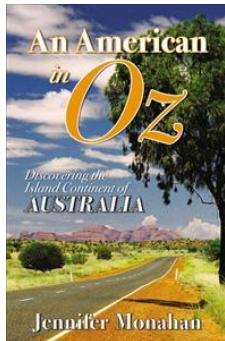


An American in Oz—Discovering the Island Continent of Australia

By Jennifer Monahan

Book Review by Volker Poelzl, Senior Editor, TransitionsAbroad.com



I was positively surprised to come across an entertaining and enjoyable travel narrative such as “An American in Oz”, specially since it is self-published. Although written in journal style, this account of Jennifer Monahan’s fifty-five-day journey back and forth across Australia by car, train, and airplane, is more than an ordinary diary in the “went there–did that” format. Monahan’s prose is factual and down-to-earth, and her experiences and anecdotes are amusing and informative for anyone interested in visiting Australia.

What emerges from the pages is the author’s contagious curiosity and willingness to immerse herself in the everyday Australia around her, as she and her boyfriend travel the continent by train, plane, and car. Readers not only learn about the places, the great cities, and vast outback, but also about the Australian people, their peculiarities, culture, customs, and way of life. But “An American in Oz” is not only a book about a journey across Australia, but also a journey of self-discovery, as the author takes the trip to gain a new perspective on her life back home. To do this it was necessary for her to take time away from her job as a part-time bookkeeper in Florida and venture out into the unknown.

Faced with a country the size of a continent and so many places to see and visit, Monahan realizes early on that “if we do this trip the way I have done so many times in the past, it will mean insanity for both of us. The “less is more” concept is starting to sink in...” Throughout the book it becomes obvious that she made the right choice about taking the trip to Australia. Her positive outlook and enthusiasm about her travels in Australia are apparent on every page. As she writes: “I’ve only been in Australia for thirty-eight hours and already, I am positively smitten.” Her narrative is peppered with humorous anecdotes, a good sense of humor and the ability to laugh not only about what’s going on around her but also at herself and her occasional faux-pas. To provide additional information for readers, her journal entries are regularly interspersed with italicized paragraphs that shed light on Australian culture, people, places, fauna, and flora. The book is written from an American perspective, and the author goes out of her way to present a sense of place for American readers, put Australia on the map for them and bring it to life, often with the help of comparisons.

Monahan’s “An American in Oz” is a well-written travelogue that inspires readers to pack their bags and journey to the land of Oz themselves. Her joie de vivre and joy of traveling are infectious, her writing style lively, her observations relevant, and her anecdotes humorous. What more can one expect from a travel book?

For more information about the book, to read excerpts and to order a copy, visit <http://jennifermohan.com/> or <http://anamericaninoz.com/>. Also available on Amazon.com