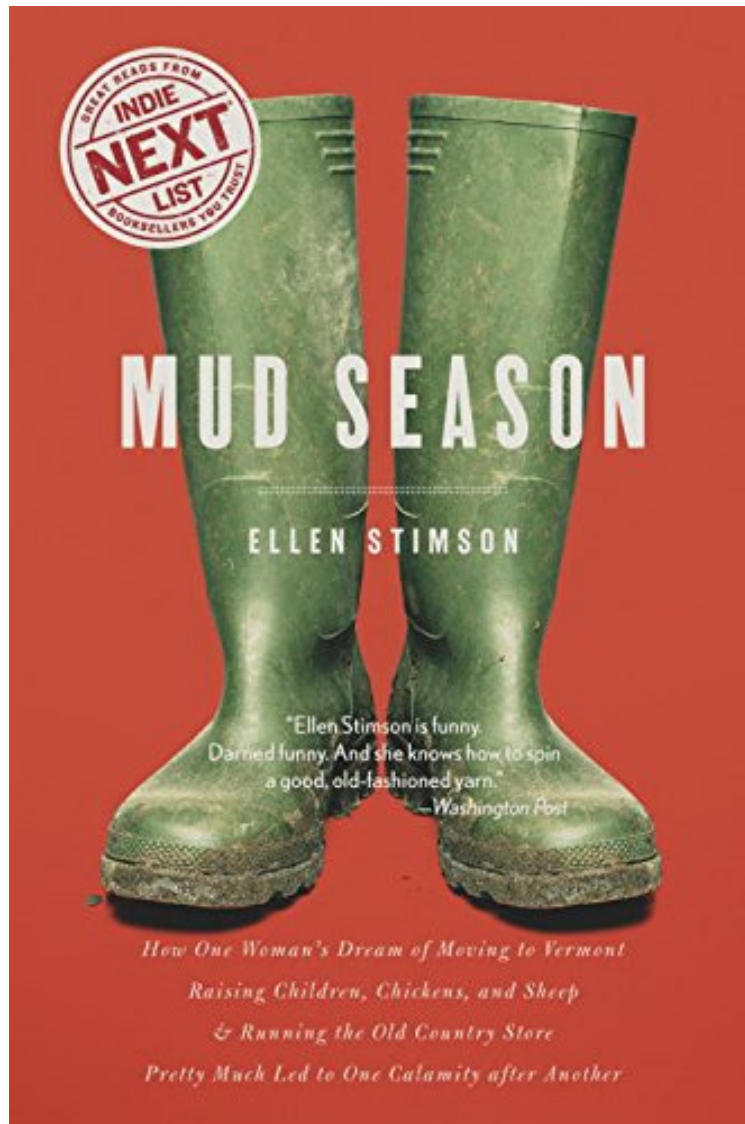


[Download] Mud Season: How One Woman's Dream of Moving to Vermont, Raising Children, Chickens and Sheep, and Running the Old Country Store Pretty Much Led to One Calamity After Another

Mud Season: How One Woman's Dream of Moving to Vermont, Raising Children, Chickens and Sheep, and Running the Old Country Store Pretty Much Led to One Calamity After Another

Ellen Stimson

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Ellen Stimson : Mud Season: How One Woman's Dream of Moving to Vermont, Raising Children, Chickens and Sheep, and Running the Old Country Store Pretty Much Led to One Calamity After Another before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mud Season: How One

