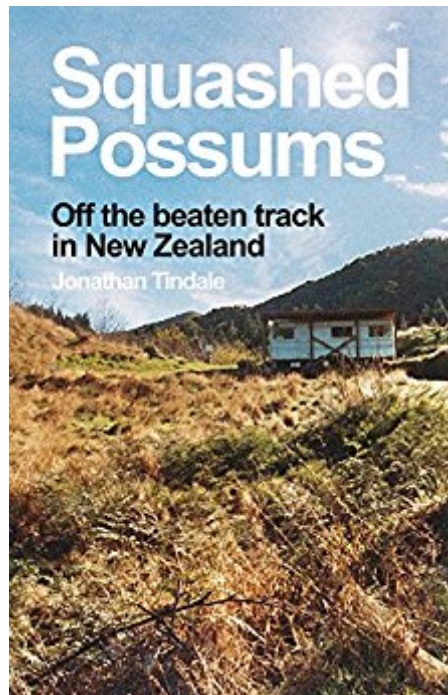




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Squashed Possums: Off The Beaten Track In New Zealand



Synopsis

Bill Bryson, author of Notes from a Small Island "Terrific" 2016 Award Finalist - Travel Non-Fiction - Readers' Favorite Awards Ten years after returning from the New Zealand outback, Jon receives a mysterious manuscript in the post. Narrated by Jon's former home, the lone caravan, Squashed Possums reveals what it's like to live in the wild through four seasons, including New Zealand's coldest winter in decades. Dr Jock Phillips, NZ historian and author "I thoroughly enjoyed it! What an interesting story" • Giles Milton, author of White Gold and Nathaniels Nutmeg "The caravan narrator "œ yes, a first. May it sell in the millions" • Discover how Jon finds himself reversing off the edge of a cliff, meet the Maori chef who survived 9/11, the pioneers who paved the way, and catch sight of the elusive kiwi bird. Encounter hedgehogs that fly, possums that scream, and perhaps most importantly, the lone caravan with a story to tell...

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Customer Reviews

I enjoy travel memoirs and this was no exception. An outline would have improved the order, as it is told using Mr. Tindale's journal, and the speaking caravan. I'd like for a New Zealander to read and review the book so I could be sure everything was true, as it seemed exaggerated.

Took a minute to get used to a caravan, as the narrator. After that, it was a fun, interesting, and informative read. Even though I had the most wonderful holiday there, a few months ago, I feel that I know and understand the place and people better. Now that I have read this book.

A poignant tale of a youngish male Pom coming to New Zealand for six months of down-under O.E. (overseas experience). He spends so much time with an old caravan marooned in the bush that they develop the necessary rapport to share the narration of this entertaining tale about the thrills and spills of back-blocks life far from home. Recommended.

Fun read!

An incredible read!!!! I was fortunate enough to have met Jon on his travels through New Zealand, and was taken back to the beauty of the country, the incredible people, and even my own journeys as he retold a hitch-hiking story of mine that I had forgotten! (!! He captured it so well, I remembered it again as though it were yesterday!! Amazing!!!! Jon has an incredible way of capturing the essence of New Zealand, its culture, its nature, and its people...in a way that makes you feel as though you are there. I could read Squashed Possums over and over again...!! Thank you for capturing so much of New Zealand, as well as your incredible perspective of your own journey there. Squashed Possums is a must read for anyone who loves travel, loves New Zealand, or just wants to be taken away to another land!! I highlight recommend this incredible book!!

Thank you Jonathan Tindale I am a New Zealander and found that this book captured the flavour of the New Zealand people and countryside really well! It also captured the New Zealand weather which has such a big impact on the people and countryside. The mix of contemporary events and the history were well chosen and well written. Reminded me very much of Bill Bryson without being a "me too". I was delighted to get the "caravan history" view of the world as I have caravanned and motor homed around New Zealand for many many months and share the caravans view. I was especially impressed by the reference to Gurney Norman's book "Divine Rights Trip" as will name our motor home "Urge" when we retire and become grey nomads. Highly highly recommended. If you like this book I recommend watching "Hunt for the Wilderpeople" - it has a similar flavour and is also a great take on New Zealand.

Bias alert, I met John Tindale when we were fellow guests at a speaking event and liked his quirky, idiosyncratic, and atypical delivery, and wanted to get to know him. I subsequently bought this book, even though I had not got to know the caravan that narrates it. I am glad I invested the time to change that. Squashed Possums is a rare book that balances transcendental experience with cultural curiosity, history, and wildlife watching, with beauty and serenity. It is my experience, and not rare at all, that time spent secluded in the wilderness brings out the inner philosopher, but it is unusual for someone to be frank about it. Physical closeness to the grandeur and interdependence of nature has a habit of opening up the possibility of epiphany, and I loved John's unabashed openness and description of this moment. But, what I loved most is that John also has a grounded insight into human nature, observes the wildlife around him with a gentle fondness and awe, and entertains a delightful curiosity, that brings the whole experience alive and you feel it with him. This is a tribute to New Zealand, caravans and nature, but it is love letter to life. For that it reaches beyond the travel curious to speak to anybody interested in the human condition. Any person who embarks on a jaunt like this one in Squashed Possums is predisposed to seeing the world through a different fraction, however, John is a rare human being who has mastered the art of telling us important things while entertaining us; we don't notice until we are won over, and we understand the deeper meaning without realising it. This is an unusual book not because it is told from the perspective of the caravan but because it has a depth with the potential to change you in reading it.

This was a thoroughly enjoyable read that, for want of further travelogues from Tindale, has me itching to reread Bill Bryson. You don't need to be a lover of travel writing to find your smile muscles exercised unbidden; you don't need to know New Zealand, or yearn to tread the tracks the author's wheels once left, for some as yet unsuspected wanderlust to come hiking to the surface; and even Clarkson would forgive a caravan its inglorious past as a tailback-causing menace, in return for its amusing intrusions on privacy between the covers of this book. Wildlife, wilderness, history and cultural curiosities are described with wit and a proportionate sense of awe and respect. And that's the book's greatest strength - whether the section you're reading contains the humble observations of the caravan narrator or the clippings from Tindale's own diary, you become absorbed such that you almost don't know you're reading. You're feeling. You feel the wind come through those gaps in a far from weathertight caravan. You feel the fear on a dusty track to a precipice over the ravine. You feel the love the author has for the memories you'll inevitably envy and you feel, for a brief while, that you've been there with him throughout it all.

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