

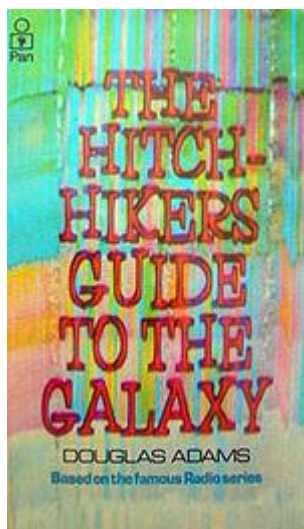
The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (novel)

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The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy



Cover of the original UK paperback edition of the novel, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, by [Hipgnosis](#) and Ian Wright. The back cover featured the slogan "[DON'T PANIC](#)" in the same colour-video-screen style.^[1]

Author(s)	Douglas Adams
Country	United Kingdom
Language	English
Series	The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy
Genre(s)	Comedy , Science fiction novel
Publisher	Pan Books
Publication date	12 October 1979
Media type	Paperback and hardcover
Pages	180 pp (UK Paperback)
ISBN	0-330-25864-8
OCLC Number	24722438
Followed by	The Restaurant at the End of the Universe

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy is the title of the first of five books in the [Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy comedy science fiction](#) "trilogy" by [Douglas Adams](#) (with the sixth written by [Eoin Colfer](#)). The [novel](#) is an adaptation of the first four parts of Adams' [radio series](#) of the same name. The novel was first published in London on 12 October 1979.^[2] It sold 250,000 copies in the first three months.^[3]

The namesake of the novel is [The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy](#), a fictional [guide book](#) for [hitchhikers](#) (inspired by the [Hitch-hiker's Guide to Europe](#)) written in the form of an [encyclopedia](#).

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[[edit](#)] Plot summary

The book begins with contractors arriving at [Arthur Dent](#)'s house, in order to demolish it to make way for a [bypass](#). His friend, [Ford Prefect](#), arrives while Arthur is lying in front of the bulldozers, to keep them from demolishing it. He tries to explain to Arthur that the Earth is about to be demolished. The [Vogons](#), an [alien race](#), intend to destroy Earth to make way for a [hyperspace](#) bypass.

The two escape by hitching a lift on one of the Vogon demolition ships. This is, however, against Vogon regulations, and when the pair are discovered, they are tortured with a reading of [Vogon poetry](#), the third worst in the known Universe, and then thrown into space. They are, very improbably, picked up by the [Heart of Gold](#), a ship powered by an [infinite improbability drive](#), which has been stolen by Ford's semi-cousin and President of the Galaxy, [Zaphod Beeblebrox](#). Zaphod, accompanied by [Trillian](#) and the chronically [depressed robot Marvin](#), is searching for the legendary planet of [Magrathea](#), which is rumoured to have manufactured [luxury planets](#). Ford is initially skeptical, but they do, in fact, find Magrathea.

There, Arthur, after being separated from the rest of the group, is taken into the interior of the planet by a native, [Slartibartfast](#). The others are kidnapped. Slartibartfast explains to Arthur that the Earth was actually a supercomputer commissioned and paid for by a race of "hyper-intelligent," "pan-dimensional" beings. These creatures had earlier built a supercomputer called [Deep Thought](#) to calculate the [Answer to Life, the Universe, and Everything](#). This computer, after seven and a half million years of calculation, had announced that the Answer is in fact 42. Being unsatisfied with the Answer, they set about finding *the Question* which

would give the Answer meaning, whereupon Deep Thought designed the Earth, to calculate it. However, ten million years later, and just five minutes before the completion of the program Earth was designed to execute, the Earth is demolished by the Vogons. Two of these beings, [Frankie Mouse and Benjy Mouse](#), had arrived on Magrathea on the Heart of Gold, in the form of Trillian's pet [mice](#).

The mice realize that a latent version of the question, or something very like it, must exist in Arthur's brain since he is a late-generation organic product of the computer, and offer to buy his brain from him. Arthur declines, and a fight ensues. The mice are about to cut Arthur's head open when [klaxons](#) all over the planet are activated, creating a diversion during which Arthur, Ford, Zaphod and Trillian are able to escape. The galactic police arrive on the planet to arrest Zaphod and the group is attacked by two officers who abruptly die when the life support systems in their spacesuits fail: Marvin had been talking to their ship, which was linked to their suits, and as a result it had become so depressed that it committed suicide.

