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Hola, Morocha!: A Black Woman's Adventures In Buenos Aires: Culture Shock



Synopsis

“Inspirational, sexy and funny, this literary travelogue series will take you on a Buenos Aires adventure that you’ll never forget and also want to recommend to other travel lovers.” —Tameka Mullins, Author of *12 Hours of Daylight* and *A Jason Jules Novella*

“Part memoir and part travel guide, *Hola, Morocha!* captures the joys and frustrations of being a woman abroad with humor and grace. As a black woman in Argentina, Jennifer Poe was indeed a stranger in a strange land — only 0.4 percent of its 41 million inhabitants identified as Afro-Argentine in 2010 — so you know immediately that this is not your typical travelogue. Accompanying Jennifer on the ups and downs of her journey helped me remember everything I loved and hated about living abroad. *Hola, Morocha!* made me want to hop the next plane to Buenos Aires or at least go get an empanada.” —Kathy Pulkrabek co-host and producer *XX Will Travel: A Podcast for Independent Women Travelers*

“Jennifer Poe’s *Hola, Morocha!* is why I seek out and crave young, Black female travel writers. They simply get it! From her irreverent humor to her worries and insights, which may seem insignificant to older travelers or even other races, Poe has an uncanny ability to articulate her feelings through vivid actions instead of direct words. For intrepid travelers, this book is a gem and an invitation to walk down memory lane. The scenes she chose to highlight and share were so familiar to me as veteran traveler, that I began reliving my own moments of fear, anxiety, and accomplishments while traveling. Yet, newbie travelers setting out on their first solo adventure will likely find solace and inspiration in Poe’s journey. It’s definitely one of those ‘if she can do it, so can I’ types of books that having read it they’ll be better for it.” —Davita M. McKelvey Editor-In-Chief, *Griots Republic*

When I first heard the word “Morocha,” I thought people were calling me a damn roach — granted, some exotic breed of roach that only skittered through luxury — but a roach! When I found out they were basically saying, “Hey, black girl, hey!” I took it as a term of endearment. Buenos Aires, Argentina — a city where black people are so few and far between that *Ebony* magazine once dubbed it “The Land of the Vanishing Blacks.” Yet that’s exactly where Jennifer Poe headed with a one-way ticket in 2007 at the age of twenty-two, fresh off a break up, desperate for a change from her New York City life, and thirsty for adventure in every form. Armed with a copy of Hemingway’s *Moveable Feast* and the contact info for the only hair stylist in a fifty-mile radius who could do black hair, Jennifer landed in BA with big plans, but zero amigas and only a cave-woman grasp of the Spanish language. As culture shock set in, Jennifer found herself dealing with the hilarious (a bidet

that fought back), the absurd (the Argentine customs agency that held her fifty-pound package of black hair care products hostage) and the unexpected—like realizing her black skin and hair made her stand out in the best possible ways. Funny and insightful, *Hola, Morocha!* offers readers a new twist on the “stranger in a strange land” tale. Told in a funny, blunt style, this first installment in a series reads like postcards from your quirky best friend, inviting readers to experience every heartache, frustration and hilarious misstep right alongside her. *Hola, Morocha! A Black Woman’s Adventures in Buenos Aires: Culture Shock* is the travel-memoir fusion of *Awkward Black Girl* meets *Me Talk Pretty One Day*: honest, intelligent, and an authentic representation of empowering female solo travel.

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Customer Reviews

OMG, I LOVE THIS BOOK. CONGRATS ON YOUR NEW RELEASE, JENNIFER POE!

I read *Hola Morocha* author Jennifer Poe. From the first page to the last page it drew me in I could not put it down. I was feeling her experiences as if they were mine, a couple of times I was was

getting uptight especially when she had to go pick up her package. I wanted the story to continue and I am so looking forward to part two!!!

It was like sitting down with your best friend to debrief about her adventures over wine!

This was a awesome read! As a black American woman who resides abroad as well, I can totally relate with the struggles of a new country, the culture and its language. One of my favorite parts of the book is quoted here: "The man at the desk was dressed in an official postal worker uniform, but looked more like a security guard. He took my paper and said something in Spanish that I could not understand. I explained to him that I could not speak Spanish that well yet. A North American girl jumped in to help translate. "Put your passport number and name on the back of the paper," she translated. I pulled out the photocopy of my passport. I never carried the real deal around with me, as it's common sense not to do that in a foreign country. The second official at the counter, a woman, saw the photocopy and immediately told me I could not use it. I didn't understand, so an Argentine woman who was listening to our broken conversation jumped in with a snooty attitude and said in English, "It's written on the back that you need to bring your passport." The postal system where I reside is very different and can be difficult at times. Arrgg! Still, I don't trade it for anything because I love the experience and learning about other cultures. Thank you so much Jennifer! When your book shows up on Goodreads, I will gladly post my review there as well. I can't wait for part two! -Sheila

Hola, Morocha! By Jennifer Poe By Nayara Khaly / June 2017 In times of so much xenophobia and bigotry, write about the intrinsic cultural chock of living in a completely new country not as much ethnic diverse as your own as a black woman is powerful, is empowering. If you want to be inspired and have good time learning about culture, language and romance with the optic of an artist go ahead, you are in the right place. Hola, Morocha! With an intercultural approach and a charming narrative makes you deeply connect with the writer's experiences while living in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Either you are a black Brazilian woman or a Norwegian man the author gives you the tools to really comprehend the dynamics of Argentine social behavior, culture and language. More important than that, Jennifer Poe gives you the keys to understand the particularities of travelling as African-American in a Latin-American country with a really inexpressive black population. I highly recommend

this book to people who have been bitten by the travel bug and want to immerse in Argentine culture with a very light and fun read. *Hola, Morocha!* is a guide to travelers of color and to anyone that wants to understand how the interrelations between gender, race, background and language affect your experiences abroad. Sometimes for the best, sometimes not. My favorite quote is: "For too long, since I was fourteen years old, I had wondered what it would be like to travel on an airplane, then step off into a new environment quite unlike my own. I had wondered if it was even possible for a poor black girl like me." (Page 150). This is my favorite quote because it shows the bitter-sweet feeling of being a black girl. At the same time that is painful to identify with Poe's perception of herself (a poor black girl that thought travelling wasn't for her), it is beautiful to see how far this poor black girl went. This poor black girl is now a well-travelled inspiring woman.

Jennifer's "Hola, Morocha!" felt like a walk down memory lane. Her engaging writing style pulled me into her story in a way that immediately made me reflect on my own experience in Argentina in 2012 as a 21-year old black woman. As I read, I smiled at the parallels between our experiences -- from the emotional goodbyes with family to the anxiety of stepping foot into a new country all alone. One of my favorite quotes from the book instantly touched my spirit because it summarized my experience so well: "But most of all, my first journey outside my home country taught me that I wasn't as meek as I thought I was, that I was a courageous human being, even if I couldn't see it." In 2012, before "Hola, Morocha!" came to life in book form, it was Jennifer's Imported Chocolate blog that gave me the confidence to make my journey to Buenos Aires, despite the uncertainties and lack of people of color in the city. Now in 2017, it's so beautiful to see the realness of her story written on paper! Jennifer's sense of humor will make you smile, as her words transport you into her journey as if you're right alongside her. I am anxiously awaiting for part two! After reading "Hola, Morocha!" I am ready to go back to Buenos Aires. If you are considering travel to an unknown place and need a boost of confidence and inspiration, this is the book to read!

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