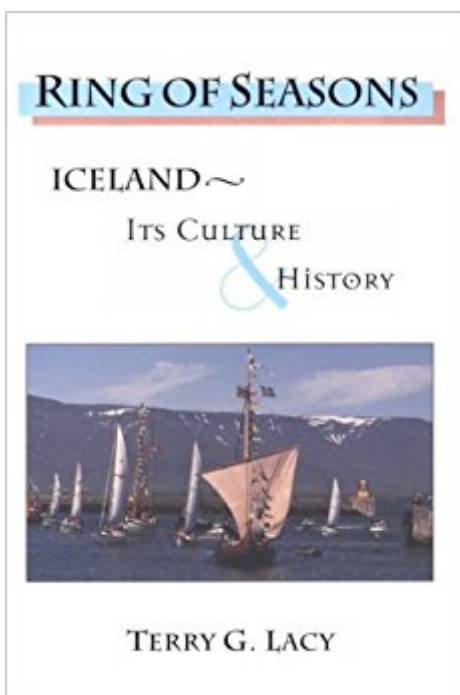


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Ring Of Seasons: Iceland--Its Culture And History



Synopsis

A remote island with a rich and ancient literature. A land of hot springs and volcanoes. A country with an extraordinary history, a challenging geography and a vibrant contemporary culture. A land of ice. In *Ring of Seasons*, Terry Lacy--an American who has lived in Iceland for twenty-four years--brings both the perspective of the outsider and the familiar eye of the long-term resident to this delightful exploration of all facets of Iceland, past and present. She conveys her story with a skillful interlacing of history, religion, politics, and culture to paint a vivid picture of the way Icelanders live today as members of a wealthy society still very dependent upon nature--from a reliance on her icy waters to support an international fishing industry to a watchful cohabitation with the volcanoes that both destroy villages and create new islands. This is a book for all who have been charmed by reading the Norse sagas, for all those intrigued by the country that can claim the oldest living democracy. It is an excellent introduction for anyone planning to visit Iceland and a delightful read for all those who do their exploration from the comfort of an armchair. Terry G. Lacy is an American currently residing in Reykjavik, Iceland.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

by Terry G Lacy --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A good overview of the history and customs of an earlier Iceland. Gives a background for the Iceland of today. Very interesting island nation.

Interesting read. Allows you to understand what who and where about Iceland. Very informative. It read kind of like a text book and not a travelogue which is what I was looking for. Despite the format, I still enjoyed the book.

Written nearly two decades ago, as Icelanders embraced the computer world but of course a decade before their economy crashed, much of this reads like a textbook. Terry Lacy teaches English there, and like few Americans, learned the language. So, her understanding is deeper already. Her sources reveal this. She focuses on natural resources, geography, history, folktales, and politics. More social sciences, therefore, than culture. That comes in the opening vignettes, where she shows in her interactions with families and friends at gatherings and holidays how they act and talk. That enlivens the factual emphasis of the bulk of this study. It's valuable for those seeking a guide not to the sights (you get little of this) and more the contexts. For instance, Lacy attends to the personality traits of a people friendly but reserved, careful yet bold, and who have little patience for the foolish--or for those outside their kin and kith, whose pedigrees and backgrounds in a small nation are intimately known to all. This will serve as a reference bridging the gap between English-language travel accounts or guidebooks and specialized studies, often in Icelandic, inaccessible to the reader in our language, Lacy sifts their findings and documents her research well. Even if parts of this are dated, it's less dated than expected, for she wisely avoided too much coverage of contemporary data, stressing instead the factors in Iceland more enduring in its land and its people. Arranged in a cyclical fashion around the seasons, the presentation of material gradually flows from past to present, but in a dispersed fashion. This keeps you reading, for the material is dispersed throughout, a novel but clever touch. Part of what makes this place special is the inherent fascination with a place so novel in its settlement and perch above the rest of Europe, and this factor does endure in this presentation, beneath the factual blizzards and data snow that can cloud the casual inquirer.

This book was much more pleasant to read in many ways than most history books. It blends history with various cultural aspects such as sausage making and other traditional pastimes and holidays. As a result, it does quite a bit to soften the sometimes drier moments of history. It is one of the few history books I have read that make me feel I would know something useful about a place if I were to travel there. Also, because the historical aspect is why I bought the book, I was not to be disappointed, the Cod Wars, the Settlement, Christianization, it is all there along with an especially interesting section on the first settlement of Greenland. I recommend this book.

This book is an excellent assortment of history, culture, and personal experience. Each chapter can stand by itself but all the chapters tie in together. The details in this book are amazing. It is great for anyone who is interested in learning more about Iceland and its rich cultural and historical background. Also, for research, it is set up in such a way that you can find exactly what information you are looking for quickly. This is my favorite book about Iceland so far. It was the most well organized and comprehensive.

I greatly enjoyed this book. It was fun to read and very interesting from a historical point of view. I'm going to Iceland soon and I feel that I understand the background and culture of the country better than before I read this book. I highly recommend it !

A little long, and it jumps around in time, and it can go off on tangents, but gives a nice feel for the history of Iceland and it was helpful to read before a trip to Iceland.

The amount of research that has gone into the writing of this book boggles my mind. Done with grace and style, over 1000 years of history condensed into a readable interesting book. I learned a lot. I salute you Terry Lacy.

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