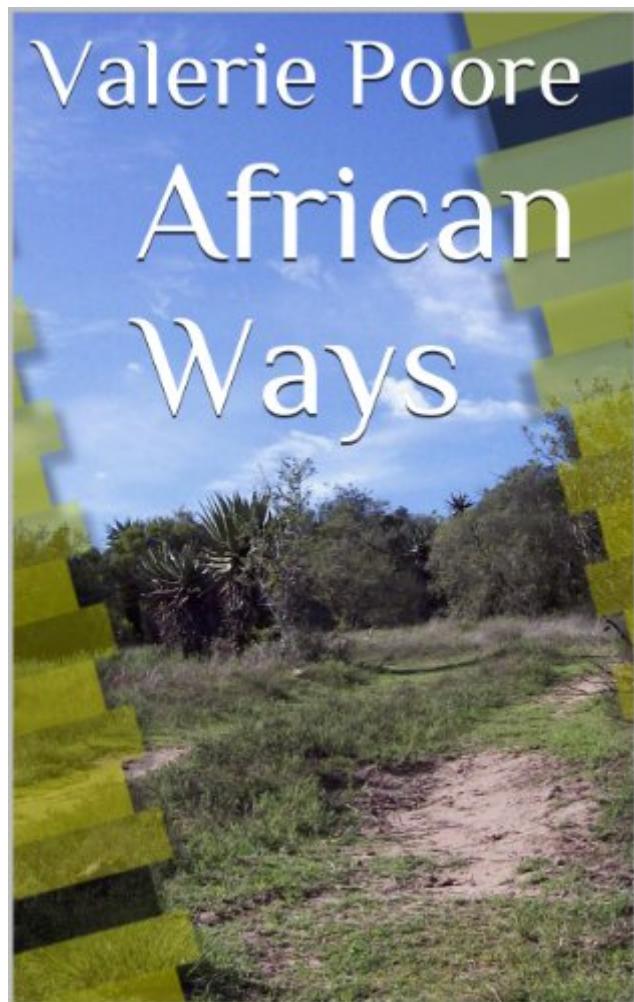


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African Ways



Synopsis

This is the story of a young woman's first encounters with rural South Africa. Coming from the all-mod-cons society of Britain at the beginning of the 1980's, the author is literally transplanted to a farm in the foothills of the Drakensberg mountains in what is now KwaZulu Natal. Once there, she finds her feet in the ways of Africa with the help of a charming, elderly Dutch couple, an appealing but wily African farm hand, his practical and motherly daughter and a wise and fascinating neighbour who has a fund of local knowledge. These are tales of a different kind of life, which include living without electricity, hand-milking cows, drought, veld fires and mad-cap adventures into the unknown. They are stories told with deep affection and respect, and above all a liberal dose of tongue-in-cheek humour.

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Customer Reviews

As a (white) South African this book delighted me, because Valerie Poore sketches such a true-life picture of life in rural KwaZulu-Natal in the 80's. Regardless of the fact that I was born and grew up

in the Western Cape, in a sense a "world away", I totally identified with the life Valerie found so exhilarating. We are so used to negative perceptions and publicity, that this honest tale is a breath of fresh air. The characters are so true to life, especially the way she describes the Zulus on the farm. Her small kids had an idyllic and oh so healthy lifestyle there! I did find it peculiar that -- even though rural -- the part of KwaZulu-Natal where they lived did not have electricity, and I could scarcely believe that they still used the party-line phone system, and those old wall-mounted phones without a dial or numbers! Well, the country is large and diversified, and I suppose modern amenities were slow to get to that part! The real-life story is amusing and entertaining, and as I don't know KwaZulu-Natal at all well, it was interesting to read all these facts about it, even though it was the early 80's. So often it seems to me that when journalists run out of stories, or get tired of their own politics, they decide to come to South Africa, where they can always sniff out sob stories and bad news ... while people here are no better or worse than in the rest of the world! I loved Valerie's description of the smell of Africa -- so absolutely true, the earthiness of it. Read this book while enjoying a braai (a grill/barbecue in the open air)!

African Ways is a delectably written piece by Val Poore who shares her vivid memories of life on a farm in South Africa during the 80's. She, her husband, Bill and their two small daughters JoJo and Momo learn to live in this rural area as they enjoy the picturesque landscape. She tells several mini stories about her three years there with a sense of humor, amusement and fine detail. I felt as if I was there meeting people such as the Ellenses along with Gwen, Innocent, Bongi and Kheswa, to name a few. I could see Val Poore learning to milk the cow, driving in the tornado-like weather or calming her young daughter after she had been stung by a bee. She took the time to pen this sacred journey about her time spent there among the Zulu people. If I never get to South Africa, I feel that I have gotten quite close by reading this candid, clear recording by Val Poore. It was as if she pulled back the curtain and said, "Enjoy the view." What a delight!

If you love reading about Africa you will enjoy this authors story of moving to Africa as a young wife and mother with 2 small children from England. As Val and her husband start out in rural South Africa with no place to live she is befriended by a Dutch couple who help get her life started.. She quickly realizes it is going to be a tough go but falls in love with the Drakensberg Mountains and its people. She describes the storms and rich scenery beautifully and it enriches the love I have always had for Africa. Arm chair travel is probably the only way I will get to experience this great continent so I do relish the great memoirs written about it. I highly recommend African Ways to any reader

that has a thirst for tales of Africa.

I enjoyed this light, humourous and interesting book of a family moving to South Africa with no preconceived ideas. It was obviously quite a culture change, but Valerie Poore and her family took it in their stride. It was probably their naivety that got them through the settling in stage and it was a good read to follow the family's life in rural South Africa during the Apartheid era. There is no bigotry or political undertones in this book, but pure clean narrative of bringing up two young children fresh from England amongst long standing white settler farmers and the indigenous black neighbours. A real lesson in how to get along. I grew up in Southern Africa and can relate to many of events Valerie describes. A book for both Africa followers and for those who would like to learn more about a part of that continent.

A memoir of a young English family moving to Natal, South Africa, in the early 1980s. Yes, apartheid was still active but the author only addresses that minimally (and apologetically) but as she says, "...on the farm where I lived, the legal fact of the political system was as remote as the mountain slopes against which our farm cottage clung." This memoir contains many, many vignettes from their life in SA, and I found it interesting and well-written.

Living in Africa on a farm sounds like a good challenge. And that is what this family did. This family moves to Africa with small children to live on a farm. It was a great experience.

A charming book! A delightful, stream-of-consciousness-like trip down memory lane, covering a young British family's three-year sojourn in rural Natal, South Africa in the 1980s. If you've ever spent time in rural Southern (or Eastern) Africa, this book will tickle your tucked-away memories and make you smile. If not, African Ways becomes your passport for a delightful "visit" to a special place at a still-unspoiled time. A far-too-quick read and well worth your time!!!

Easy breezy

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