



# Time Travel in Einstein's Universe: The Physical Possibilities of Travel Through Time

By J. Richard Gott

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In this fascinating book, the renowned astrophysicist J. Richard Gott leads time travel out of the world of H. G. Wells and into the realm of scientific possibility. Building on theories posited by Einstein and advanced by scientists such as Stephen Hawking and Kip Thorne, Gott explains how time travel can actually occur. He describes, with boundless enthusiasm and humor, how travel to the future is not only possible but has already happened, and he contemplates whether travel to the past is also conceivable. Notable not only for its extraordinary subject matter and scientific brilliance, Time Travel in Einstein's Universe is a delightful and captivating exploration of the surprising facts behind the science fiction of time travel.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

As one of the foremost scientists in the field of time travel, Princeton astrophysicist Gott takes it upon himself to disseminate advice on building time machines. The construction of the vessel itself is rarely of concern here; it is the way it is used and the way that space-time (the dimensions of space and time that we collectively consider to be our universe) behaves around it that may eventually allow adventurers to break with the usual order of things. Believing that science fiction often spurs true scientific discovery, Gott explores numerous theatrical and literary concepts before moving on to current bona fide theories, pointing out the difficulties of each method. Some possibilities for leaving the present involve dismantling Jupiter, making use of "cosmic strings," taking a trip at near light-speeds far out into space then back and warping space-time itself. Einstein's theory of relativity, upon which all of the presented theories depend, is described in impressively clear language. Practical tips for chrononauts on their options for travel and the contingencies to prepare for make everything sound bizarrely plausible. Gott clearly enjoys his subject and his excitement and humor are contagious; this book is a delight to read. (May 21)Forecast: This book will appeal to anyone who has ever been fascinated by time travel, as well as those who many have considered such a thing. Liberally sprinkled diagrams will help readers who find this stunning array of craziness a lot to take in. Good handselling by booksellers will ensure the author's events in New York, Boston, Ann Arbor, Seattle and San Francisco are well attended, and word-of-mouth by readers of all stripes will boost sales beyond the initial push.

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From Scientific American

"One reason that time travel is so fascinating is that we have such a great desire to do it," Gott writes. And so he explores the possibilities of travel to the past and to the future. Being a professor of astrophysics at Princeton University, he does not stray from the laws of physics in constructing this stimulating odyssey. Being also the man who has made a number of intriguing predictions based on the Copernican idea that "your location is not special," Gott offers several predictions here. The future duration of the human species, for one--more than 5,100 years but less than 7.8 million. And "one of the things we should understand about time is that we have just a little," he argues that "the goal of the human spaceflight program should be to increase our survival prospects by colonizing space."

*Editors of Scientific American*

From [Booklist](#)

Somewhere, the shade of H. G. Wells must be smiling. For although Morlocks and Eloi remain a fantasy, the daring premise for Wells' classic novel about time travel is winning over more and more serious astrophysicists. As one of the most distinguished scientists to probe the topic, Gott well understands the complexities that attend any attempt to turn time travel from an idle dream into a theoretical possibility. Yet in his treatment, these complexities yield their secrets to the nonspecialist--and even lend themselves to entertaining glosses from popular culture. Where else can you turn to find an abstruse explanation of quantum mechanics illustrated with episodes from *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*? But for all of his lively diversions, Gott advances a sober assessment of where and how humans might actually race forward or glide backward along the mysterious fourth axis of the universe. These possibilities, it turns out, depend

on unproven but theoretically respectable conjectures about how the normal fabric of space and time warps and twists around cosmic string and wormholes, and about how clocks slow down when accelerated to near light speed. Certain to stir excitement among armchair physicists and science-fiction buffs, a book that deserves the attention of anyone wanting wider intellectual horizons. *Bryce Christensen*  
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#### **Ernie Swisher:**

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