

Reviews in Amazon

An armchair getaway!, May 4, 2011

By

Kimberly K. Fisher (New York, NY) - [See all my reviews](#)
(REAL NAME)

This review is from: Taking Root in Provence (Paperback)

If you are looking for an armchair getaway filled with charm, subdued sophistication and grace, pick up a copy of "Taking Root in Provence" by Anne-Marie Simons. A writer and traveler, Anne-Marie has that certain way of casually transporting you to a different place through the eyes of a local.

As a former American, the Simons' decided on retiring in the South of France. The main draw? Quality of life. The beaches, mountains, fresh air, ancient cities, remote villages and culture drew them in. Get a little glimpse of the daily life of an American in Provence; and experience drama of the daily markets, village life, transportation strikes, gypsies, curious villagers, French traditions, truffle cheaters, winter festivities, apartment mishaps, the humor of being lost in translation, wine and of course, food.

The book reads as part memoir and part travel guide, as we go from Provence to Marseilles to Nice exploring the culture, life and cuisine of Southern France.

A delicious treat of a book, May 22, 2011

By

Citizen Paine (East coast) - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: Taking Root in Provence (Paperback)

Travel books, books about moving overseas, books that examine the culture of a country and its people (how unique we all are!), and books about delectable cuisines and cooking all tickle my fancy. So it was fated that I'd love Taking Root in Provence--a single book that blends all four aspects and manages to do it with graceful panache.

This is a rare book, as fulsome as a triple chocolate bon-bon. Because Provence is high on my personal 'bucket list' of must-see travel spots, I was eager to see what the author would tell me. She told me well. A natural story-teller with finely honed powers of observation, the author took me along on a happy romp. I finished the book with a sigh, sad at its end, having learned, tasted, laughed and explored this magical part of the world.

Ms. Simons is a tour guide of wit and puckish humor. Sometimes laudatory, sometimes gently critical, she reveals a multi-layered Provence, lovingly dissected in chapters that stand as separate stories. Taking Root in Provence is like a box of bon-bons, pick one and savor it, pick again to find a new treasure, or practice willpower and try not to devour the entire box at one gulp.

Me? I devoured the book in one binge into the wee hours, too fascinated to put it down.

Why have so many artists been drawn to Provence, painted its streets, its people, its landscapes? Simons observes, "There are other beautiful places in the world, so what is it about this area that so inspires artists? ...of course the climate and the beauty of the place contribute to a sense of general well-being, but in the end I believe the answer is to be found in the particular luminosity of Provence."

Ultimately, that's why I enjoyed Ms. Simon's writing. She, too, populates her book with luminous words that engage all our senses. Her portraits of Provence's flavors and colors remain with me, such as her chapter on the remote Camargue region, colored with its white horses, black bulls and thousands of pink flamingos. I see them through her eyes.

Simon's observations on Provence culture made this reader drool with envy--memorable meals eaten and cooked, Provence's many festivals deeply implanted with ancient roots, the Summer opera and theater season where food for the mind is offered in such abundance, an embarrassment of riches.

Ms. Simons reveals Provence as complex, earthy and subtle as a truffle. Speaking of which, Ms. Simon's covers truffles with her insider's look at the tricks and history of the truffle trade and trafficking of this 'back-gold' morsel so desirable that fake made-in-China truffles are on offer to the unwary.

After you've read this book, you won't be one of the unwary. You will have become a Provence insider thanks to Taking Root in Provence.

If finances are keeping you close to home right now, do the next best thing. Buy the book, it's a trip to Provence for well under \$20...truffles not included.

Taking Root in Provence, May 4, 2011

By

C F Beyer "C.F. Beyer" (USA) - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: Taking Root in Provence (Paperback)

For anyone who has visited France, this book is a must read! The author, clearly in sync with her surroundings, takes a perceptive and humorous look at all aspects of life in Southern France. From its festivals, of which there are many, to its food, which, with Gallic flair, is of utmost importance, Simons enjoys it all to the fullest. She is steeped in the history and the legends; one such is the Tripe Festival, complete with dancers called the Tripettes. As for the food, she and her husband even include recipes for us. All is delightfully woven together with wit and charm. I liked this book so much I bought several copies for friends. Enjoy!

a year in the life..., May 25, 2011

By

Jessica Voigts "tranquil reflections" (Michigan) - [See all my reviews](#)
(REAL NAME)

This review is from: Taking Root in Provence (Paperback)

I get a LOT of travel books to review. This one stands out - it's not a travel guide, per se - more a meander through a year in provence. With lovely stories, history, food, culture, geography, and more, Simons fills a niche I didn't even know existed - a book that moves me to come visit, learn, and EAT! The recipes at the back are a welcome addition to a fantastic read.

