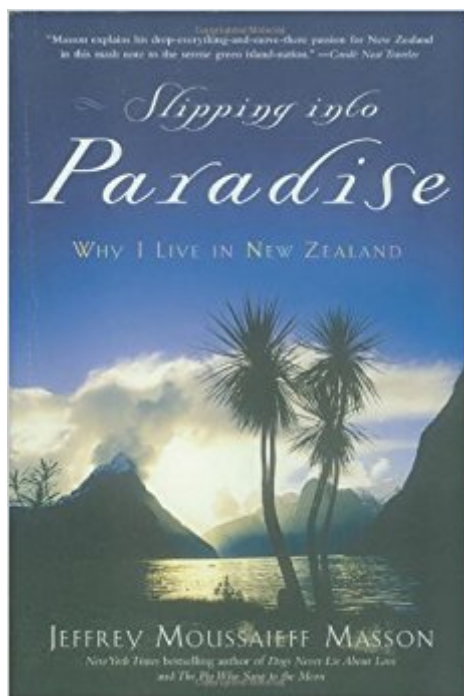


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Slipping Into Paradise: Why I Live In New Zealand



Synopsis

In the tradition of *Under the Tuscan Sun* and *A Year in Provence*, here is Jeffrey Masson's ode to his personal paradise—his adopted home, New Zealand. After living in California, why did Masson settle out of all the places on earth in such a faraway land? It turns out that while visiting a beautiful sandy beach just fifteen minutes from bustling Auckland, Masson and his family were utterly seduced by the exotic locale. There was little deliberation. This place, surrounded by lush forest on a bay dotted with volcanic islands, would be their new home. Masson takes readers on a remarkable journey to another world, as he and his family "slip into" the paradise that is New Zealand. For anyone who has ever dreamed of finding utopia, Masson reveals a country where neighbors talk to one another and provide a sense of real community—rarely, outside of the big cities, locking their doors—and where politics are as mellow as the weather. New Zealand is also a land of spectacular scenery, made even more famous for being the shooting location for the *Lord of the Rings* films. The flora is plentiful. Mangroves, banana plants, papaya trees, and more than ten thousand species of ferns grow wild and freely. The fauna is benign. There are no snakes, tarantulas, or scorpions. Children can walk to school barefoot without a care—there is nothing to sting them, bite them, or give them a rash. In the blue waters near the lush coastline, dolphins and orcas abound. While describing his love affair with the country and his affinity for its citizens, Masson reflects on the meaning of home, the importance of acting on intuition, and what happens when we lose our connection to the place we live in. Responding to an impulse, Masson reveals, he realized a dream. Featuring a glossary of phrases used by New Zealanders and important Maori words, as well as the author's recommended travel itinerary, *Slipping into Paradise* is ideal for anyone planning a visit to this exquisite land. Full of photographs, delightful anecdotes, and little-known facts (jogging, for example, was invented in New Zealand), *Slipping into Paradise* is also a book for those who fantasize about dramatically changing their lives—and who imagine something better for themselves. Jeffrey Masson's message: New Zealand awaits. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

Should you move to New Zealand? "The short answer," writes Masson in this breathless paean to his adopted home, "is 'Yes.'" Comprising two large islands, New Zealand is "the green gem in the middle of the South Pacific." Its physical beauty will be familiar to anyone who's seen *The Lord of the Rings*: the country boasts a temperate climate, beautiful beaches, towering mountains, exotic animals and lush vegetation. New Zealand's human inhabitants are just as remarkable, legendary for their modesty and warmth. When Masson, an American psychologist and author (*The Pig Who Sang to the Moon*, etc.), wants to interview the foreign minister, he finds him in the phone book. When he wants to chat with the country's most famous icon, Sir Edmund Hillary, he simply drops by his home. Though Masson is eager to portray New Zealand as "benign, gentle, friendly, and safe," he also acknowledges that it can seem remote, provincial and dull. Actually, the country's isolation may explain why it has one of the world's highest suicide rates, and why Masson spends three months of each year elsewhere. Blending history, geography, memoir and travelogue, Masson's book is a hodgepodge, but it succeeds in promoting New Zealand as an attractive place for a vacation—*if not a permanent stay.* Maps. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Jeff Masson is one of the world's most erudite polymaths. He is also a brilliant and original thinker. So, naturally, even in paradise he is restless, but then any paradise devoid of the spice of intellectual quest and moral debate would be tedious. One does not so much slip into Masson's paradise as take a razorback ride, full of wit and insight, through his views on culture, national identity, public intellectuals, New Zealand history, New Zealand flora, fauna, and beaches. There is never a dull moment, and I suspect that this book will

cause a further surge in the tourist boom to the Land of the Long White Cloud. "Since arriving in New Zealand four years ago, Jeffrey Masson has traveled widely and met thousands of New Zealanders as part of his quest to better understand his adopted homeland. His book reflects that. Written by someone who clearly loves the country and is prepared to say so, it's an effective introduction to anyone who wants to know more about a society on the cusp of new beginnings. New Zealand isn't just a scenic wonderland, or the place that gave us Sir Edmund Hillary and Peter Jackson, and Masson suggests the reasons why.

