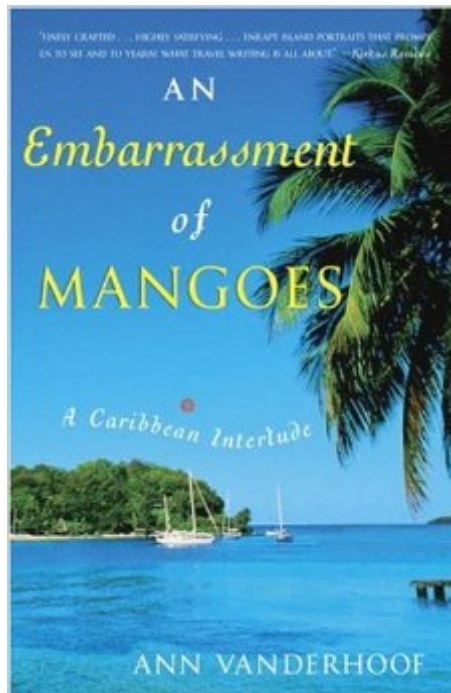


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An Embarrassment Of Mangoes: A Caribbean Interlude



Synopsis

Who hasn't fantasized about chucking the job, saying good-bye to the rat race, and escaping to some exotic destination in search of sun, sand, and a different way of life? Ann Vanderhoof and her husband, Steve, did just that. In the mid 1990s, they were driven, forty-something professionals who were desperate for a break from their deadline-dominated, career-defined lives. So they quit their jobs, rented out their house, moved onto a 42-foot sailboat called Receta (a recipe, in Spanish), and set sail for the Caribbean on a two-year voyage of culinary and cultural discovery. In lavish detail that will have you packing your swimsuit and dashing for the airport, Vanderhoof describes the sun-drenched landscapes, enchanting characters, and mouthwatering tastes that season their new lifestyle. Come along for the ride and be seduced by Caribbean rhythms as she and Steve sip rum with their island neighbors, hike lush rain forests, pull their supper out of the sea, and adapt to life on island time. Exchanging business clothes for bare feet, they drop anchor in sixteen countries—forty-seven individual islands—where they explore secluded beaches and shop at lively local markets. Along the way, Ann records the delectable dishes they encounter—from cracked conch in the Bahamas to curried lobster in Grenada—from Dominican papaya salsa to classic West Indian rum punch—and incorporates these enticing recipes into the text so that readers can participate in the adventure. Almost as good as being there, *An Embarrassment of Mangoes* is an intimate account that conjures all the irresistible beauty and bounty from the Bahamas to Trinidad—and just may compel you to make a rash decision that will land you in paradise.

Book Information

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[Caribbean > General](#) #2927 in [Books > Travel > Travel Writing](#)

Customer Reviews

'embarrassment of mangoes' is much less a sailing book than a 'wife's view' of a two-year vacation through the Caribbean. Like plenty of sailing couples, Ann Vanderhoof does not really have the bug, and instead follows gamely along with partner on a Toronto-Caribbean loop. She was the founder of 'cottages', a modern magazine incarnation of the 'house and garden' ilk, and the book reads like a 200-page version of one of those chatty recipe articles from 'Cruising World' or 'Coastal Living': 'we pulled into unknown Bay X after a horrid/delightful/tumultuous passage, and the next morning while drinking/walking/looking for parts, we fortuitously ran into authentic local fisherman/housewife/fellow sailing couple/non-profit organizer, who fed us amazing/delicious/tasty local X, and here is the recipe.' The peril of a dragging anchor in this book is equal parts damage to the boat and the threat of upsetting the dinner guests; Ms. Vanderhoof's sense of adventure is heightened by the profound psychological growth of giving up her Toronto hairdresser for two years. And on and on. For a girly-girl sailing adventure, there is precious little about their relationship, hubby Steve instead plays a background role as a sort of invisible lovable oaf. Ann is certainly a capable writer and the book flows along on an even if somewhat predictable and superficial keel, like a seamless dinner conversation with someone intent on subtly pushing their vacuous politically correct message points: we were authentic - we developed real friendships with the locals! we do care about the environment - we felt bad about tossing that old fishing net garbage back into the sea! it did seem like a shame to develop the old man's veggie patch into a resort!

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