



I love France #54: Book review: Taking Root in Provence

by [WordsAndPeace](#)



I LOVE FRANCE!

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Taking Root in Provence

by

Anne-Marie SIMONS

208 pages

Published in 2011 by [Distinction Press](#)

MY THOUGHTS ABOUT THIS BOOK



Summer is finally here! Maybe it's time to go discover the world. How about a sunny place where life slows down a bit, with nice wine, food, and tons of cultural places to visit? Does this place even exist? Of course, it's **Provence**, in the South of France.

If you read this book, you might actually want to pack right now and go!

Having visited Provence last year, it was really great fun for me to revisit in company of **Taking Root In Provence**.

After a busy life in Washington, Anne-Marie and Oscar decided to retire and settle in Provence. This book is a treasure trove, full of their daily impressions of Aix-en-Provence and of the many surrounding quaint little cities and villages.

The author also follows the calendar to speak about the numerous festivals available around; whether they be related to food, art (music, opera, theater), nature, there's something for everyone!

Anne-Marie's style is very lively. She captures beautifully the reactions of the locals, and does not hesitate highlighting the difficulties one might encounter to become part of the local world.

What I liked is how she integrated very good historical and cultural information in an attractive narrative, never boring. For instance, shame on me, I am from Burgundy, but I had totally forgotten, and did I even know this?, why Saint Vincent was the patron saint of vintners. Go page 65 and you will understand why.

During my visit of Aix, I was surprised by the large number of small statues of the Virgin Mary on street corners. I actually took many pictures. I finally got the explanation by reading Anne-Marie's book, it's on page 68. There is a fascinating reason to it, that all historians will appreciate. And it's connected with the delicious Calisson!!



So to prepare your visit to Provence, you really need to read this beautiful book. Plus at the end, she inserted her husband Oscar's great recipes with produce and traditions of Provence. They sound delicious. Why resist?

WHAT IS IT ABOUT

They agreed on one thing before retiring-they would travel, sniff around at other countries and other lifestyles, and discover along the way which place came closest to "having it all." There they would drop anchor and go with the flow. The going has been good, so much so that these former Washingtonians have decided to make France their permanent home. They chose the city over the countryside and took on the challenges and pleasures of Aix-en-Provence, where they have been doing as the locals do for more than a decade now. The daily markets, strikes, gypsies, curious villagers, ancient traditions, truffle cheaters, pagan and religious celebrations, secret swimming spots in the middle of Marseilles-it's all there to be suffered and enjoyed. Not to mention an interest in food that borders on the obsessive. Add good weather, a pinch of hedonism, a dose of culture, and it all adds up to that elusive prize: quality of life. In this collection of vignettes, take a ride in the slow lane with *Taking Root in Provence*, through la France profonde, ancient Roman cities, and that wonderful blend of the old and new worlds that is today's Provence. [Goodreads]