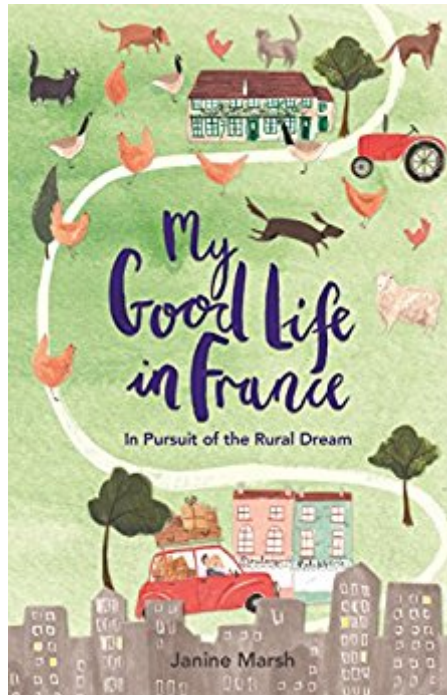


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My Good Life In France: In Pursuit Of The Rural Dream



Synopsis

One grey dismal day, Janine Marsh was on a trip to northern France to pick up some cheap wine. She returned to England a few hours later having put in an offer on a rundown old barn in the rural Seven Valleys area of Pas de Calais. This was not something she'd expected or planned for. Janine eventually gave up her job in London to move with her husband to live the good life in France. Or so she hoped. While getting to grips with the locals and la vie Française, and renovating her dilapidated new house, a building lacking the comforts of mains drainage, heating or proper rooms, and with little money and less of a clue, she started to realize there was a lot more to her new home than she could ever have imagined. Ten years ago, Janine Marsh decided to leave her corporate life behind to fix up a run-down barn in northern France. This is the true story of her rollercoaster ride, in many ways a love story, with her sharp observations on the very different way of life, culture and etiquette of France. From her early struggles and homesickness through personal tragedy, to her attempts to become self-sufficient and to breed 'the fattest chickens in the village', Janine learned that there was more to her new home than she could ever have imagined.

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Customer Reviews

I read this book right before our first trip to France. I thought Ms Marsh's writing style was very clear, and it made me feel like I've been friends with her for years. She shares very personal stories and really brought her life to me. I thought of the book constantly while on my trip, wondering if the little farmhouse I just drove by was hers. You don't have to be going on a trip to enjoy this book; I just know how much better my trip was because I did read it.

What a delightful and enjoyable book... With humor and wit and insight the author tells about remodeling her broken down 'new house', friends and neighbors, small town living, and customs that all make up the Good Life in France. It's easy to read, well written and puts a smile on your face.

This delightful memoir is not just about a husband and wife moving from the U.K. to France. Yes, as usual, they had much work restoring the house that they bought. In addition, we learn a great deal about the French people and French customs. The couple's neighbors and village store keepers are vividly brought to life. There is humor throughout. I think you will enjoy "My Good Life in France" as much as I did. Oh, there is a bonus at the end of the book which is the icing on the cake.

Charming, informative and funny, this is a great travel read for expats (to be) that will spark your French appetite.

The author has done a wonderful job of describing how amazing! it would be to move to France! Her very articulate use of words makes you feel like you are enjoying the French countryside!! The temptation is real to throw all caution to the wind and become an expat!! Thank you for sharing your wonderful life!

Fascinating read about buying a dilapidated barn in northern France then choosing to move there ten years before you had originally planned. You won't be rich in money but you will be rich in friendship, getting back to life's basic needs and finding what is truly important in life.

On a cold, wet day about ten years ago, Londoner Janine Marsh went with her husband and father on a day trip to France. They didn't have big plans - it was just a quick jaunt to have lunch and buy some wine. But sometimes life has other plans, and she ended up

not only buying wine but also a house. How that happened is the beginning of Marsh's charming and funny memoir. Nestled in a tiny town in France's Seven Valleys area, near Calais, the house was a bit of a fixer-upper. No, it was more than that it was a total wreck. And as you can imagine, everything went wrong, including an overflowing septic tank that earned Marsh the nickname Madame Merde. As she says, you have to be "a bit mad" to buy a house like this. For the next few years, Marsh and her husband visited the house on weekends, beginning the monumental task of making it livable. But this split life proved unsatisfactory and eventually the big question had to be faced: do we move to France? Marsh, who had worked for years to rise from secretary to bank vice president - with another promotion imminent - agonized over the decision. The couple decided to seize the day, and off to France they went. The more they repaired the house, the more they discovered problems, but their energy and optimism eventually carried them through. Not only do they build a comfortable home, they build a wonderful new life for themselves in France. Marsh does a brilliant job of sharing with us what makes life in the Seven Valleys so charming. This isn't Paris or Provence, but la France profonde, an area that tourists seldom visit. We learn how neighbors help one another, like the time the Marshes nearly ran out of firewood in the middle of winter. With disaster looming, a neighbor showed up with his tractor, carrying several tons of firewood and no payment expected. We learn about the nearby town that is normally silent as a tomb, but that comes to life when Madame Magniez decides to bake some of her famous bread to sell. People see smoke coming out of her chimney, word spreads, and soon there is a traffic jam in the tiny downtown. Marsh shares with us the local legends and the local celebrations. She describes the ins and outs of the French bureaucracy, French driving customs, and the proper way to kiss a person in greeting. And she tells us about the food, one of the glories of France. My favorite line in the book is when Marsh writes about the huge meals to celebrate Christmas and New Years. As she says, "At this time of year in France, you can quite easily eat yourself to a standstill. If you've ever dreamed of discovering the real France, you won't want to miss this delightful book."

Funny, informative and interesting about the trials and joys of living in an old farm house in the French countryside.

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