Woman's Dream of Moving to Vermont, Raising Children, Chickens and Sheep, and Running the Old Country Store Pretty Much Led to One Calamity After Another:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A comforting tale of relocation, business ventures, and family. By JoAnn Mapson Having already read Ellen Stimson's *Good Grief*, and loved it, on a cold February day in Santa Fe, New Mexico, I decided to read her first book. I attended grad school in Montpelier, VT, coming from Southern California in winter (maybe I wear socks) to Montpelier with tons of snow, was a shock and as much education as studying for my MFA. Stimson absolutely captures the culture shock, and is able to joke about her earlier notions of Vermont being paradise. But it's also a story of family and country stores and animals--dogs to hens to sheep--which left me crying in some spots but laughing in others, This tale is beguiling and rich with emotional truth. It made me wish I was her next door neighbor. Reading it on a snowy day was like having surround sound and seeing a movie that hurtled toward its inevitable finish with such energy, I did not want it to end. I hope she publishes a new book soon. I adore her writing, her stories about food, kids and chickens. Just a lovely book to give to a friend who entertains ideas of "moving to the country" or watching Diane Keaton in *Baby Boom*, one of my favorite films. I will reread this when I need a hug. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Home Again! By Diane R. Harrison Reading this book was like being home again. I grew up a few miles from the Vermont State Line in Upstate NY and this book could have taken place in my own home town. We all knew each others dogs and kids and everybody watched out for each other. I think of my cousin out plowing his field with his team of Belgian Horses and cursing the early spring mud. We all dreaded that damp cold that comes with mud season and yet were happy that days were growing longer. My neighbors were characters right out of this book and behind that New England reserve there was a steadfast love that one cannot deny. I remember looking out the window to see a herd of cows trotting through the yard and every neighbor setting out to help round them up and return them to Max, the owner. This book WAS like a warm hug and like going home again. Thank you, Ellen Stimson. Even though I now live in the Midwest I have only to pick up your book to go home for a while. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. I really felt like part of their family!!! By Skiabella Sometimes a story can be both very compelling and gripping as well as being very personal at the same time. This is the case with *Mud Season*. I really enjoyed reading the story of her family's adventures (and MISadventures) in pulling up their mid-America roots and moving to the "Republic of Vermont." This was one of those great books that I found myself reading in one (well, two) marathon sessions - I just couldn't put it down! I really felt like part of this courageous family as they took on the challenges and experienced the joys and challenges of setting up a new life in a new place. So one last comment... When you get to the very end of the book, there are a few pages where I would warn you in advance - have tissues, LOTS of tissues. The last few pages of the book touched my heart and earned this book a permanent place in my bookshelf.

Living the dream of the endless vacation In self-deprecating and hilarious fashion, *Mud Season* chronicles Stimson's transition from city living to rickety Vermont farmhouse. When she decides she wants to own and operate the old-fashioned village store in idyllic Dorset, pop. 2,036, one of the oldest continually operating country stores in the country, she learns the hard way that "improvements" are not always welcomed warmly by folks who like things just fine the way they'd always been. She dreams of patrons streaming in for fresh-made sandwiches and an old-timey candy counter, but she learns they're boycotting the store. Why? "The bread," they tell her, "you moved the bread from where it used to be." Can the citified newcomer turn the tide of mistrust before she ruins the business altogether? Follow the author to her wit's end and back, through her full immersion into rural life?swapping high heels for muck boots; raising chickens and sheep; fighting off skunks, foxes, and bears; and making a few friends and allies in a tiny town steeped in history, local tradition, and that dyed-in-the-wool Vermont "character."

From Publishers Weekly Stimson's predictable tale of uprooting to Vermont after an idyllic fall vacation has its fun moments, including "choosing the cheese" and experiencing *Mud Season*, the time in early spring when "the snow opens up the hard, bare ground beneath it," but never enough of them to outweigh the plodding narrative. Initial visions of a picturesque small-town life are immediately sidetracked by the day-to-day of historic home renovations and management troubles at the "Horrible Quaint Country Store" that Stimson and her husband decide to open. Natural descriptions provide moments of serenity: "There seems to be a whole, separate world just below the snowy, melty surface." Such instances, unfortunately, are often bogged down by repetitive footnoting. Stimson's story, which concludes with bankruptcy negotiations and a promise never to buy a store again, is fraught with anxiety and missteps. More than thirty appended pages of recipes, including three pet memoriam, supply cheerier resolutions than the story commands. Such additions detract from what would otherwise be a bittersweet story, making this book far more complicated, and less enjoyable, than it should be. (Oct.) From Booklist *Starred* Get your schadenfreude ready. Stimson's fish-out-of-water memoir is chockablock with self-deprecating, belly-laughable vignettes. Not since Betty MacDonald's *The Egg and I* (1945) has anybody seemed more ill-suited to country life. And yet this born-and-bred midwestern city dweller, having run up an enormous tab at her local Vermont country store, thinks, Maybe I could run

