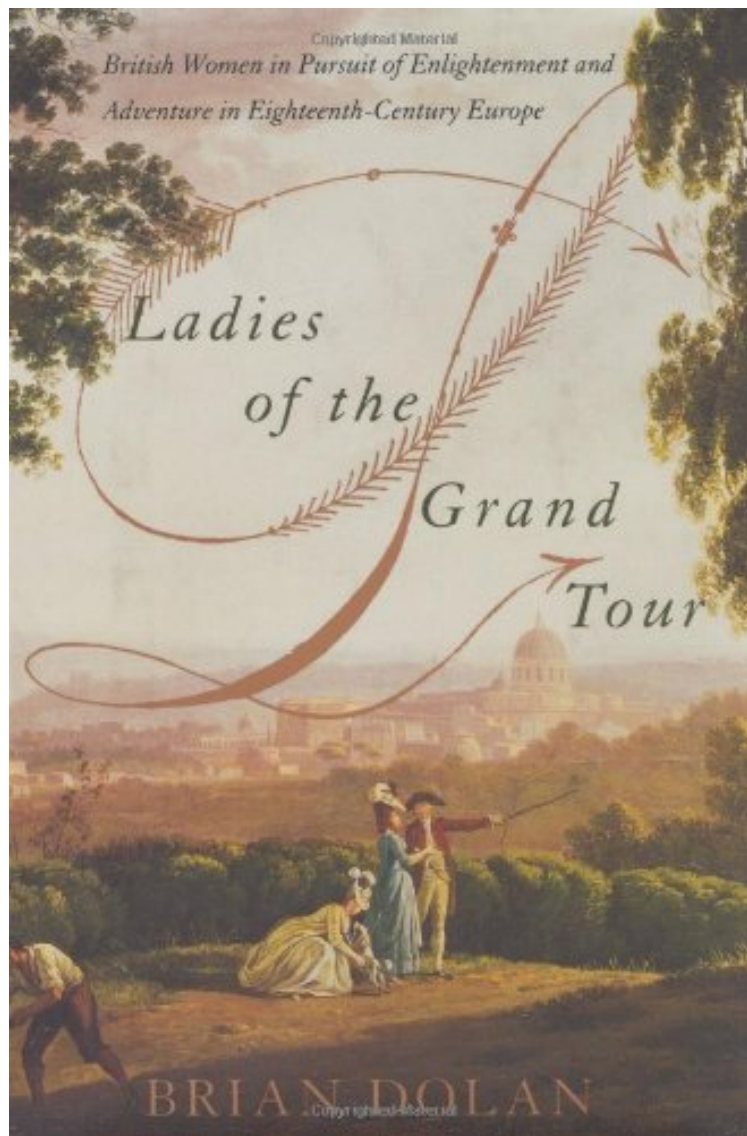


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Ladies of the Grand Tour: British Women in Pursuit of Enlightenment and Adventure in Eighteenth-Century Europe

Brian Dolan

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Brian Dolan : Ladies of the Grand Tour: British Women in Pursuit of Enlightenment and Adventure in Eighteenth-Century Europe before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ladies of the Grand Tour: British Women in Pursuit of Enlightenment and Adventure in Eighteenth-Century Europe:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Understanding the nature of Victorian women travel
By Lauren M Riepl
Excellent condition and great read.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A great resource.
By cspt2A
good resource-- slightly dry but solid.
0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An Overlooked Influence on Women's Progress
By Dr. Anne Mills King
This charming book revives interest in these 18th-century travelers and female wits. I was delighted to find it on --gently used! Finding these treasures is almost as good as haunting a bookstore--almost!! The book's condition was quite good--a few topic sentences had been underlined in bright blue ink. So I imagined a girl in a private school. The book illustrates a period and a class not usually treated seriously (18th-century women travelers from England to the continent). Lady Holland's spaniel has the same name as my spaniel's--a coincidence (illustration following page 114).

According to the 1747 publication *The Art of Governing a Wife*, women in Georgian England were to "lay up and save, look to the house, talk to few and take of all within." However, some women broke from these directives and took up the distinctly male privilege of traveling to the Continent to develop mind, spirit, and body. For many the Grand Tour -- often undertaken in great parades of coaches laden with servants, trunks, and furniture -- became an intellectual and romantic rite of passage. The landscape, health spas, salons, and social scene of Enlightenment Europe provided a wealth of glamorous, revolutionary, and therapeutic experiences from which many ladies returned "the best informed and most perfect creatures." Brian Dolan leads us into the hearts and minds of the ladies through their stories, thoughts, and court gossip, recorded in journals, letters, and diaries. *Ladies of the Grand Tour* creates a mesmerizing portrait of a previously overlooked slice of eighteenth-century life.

From Publishers Weekly
For upper-class Englishmen in the 18th century, travel on the Continent represented pretty much what it does for college students today a chance to learn a few things and have some unsupervised fun. For women of that era, however, it might represent an opportunity denied to them at home: freedom from a narrowly defined femininity, the chance to develop and exercise their intelligence, an escape from an abusive marriage or, occasionally, a career as a travel writer or political correspondent. As Dolan points out, however, these benefits came at some real cost, since Continental travel, even for the rich, was neither comfortable nor safe, and the woman who remained too long abroad risked condemnation at home as unpatriotic, unfeminine or unchaste. While some were decidedly the last, using a sojourn abroad to pursue an irregular sexual liaison or to conceal its results, many found in revolutionary Paris or benign Tuscany a personal and intellectual liberty impossible in England and, like Mary Wollstonecraft, wrote home to say so. Although this book is richly detailed and immensely entertaining, it is a bit of a grab-bag in which women of no particular interest jostle for space with the genuinely significant. Still, it is hard to forget the otherwise obscure Elizabeth Webster, reluctant repatriate, being borne backwards over the Alps so that she would not lose sight of her beloved Italy until the last possible moment. 16 pages of color photos not seen by PW. (Nov. 16)
Forecast: This entertaining volume will please students of women's history and of travel literature.
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From Booklist
The notion of a grand tour of Europe as an essential rite of passage for aristocratic young Englishmen has been a historical given for generations. Dolan, a university lecturer, is more interested in a less common phenomenon: British women who traveled the Continent at a time when most aristocratic women's travels were narrowly constrained. Drawing on journals, letters, and diaries, Dolan explores the many goals those women sought in travel: "Education Improvement," "Liberty Independence," "Fashionable Society Foreign Affairs," "Sea Breezes Sanity," "Fine Art Fashion," "Revelation Revolution." Continental nations were hardly a feminist paradise, but traveling itself gave many women more freedom than they would have had at home, and writing about their travels gave many an opportunity to exercise their intelligence and define the characteristics of the Georgian lady of letters. Although it is not an essential acquisition, *Ladies of the Grand Tour* is thoroughly researched and gracefully written. Mary Carroll
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About the Author
Brian Dolan is Wellcome Research Lecturer at the University of East Anglia. He received his doctorate from Cambridge University in 1995 and has been a history lecturer in Sweden and London. He is the author of *Exploring European Frontiers: British Travelers in the Age of Enlightenment*. An American by birth, Brian Dolan lives with his wife in Cambridge, England.