

## Adventures on Land and Sea: Searching for Culinary Pleasures in Provence and along the Cote d'Azur (Savoring the Olde Ways Series, Book 4)

**Carole Bumpus**

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*Impressionistic and enthusiastic, Adventures on Land and Sea is an exuberant travelogue set in Southern France.*

The fourth volume of the Savoring the Olde Ways series, Carole Bumpus's travelogue *Adventures on Land and Sea* chronicles culinary discoveries and trips through France's celebrated southern region.

The book recounts Bumpus's three separate trips to Provence with her husband and companions, taken between 1997 and 2006. While the group's collective French-speaking abilities were limited, their enthusiasm levels were high. They sampled Provençal food, toured ancient and medieval sites, walked through quaint villages, and sunbathed on the French Riviera. They also visited the birthplace of Marcel Pagnol, toured the psychiatric asylum where Vincent van Gogh recuperated after mutilating his ear, went to the rumored Provençal burial spot of Mary Magdalene, and made note of the influences of Roman, Phoenician, and Greek civilizations upon the region.

Each featured trip is narrated in a distinctive tone. The 1997 section focuses on the thrill of arrival and exploration; a return to the area in 2000 is about familiarity and renewed anticipation. The 2006 trip, involving an extended Côte d'Azur sailing excursion, includes ample historical background to ground it. Throughout, there are impressionistic descriptions that flesh the settings out, as of verdant palm fronds, mists of "warm coastal fog," and roads lined with irises, poppies, and "blue-flowered rosemary hedges."

The book's descriptions of meals are heightened as well, delighting in pastis aperitifs, olives, zucchini, "voluptuous" eggplants, and desserts of chocolate cake and fruit tarts. In Marseilles, the fresh-caught seafood is "savory and briny"; a glass of Mourvèdre wine is like "swimming in a pool of red velvet." Here and elsewhere, the prose is exuberant, delighting in "pearl pink meringues," goat cheese wrapped in chestnut leaves, and pizza topped with hot peppers and ham.

Beyond the book's travelogue and culinary delights are better individuated personal stories, as of Bumpus and her sister, Melody, dreaming of fleeing to France; after raising children and fulfilling other obligations, they were finally able to make the voyage together, resulting in a sense of triumph. A recipe for chilled strawberry soup is prefaced by childhood memories of the tangy sweetness of prairie strawberries in Nebraska, while the 2006 Mediterranean sailing trip is contextualized as "dream come true" for Bumpus's husband, Winston. Exclamatory phrases bring additional verve, with the observational detachment of pure travel sections giving way to unabashed expressions of enthusiasm like "All was good! I mean it; all was good!"

Celebrating the joys of travel while relishing new and traditional tastes, *Adventures on Land and Sea* is a memoir about camaraderie, family, and true cultural appreciation.

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