a quaint country store. Visions of herself, husband John, and their Bernese Mountain dog, Eloise, greeting delighted customers with homemade breads and soups and cozy woodstove fires eclipsed all logic. They bought the store. Which sounds ominously like the phrase, they bought the farm. Which it may as well have been in the case of this former wholesale book businesswoman who seemed hell-bent on proving she had more money and credit than brains. Naturally, first thing, Stimson rearranged the store to suit her well-intentioned yuppie sensibilities. The locals stayed away in droves. Indeed, her first customers—staid, khaki-and-sensible-shoe-wearing native Vermonters—took one look at her swingy orange and purple outfit accessorized with jangly jewelry and thought she was a fortune teller. The experience foretold a very long acclimation and heaps of hilarious anecdotes. As for this book—come for the humor, stay for the recipes. --Donna Chavez Get your schadenfreude ready. Stimson's fish-out-of-water memoir is chockablock with self-deprecating, belly-laughable vignettes. Not since Betty MacDonald's *The Egg and I* (1945) has anybody seemed more ill-suited to country life. And yet this born-and-bred Midwestern city dweller, having run up an enormous tab at her local Vermont country store, thinks, "Maybe I could run a quaint country store." Visions of herself, husband John, and their Bernese Mountain dog, Eloise, greeting delighted customers with homemade breads and soups and cozy woodstove fires eclipsed all logic. They bought the store. Which sounds ominously like the phrase, they bought the farm. Which it may as well have been in the case of this former wholesale book businesswoman who seemed hell-bent on proving she had more money and credit than brains. Naturally, first thing, Stimson rearranged the store to suit her well-intentioned yuppie sensibilities. The locals stayed away in droves. Indeed, her first customers—staid, khaki-and-sensible-shoe-wearing native Vermonters—took one look at her "swingy" orange and purple outfit accessorized with jangly jewelry and thought she was a fortune teller. The experience foretold a very long acclimation and heaps of hilarious anecdotes. As for this book—come for the humor, stay for the recipes. — Booklist [STARRED REVIEW]A picturesque family vacation in rural Vermont inspires Stimson and her husband to pay a visit to what they call the "Life Store" to shop for a new adventure: packing up their city life in St. Louis and moving into an old farmhouse in Dorset, VT (pop. 2,036). After taking over the old country store, they try to keep it afloat through the five Vermont seasons: spring, summer, fall, winter, and mud. But these city mice discover that country life is not exactly what they imagined. Moving the bread in the store inspires town-wide gossip. A hen in their "yuppie chicken coop" turns out to be a rooster. Stimson chases a goat while wearing a bathing suit and is forced to face the fragility of life when her family takes in lamb orphans. Mishap after mishap, Stimson compares their new life to "putting out a fire using a hose of gasoline." VERDICT: Written with self-deprecating honesty, this memoir is for anyone who has ever gone on vacation and fantasized about staying. — Library Journal

In her debut, former bookseller Stimson recounts relocating her family from St. Louis to the bucolic beauty of Vermont. The author and her husband John fell in love with Vermont on a getaway weekend. Years later, financially stable and in need of a change, they settled into a small Vermont town to enjoy the simplicity and beauty of the Green Mountains. That is when the trouble began, as Stimson brought in an out-of-state contractor and crew rather than hire local folks to fix her house. Then, in an impulsive moment, she bought the local country store with hopes of turning it into a high-volume gourmet shop. Though nothing really went as planned, the beauty of Vermont and its changing seasons gave Stimson solace. "There is no more naturally beautiful place I have ever been," she writes, "and I have been to a bunch of them." The author dramatizes the age-old conundrum of newcomers versus old-timers and the difficulties of fitting in—even if acceptance, in this case, only meant that the locals would not boycott the store after she moved the bread rack from the back of the store to the front, near the registers. Meanwhile, cats, dogs, sheep, chickens, goats and skunks traipsed through their idyllic setting, biting the minister and generally running amok. In a humorous, self-deprecating style, the author examines a variety of questions about her new life: In Vermont, what constitutes an emergency? When can you call 911? With aplomb, Stimson describes her rural Vermont setting, the changing seasons and what drew her to the state. A section of recipes—including "Lovely Fluffy Quiche" and "John's Grandmother's Roszke Cookies"—and the obituaries of three pets round out the volume. A quick, light book to keep around as a pick-me-up. — Kirkus

Ellen Stimson is funny. Darned funny. And she knows how to spin a good, old-fashioned yarn. Stimson tells her tales with clear-eyed, self-deprecating humor, which makes *Mud Season* a breeze to read in a single sitting. — Washington Post