This book calls you back again and again!, April 20, 2013

By

Patricia L. Sands "Patricia Sands, author" (Toronto, ON Canada) - [See all my reviews](#)
(REAL NAME)

This review is from: Taking Root in Provence (Paperback)

Anne-Marie Simons is living my dream ... and from what I hear, it's a dream harboured by many others: she and her husband, Oscar, retired to the south of France several years ago. Choosing to live in ancient Aix-En-Provence, with its intriguing history and established traditions steeped in the arts and education, there is much to share without ever leaving town. However, we also venture on wonderful excursions into the countryside with stops along the way from Marseilles to Nice, all the while treated to extraordinary detail only a true insider can provide.

The history, customs, characters, cuisine (ahhhh), quirks and joys of living in this complex potpourri of old and new worlds linger long after the final page is turned. The physical beauty of this area of France is clearly visualized: from spectacular vistas to pastoral countryside to the sun-kissed Mediterranean coast. I loved every minute of my time spent in this book and know I will return to it many times over. The subject matter is easily referenced and offers the additional gift of being an excellent guide for anyone considering visiting or relocating to this part of the world as well as a most pleasurable read.

Taking Root In Provence is a delightful anthology, engaging all the senses in a portrait of Provence painted in vivid brushstrokes of words and feelings. Ms. Simons' background as a journalist is apparent in her insightful observations and comfortable writing style. She invites us into the heart of the life they now enjoy and leaves us wanting to move in with them ... or at least next door!

Anne-Marie Simons has done it again!, October 18, 2011

By

Charlie - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: Taking Root in Provence (Paperback)

Anne-Marie Simons has done it again with Taking Root in Provence. After reading her first offering, Ten Years in Provence, I was hoping that she would give us more, and she did just that. It is as if she has taken a page from her own writing in which she wisely suggests that after a day in the bustling city of Aix you step out at six pm and walk around when the doors of the Town Hall are closed and the town is quieting down but still day lit, because it is precisely then that you can see details that really make the difference: a statue that dangles a leg provocatively above the market square, or the stunningly handsome doors of the mairie itself. She has looked again at her subject and found new meaning in this very, very old land. And this clever lady always has the most unusual stuff to write about the much-talked-about region of Provence. Her tips on what is good in the market are great (I happen to be a jam-lover myself, and sure enough there was something there for me) perhaps in part because as she points out her husband is an extraordinary cook himself, but she has also cast her attention somewhat wider than the region itself and has included pages on related matters such as the national Agricultural Fair in Paris and life on the Cote d'Azur (the Riviera to Americans), which most dyed-in-the-wool Provencaux do not consider a part of their own terroir. A fun book to read for its abundant human interest stories and a must for anyone who wants to hear what is new and different in Provence today.

Armchair travelling at its best!, September 26, 2011

By

M. Kausch (San Francisco) - [See all my reviews](#)
(REAL NAME)

This review is from: Taking Root in Provence (Paperback)

The book "Taking Root in Provence" had me captured from just one word in the title... PROVENCE. That name conjures up heavenly visions of some of the world's greatest artists, Van Gogh, Cezanne, Picasso and so many more. It also brings to mind mouth watering food (fresh from the daily market of course), delightful smells (lavender being just one), and the myriad sights and sounds of everyday living along with all of the special occasion celebrations steeped in tradition. This book delivers on those visions by enticing the reader with gorgeous descriptions of what this part of the world offers those who travel there, but more particularly what it offered the writer so that she was convinced it was "the" place in which to settle down and call home. Not all is perfect in Provence and Ms. Simons is not claiming that it is, the chilly mistral winds, the traffic clogged and often littered tiny (yet charming) streets are a few annoyances. However the good far outweighs the bad in Provence and the reader will be tempted to pack up all

of their belongings and follow suit after reading this book! I specifically would love to go to her secret spot in Marseilles and "fish" for sea urchins and eat them within minutes - yum! There are tasty recipes included in the book which also make it a special treat. The book goes into detail about the gorgeous small cities and their local traditions and we are transported to that part of the world - all the senses tickled by the in-depth and knowledgeable descriptions. This is one book I truly could not put down, and I was sad that it was not longer!