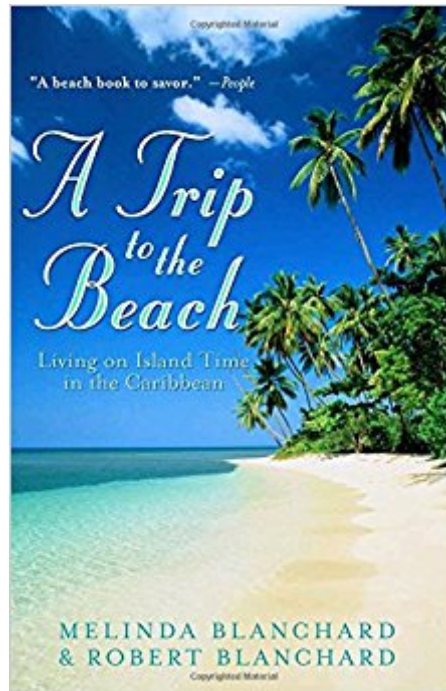




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A Trip To The Beach: Living On Island Time In The Caribbean



Synopsis

This is the true story of a trip to the beach that never ends. It's about a husband and wife who escape civilization to build a small restaurant on an island paradise -- and discover that even paradise has its pitfalls. It's a story filled with calamities and comedy, culinary disasters and triumphs, and indelible portraits of people who live and work on a sliver of beauty set in the Caribbean Sea. It's about the maddening, exhausting, outlandish complications of trying to live the simple life -- and the joy that comes when you somehow pull it off. The story begins when Bob and Melinda Blanchard sell their successful Vermont food business and decide, perhaps impulsively, to get away from it all. Why not open a beach bar and grill on Anguilla, their favorite Caribbean island? One thing leads to another and the little grill turns into an enchanting restaurant that quickly draws four-star reviews and a celebrity-studded clientele eager for Melinda's delectable cooking. Amid the frenetic pace of the Christmas "high season," the Blanchards and their kitchen staff -- Clinton and Ozzie, the dancing sous-chefs; Shabby, the master lobster-wrangler; Bug, the dish-washing comedian -- come together like a crack drill team. And even in the midst of hilarious pandemonium, there are moments of bliss. As the Blanchards learn to adapt to island time, they become ever more deeply attached to the quirky rhythms and customs of their new home. Until disaster strikes: Hurricane Luis, a category-4 storm with two-hundred-mile-an-hour gusts, devastates Anguilla. Bob and Melinda survey the wreckage of their beloved restaurant and wonder whether leaving Anguilla, with its innumerable challenges, would be any easier than walking out on each other. Affectionate, seductive, and very funny, *A Trip to the Beach* is a love letter to a place that becomes both home and escape.

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Customer Reviews

On a vacation with the family in Barbados, Mel and Bob Blanchard (of the Vermont-based Blanchard & Blanchard specialty foods company) stumble upon a tiny restaurant/shack on a Caribbean beach: I marveled at the ingenuity of the set-up. A secluded spot, sand like flour, customers arriving in bathing suits. The guy barely lifted a finger, cleared at least \$35.00, and gave us a lunch we'd remember forever.... The man had sold us a frame of mind. So begins the Blanchards' 10-year pursuit of the illusory notion of "island time." In a literary heartbeat, they abandon the "concrete jungle" that was Vermont and open a restaurant on a little-known island in the British West Indies called Anguilla ("rhymes with vanilla"). Narrated by Mel Blanchard, *A Trip to the Beach* dispels tired notions of the Caribbean--the steel drums, the lush landscapes, and acres of swaying palm trees--and instead focuses on the understated elegance and easy rhythms of the sublimely "flat, and scrubby" island. Though lacking the richness and finesse of Frances Mayes, and the wit and wisdom of Peter Mayle, Mel Blanchard nonetheless forges a new path in travel writing as the Martha Stewart of the Caribbean. A remarkably intuitive and inspired chef, Mel writes poignant passages on running a kitchen in Anguilla. Here she exposes the meat of the story, sharing her many outrageous adventures--how to cater to pampered and demanding guests, how to cook for a full restaurant in the darkest of island night with no electricity, how to prepare for recurring and utterly devastating hurricanes that wipe out your business. In these chapters the writing is as good as her cooking--inspiring, colorful, and easily digestible. Although she sometimes relies heavily on well-worn clichés and expresses naïve and rather privileged assumptions--"Why would anyone choose to live surrounded by concrete and traffic rather than fishing boats, water and palm trees?"--discerning readers will see the true nature of this tiny island--a place of simplistic beauty that struggles to maintain its independence while it depends on tourism for its livelihood. With a strange concoction of anecdotes, island politics, recipes, and sweet memories, the Blanchards seduce readers with the allure of "island time," bringing Anguilla home to the rest of us. --Daphne Durham --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

