks walks COMPLETELY contradict the grandiose conclusions he comes to about neighborhoods, stores and restaurants, and more...!The book is also extrememly heavy and awkward to hold and use, so if you want to carry along on a walk, it would be unpleasant. As a long time waker in the city, I was extremely disappointed at the thinness of new information and tips, and on the historical notes that seem lazily attained and undeveloped, impersonal.

This is a wonderful and comprehensive book about Brooklyn. If you don't know the borough this is the perfect way to learn about it. The author covers every single neighborhood in Brooklyn, all 44 of them, in a unique and highly entertaining way. Based on an 800 mile walk through its streets and hundreds of fascinating conversations with its residents he tells us about the unknown aspects----the Bergen Beach man who put up 1,140 stuffed toys in his cherry tree; the Caribbean-born hornsmith who carves birds, ships, and other items from animal horns; the nature walk in Greenpoint lined with trees whose products are used in industry; the stunning church in Carroll Gardens where Al Capone was married; I simply couldn't put it down!

"The Brooklyn Nobody Knows" by William B. Helmreich is the first of five planned books - one for each borough of New York City. Mr. Helmreich is Distinguished Professor of Sociology at City College of New York, and he brings a sociologist's set of lenses to his examination of the disparate neighborhoods of Brooklyn. The result of his research and writing is a treasure trove of information and insights!He has walked all of the blocks of all five boroughs of NYC, and has made note of

features that most visitors to New York would not normally be aware of. This hefty volume is a godsend to anyone who aspires to delve deeply into the hidden treasures of Brooklyn. For each of the 44 discrete Brooklyn neighborhoods, he follows a similar pattern. After describing the widely agreed upon boundaries of the neighborhood, he offers up a history of the ethnic and socio-economic and religious groups that have called this neighborhood home over the changing decades and generations. He often comments upon the pluses and minuses of the process of gentrification that is creeping across the Brooklyn landscape block by block. I am eager to continue sharing what I have learned about Brooklyn with my many friends who inhabit Brooklyn and call one of its neighborhoods their home turf. This book holds equal value and delight for those who feel they already know this borough well, as well as those beginning their exploration of its wonders and idiosyncrasies. If you love learning a city by walking it, this volume will be an invaluable guide and companion.

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