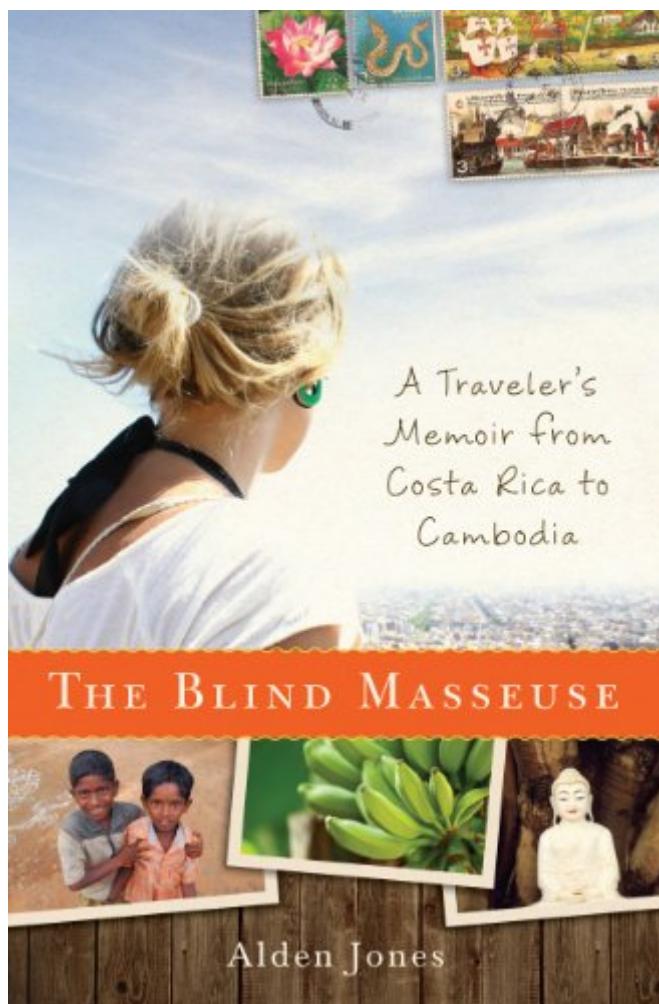


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The Blind Masseuse: A Traveler's Memoir From Costa Rica To Cambodia



Synopsis

Through personal journeys both interior and across the globe, Alden Jones investigates what motivates us to travel abroad in search of the unfamiliar. By way of explorations to Costa Rica, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Cuba, Burma, Cambodia, Egypt, and around the world on a ship, Jones chronicles her experience as a young American traveler while pondering her role as an outsider in the cultures she temporarily inhabits. Her wanderlust fuels a strong, high-adventure story and, much in the vein of classic travel literature, Jones's picaresque tale of personal evolution informs her own transitions, rites of passage, and understandings of her place as a citizen of the world. With sharp insight and stylish prose, Jones asks: Is there a right or wrong way to travel? The Blind Masseuse concludes that there is, but that it's not always black and white.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I finished reading The Blind Masseuse on a recent flight. Oh, how I could relate! The past subjunctive, the mad cab driver in Cairo, not wanting to grow up at 27....and all the wonderful people you meet while traveling the world. It brought back a lot of memories. And not just because I had the pleasure to meet and travel with Alden several years ago, but because I could really connect with

her writing and her sentiments. I could visualize each of the characters and see myself in the various locales. Not only did it bring me back to reflect on past experiences; it inspired me to keep traveling and exploring the world. It is difficult to pick a favorite chapter as I related to them all. "I know what you did in Egypt" stands out as my favorite and has inspired me to read the letters from Flaubert, to which she responded with humor, thought and intrigue. This is a book that I will read again, and recommend to all who have that sense of wanderlust that we share.

I love a clever book that reads with ease. "The Blind Masseuse: A Traveler's Memoir from Costa Rica to Cambodia" is that book. It is especially exciting for the avid traveler (and has made a great gift for friends!). "Is there a right way and a wrong way to travel?" asks Jones - forcing the travel enthusiast in all of us to dig deeper into our motivations and expectations. It's been a while since a book has kept me wanting more, kept me turning and turning. But Jones writes in a way that makes you feel as if you are simultaneously present in the pages and sitting next to her as she recounts her journeys. Left me reflecting and looking forward to more from Jones!

Alden Jones uses travel to stimulate experience that takes her both outside her familiar world and inside her increasing self-awareness. Ever self-critical and touchingly honest, we see her evolve as a traveler and a woman, always with sincere respect for the peoples and places she visits. Her gentle humor about the act of travel--or she would ask--is it tourism?--is a question that becomes blurrier to her, like her own photos of Burma, as she matures. Her letter to Flaubert is a gem in itself. I agree with the other reviews that she is a wonderful story teller, and I look forward to reading stories that go even more deeply into the lives of the people she has observed.

This is the first travel memoir I've read and I was hooked from first page to last. Alden Jones has piqued my interest in reading more travel writing, although I'm afraid I've already started with one of the best travel memoirs out there! The vivid, funny and wise chapters take the form of lyric essay, personal reflection, and plot-driven narrative, all bound by the search for the answer to the question: what is the right way to travel? Alden Jones explores both exterior and interior worlds in seamless, beautiful prose. As a narrator she is approachable, honest and self-aware. It was a great pleasure to read this book and travel vicariously.

I loved everything about this book -- and knew I would right from the Introduction where the author talks about the difference between a tourist and a traveler. It was clear that, like Jones, I was a

traveler, always looking for the "thrill of a new perspective." But, then, all of a sudden she left me behind, referring to herself as an exoticist. And, indeed she was! From that point on I was content to sit back and let her bring me along to the most amazing places, opening up new worlds and showing me how she fit into them. Exotic worlds that a part of me yearned to travel to, but knowing that physically I never would. So, I did the next best thing. I traveled vicariously with a masterful story teller.

I started the *Blind Masseuse* on a Sunday evening and finished it shortly after getting the kids off to school Monday morning. One of those books you can't put down. Jones takes us to unfamiliar places but has an uncanny ability to describe the adventures in such detail and with such sensitivity that you feel as though you are her traveling companion. Her stories are witty, honest and well researched. She does a wonderful job describing the tourist/traveler dilemma. She humorously describes the tourist and traveler voices she hears in her head. The tourist's voice desires all the comforts of home while the traveler's voice insists on total cultural immersion. Jones puts into words the conflict that many of us feel when traveling abroad. *The Blind Masseuse* is an entertaining and fun read, whether you enjoy traveling or not.

A great piece of travel writing and a deserving bearer of the title "best travel book of 2013" (Huffington Post), "The *Blind Masseuse*..." tells the age-old tale of the perpetual struggle between good (traveler) and evil (tourist) though a new lens. Author Alden Jones beautifully recreates the memorable landscapes and relationships that are the hallmarks of all great travels. The book is a true must-read for anyone who has ever caught the travel bug.

I enjoyed reading the whole book at once. It was fun to experience countries through her writings that I have never visited, but also having visited others, I saw the culture through different eyes. I have seen Alden's photos on another blog and hope she will include them in her next book. After buying and reading my copy from , I received one as a gift, so I promptly donated it to our local public library (very small town). My friends also think she is a gifted writer and many have checked out the book. I am waiting to get my copy autographed soon.

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