To those weary of the rat race, the prospect of moving to a tropical land and opening a bistro sounds like a dream: balmy weather, blue skies and not a care save for which number sunblock to wear. Melinda and Bob Blanchard couldn't pass up the chance to live out that dream, and their resulting adventure is recounted in this prosaic memoir, presented as a slim volume narrated by

Melinda. These two Vermonters, burned out from their ownership of a specialty food company, impulsively decided to go out on a limb and move to the Caribbean island of Anguilla to open a restaurant. Upon their first foray into negotiations with the locals, they nearly scrapped the plan and returned home, but perseverance and their own acceptance of "island time" customs helped them to stick it out. The authors tell of the obstacles involved in launching a business in a place where goats crossing the road can be a town's major daily event. Chapters relate typical issues of negotiating rent, finding building supplies and locating such ingredients as free-range chicken and baby squash, always ending in a sigh as the restaurant staff wraps up yet another fabulous night at Blanchard's. Despite a moderately gripping third section that details a fierce hurricane, the action moves along at a languid pace; even with the inclusion of some savory recipes, this bland tale lacks an original and appealing hook. Author tour. (Oct.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A great book once the reader gets past the inordinate professionalism of the author. The tale of these entrepreneur's escape to paradise was quite an eye-opener, and I became completely vested in learning whether or not their business venture in the islands would pay off or break them forever. This was my third read of 4 books on the islands and found myself captivated and enjoying the book and stories immensely. Once the book was done I missed the retelling of conversations in the island dialect captured by the author on a number of recounts. A blessing to me, I would recommend it to the business-savvy and the casual-interest-reader. Truly a marvelous story unfolded in its pages.

I really enjoyed this book. We have been to Anguilla several times so can relate to places and the good people they refer to. We have also been to their restaurant several times and thoroughly enjoyed it. We knew the owners were from Vermont but never really knew how they came to own on Anguilla. Was really impressed with the hard work that went into getting it up and running. We would not have known about the book except for a cab driver who took us to the restaurant one evening and told us about it. We met Bob one time when we were there but not Melinda. We are looking forward to a return visit and hope to meet them both.

My husband and I first learned about Bob & Melinda Blanchard while visiting Anguilla and eating at Blanchard's. What a joy to come home and find a book detailing the story of how Melinda and her husband came to open their restaurant. As I read, I could think back on my memories of the island and the spots we visited as she described them. I found the book entertaining, inspiring and

informative. Melinda's writing style makes you feel like she's a good friend. Exactly what I was looking for in some leisure reading.

GREAT READ! Their restaurant is still in business. Look up their website.

I was skeptical about this book, so I got a free sample for my Kindle. Within 10 minutes I was purchasing the full version! I am a lover of a good beach book, and have read a few lately that fell quite short. Not this one, I LOVED it! This is a fascinating story, written in an intriguing, relatable and interesting style. The Blanchards are truly fascinating people, and I have found myself desperately pondering planning a trip to Anguilla, JUST to eat at Blanchard's. The story is told, just like that..a story. Could have easily been interpreted as fiction had I not known it was a true story. The setting is obviously amazing, and she does a GREAT job of bringing it to life! You can almost feel the tropical breezes, and hear the palms swaying. The characters are brought alive and you feel like you personally know each of them by the book's end. I have been to all of the islands that neighbor Anguilla, and she made me feel like I had just taken a vacation. This was one of those books that you looked forward to snuggling up with, instantly transporting you...where you find yourself trying to carve time out of your day just to read. You will not be disappointed with this one!

Great book love it thanks much

Great, entertaining story. It made you feel like you were there the whole time. Loved the characters and the story arc.

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