PHIL GOFF, New Zealand's minister of foreign affairs

From the Hardcover edition.

We've visited New Zealand and consider moving there from time to time, like when Dubya gets re-elected! :-) So I bought this book looking for a real review of New Zealand, its strengths and weaknesses. Instead I got is this sappy, sugar coated, drivel about how NZ is just oh, so perfect, and where it's not, the problem is analyzed through rose colored glasses. In actuality, if you can get past the thick coating of sugar, there is some meat - some facts and history in this book. I became too nauseated to go much past half way through. I've never taken the time to write a review on , but this book is just so lame I'd like to have others spend their money on something more worthwhile, like a travel guide to NZ. You'd get better information that way!

I found it a bit too insulting to lots of other countries, so it was difficult to appreciate how great New Zealand is. But, I overlooked my dislike for the book and went off to the South Island of New Zealand (the book concentrates almost exclusively on the North Island). New Zealand is incredible; hidden gems of wineries all over the south. And plenty of undisturbed natural beauty to enjoy.

Very good introduction to New Zealand - both the good and the not-so-good aspects. A quick read for those traveling there for the first time.

This book..I loved it and I hated it. Overall-what a disappointment. There are so few books that are written to give you a 'feel' of New Zealand. As well, not much is written on the contemporary scene of that island. Thumbing quickly thru Slipping Into Paradise at the bookstore really raised my hopes. But again,disappointing. After reading his book you find that Jeff Masson is not a Kiwi, he is an American transplanted who has lived in New Zealand a very short time. His outlook is American-style

liberal, that is the shading he puts on his version of New Zealand. An inaccurate description in my opinion. Just a few examples.....One of the most interesting chapters, surprisingly, is about the odd trees of New Zealand and the splendid uses they afford. Of course, this led to over logging with the result that a lot of fantastic trees are now quite rare. So to save their native woods and still have a building material, the Kiwis imported Monterey pine tree saplings from the US. They were planted in large tracts and are now used extensively for lumber. Great solution! Win-win. Not for Masson- he felt sad. While it is important to preserve and conserve the beautiful native woods, by bringing US pines to New Zealand the Kiwis were, in effect, 'capturing' a living thing from one continent to be used as a 'slave' on another continent for "nothing else than to satisfy greed". No Kidding! Masson really said this! Excuse me Jeff, don't you live in a house? Didn't you move to New Zealand necessitating this cruel bondage? There is a chapter on the Maori. Great, some on-site observations. You'd expect perhaps a discussion of contemporary tensions surrounding the Treaty of Waitangi. Maybe something of Maori tribal values melding into a modern world. There's little or nothing of that. There is, however, lots of PC hyperboly, which includes 3 pages on the evils of spanking children and child abuse. Seems like there should be a little more of substance on the Maori. Lastly, the overall motive of this book is darkly suspect. Masson titles his book so as to identify New Zealand as 'paradise', He goes on and on (half the book literally) about how much of that 'paradise' is the result of so few people living there. What is Masson's course of action? He moves there-denigrating paradise by his mere presence. Further, his course of action is to write a book to attempt to entice others to move there-further denigrating paradise. I'm not sure the real Kiwis value this kind of appreciation. So what is the author's motive, entertainment, crass commercialism, satisfy greed? I have to recommend to potential readers, pass this book up. Masson doesn't impart a 'feel' of the country to you. While he is strong on much of his natural history, his descriptions will drive you nuts with their PC tone.

My wife bought this book in advance of our trip to NZ. She read me some excerpts from the early pages of the book which sounded interesting enough for me to read it myself. That is until the author identified as his intellectual heroes such people as Noam Chomsky and Michael Moore - Michael Moore!!!! - while describing the views of intellectuals whose points of view he disagrees with as, eg hateful. Nobody so myopic and narrowminded could possibly have anything worthwhile to say. Save your time and money.

Speaking as an American living in New Zealand (indeed, a Berkeleyite, just like Masson), this book

really got under my skin, and not in a good way. Masson arrives in New Zealand with all his Berkeleyan world-explaining ideas (The Despoiling White Man, The Noble Savage, The Oppressed Native Peoples) intact, needing only a smattering of experience to trot them out and apply them to his adopted country. There is next to no learning in this book, remarkably little writing of charm, insight or wit--just an endless litany of "I did...", "I felt...", "I was affected by..." paragraphs, interspersed with the kind of factual material that a high-school student might include. As journalism it is far too slapdash. As memoir, its self-regard and -indulgence far outweighs its meager helping of resonance. In short, I can't believe that this book had an editor. This is clearly a book that was written on his veranda, for people who already take him for an intellectual/empathetic figure of note. Not having ever read anything else of his, I found nothing here to justify that standing, which makes it only the more irritating that he is so "up himself", as the Kiwis would say. New Zealand is indeed a wonderful, wonderful places, for some of the reasons Masson describes, and for many others as well that he never notices. Even when he says something I sort of agree with, I start mentally arguing with him. GAHH!

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