The group decides to go to [The Restaurant at the End of the Universe](#) for lunch.

[\[edit\]](#) Illustrated edition

"The Illustrated Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" is a specially designed book made in 1994. It was first printed in the United Kingdom by [Weidenfeld & Nicolson](#) and in the United States by Harmony Books (who sold it for \$42). It is an oversized book, and came in silver-foil "holographic" covers in both the UK and US markets. It features the first appearance of the [42 Puzzle](#), designed by Adams himself, a photograph of Adams and his literary agent Ed Victor as the two space cops, and many other designs by Kevin Davies, who has participated in many Hitchhiker's related projects since the stage productions in the late 1970s. Davies himself appears as Prosser. This edition is out of print - Adams bought up many remainder copies and sold them, autographed, on his website.

[\[edit\]](#) Audiobook adaptations

There have been three audiobook recordings of the novel. The first was an abridged edition ([ISBN 0-671-62964-6](#)), recorded in the mid-1980s by [Stephen Moore](#), best known for playing the voice of [Marvin the Paranoid Android](#) in the radio series, LP adaptations and in the TV series. In 1990, Adams himself recorded an unabridged edition for Dove Audiobooks ([ISBN 1-55800-273-1](#)), later re-released by New Millennium Audio ([ISBN 1-59007-257-X](#)) in the United States and available from BBC Audiobooks in the United Kingdom. Also by arrangement with Dove, ISIS Publishing Ltd produced a numbered exclusive edition signed by Douglas Adams ([ISBN 1-85695-028-X](#)) in 1994. To tie-in with the 2005 film, actor [Stephen Fry](#), the film's voice of the Guide, recorded a second unabridged edition ([ISBN 0-7393-2220-6](#)).

[\[edit\]](#) Film adaptation

Main article: [The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy \(film\)](#)

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy was adapted into a science fiction comedy film directed by [Garth Jennings](#) and released on 28 April 2005 in the UK, Australia and New Zealand, and

on the following day in the USA and Canada. It was rolled out to cinemas worldwide during May, June, July, August and September.

[[edit](#)] Series

The deliberately misnamed Hitchhikers' Guide To The Galaxy *Trilogy* consists of five books: *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1979), *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe* (1980), *Life, the Universe and Everything* (1982), *So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish* (1984) and *Mostly Harmless* (1992). On 16 September 2008 it was announced that Irish author [Eoin Colfer](#) was to pen a sixth book. The book, entitled *And Another Thing...*, was published in October 2009, on the 30th anniversary of the publication of the original novel.^{[[4](#)]}

[[edit](#)] Awards

- Number one on the Sunday Times best seller list (1979)
- Author received the "Golden Pan" (From his publishers for reaching the 1,000,000th book sold) (1984)
- Waterstone's Books/Channel Four's list of the 'One Hundred Greatest Books of the Century', at number 24. (1996)
- BBC's "[Big Read](#)", an attempt to find the "Nation's Best-loved book", ranked it number four. (2003)

[[edit](#)] References

- ↑ Neil Gaiman (1988). *DON'T PANIC: The official Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy companion*. Titan Books. pp. 50. [ISBN 1852860138](#). [OCLC 24722438](#).
- ↑ Webb, Nick (6 October 2003). *Wish You Were Here: The Official Biography of Douglas Adams*. Chatham, Kent: Headline. pp. 157. [ISBN 0-7553-1155-8](#).
- ↑ "[1000 novels everyone must read: Science Fiction & Fantasy \(part one\)](#)". *The Guardian*. 22 January 2009. Retrieved 31 March 2011.
- ↑ "[And another thing...](#)". *The Today Programme* (BBC). 17 September 2008. Retrieved 16 December 2008.

[[edit](#)] See also



[Novels portal](#)

- [Spelling of Hitchhiker's Guide](#) for variations in the spelling of the title.

[[edit](#)] External links

- *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* on [Literapedia](#)
- [Audio review and discussion of The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy](#) at [The Science Fiction Book Review Podcast](#)

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by [Terry Jones](#) [Starship Titanic](#)

by [Eoin Colfer](#) [And Another Thing...](#)

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 - [Starship Titanic](#)

- Companion media**
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 - [Douglas Adams's Guide to The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy](#)

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