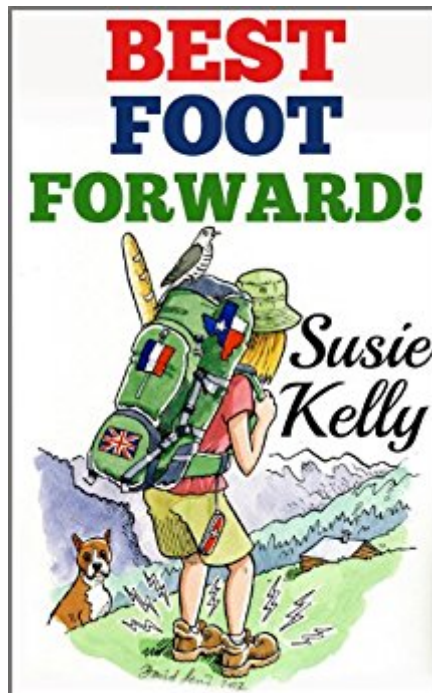




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# Best Foot Forward: A 500-Mile Walk Through Hidden France



## Synopsis

When Susie Kelly decides, at the age of 50+, on a whim, to trek alone right across France from West to East, from La Rochelle on the coast, to Lake Geneva in Switzerland, she entrusts her French farmhouse full of assorted animals to a total stranger from San Antonio, Texas. While Susie doggedly tramps 500 miles over unknown terrain, frequently lost and either too hot or too cold, Texan Jennifer Shields copes heroically with lost dogs, erratic electricity, old men hiding in bushes, and a language she cannot speak. For each of them it is a life-changing experience. Both find their resourcefulness and ingenuity tested to the limit as, in their own ways, they explore and enjoy the culture, cuisine and people of Europe's most fascinating country. A hilarious true story of English eccentricity, the Texan pioneering spirit & 2 women old enough to know better. A book to inspire • Good Housekeeping Magazine "This is one of the best travel books I have read to date. I thoroughly enjoyed reading every drop of it." US Vine Voice I would have never thought I could be so addicted to a book about a woman who decided to walk 500 miles through the French countryside. This book was delightful. Canada "Susie is ... able to paint a picture with words that makes me feel like I am beside her on her journey. Perfect for the Francophile, the armchair adventurer, and the lover of good literature for this is surely literature." US Az Vine Voice 'This book is truly a jewel not to be missed.' US Fans of hiking adventures like Wild: A Journey From Lost To Found by Cheryl Strayed will enjoy this book about long distance hiking that is about so much more than long distance hiking.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The cover illustration almost prevented me from buying this book. (Yes, I judge books by their covers, sometimes.) But after I finished the generous (thank you) sample, I had to purchase it. First of all, it's an incredible (blister-filled) story, about a 50ish? yr old woman (British) walking alone across France. She was an inexperienced and ill-equipped hiker, but had curiosity and determination to spare. The story is filled with tons of interesting history, and quirky characters. The author's descriptions of encounters with all forms of life: flora, insect, animal, avian and human are wonderful - and often hysterical in that deadpan matter-of-fact English style. I loved that there are links to the maps of her route, too. Her descriptions of the villages and countryside she passed through make me want to visit each one. I highly recommend it and look forward to reading more of her books.

I found this a great read. I think I will walk across France but while I figure out how and when to do this I am not telling hubby until I have everything ready to go. Hubby works in England so when I tell him --he doesn't have a huge chance to talk me out of it--what about all the animals--no problem, I advertised on social media for someone to come stay at our house and take care of the animals for 6 weeks. The two smartest things she did was saying yes to Jennifer from San Antonio, Tx, although she already bought her ticket so how could she say NO. The boots were a great investment also--if you are going to walk 500 miles you better have a good comfortable pair of sturdy boots. Now, shall we talk about everything she did wrong!! Nah, everything turned out OK and beside telling her great story she tells us about hidden France--great places off the tourist trap road. The book definitely made me jealous, that I would never do this, but I could enjoy some of the trip by car as she went into detail for the readers. Great book, if you like France and like to travel, you can't go wrong with this one!!

Loved the book about Susie's backpack across France from her home to Lake Geneva. Susie had never backpacked before but decided in her 50's to walk to Switzerland and camp along the way. It

takes much courage to try something new like that on your own, I took backpacking school to learn the ins and outs of carrying your world on your back, but Susie learned her skills as she tramped her way. Susie never gave up, in spite of blistered feet, hunger, solitude, scary people, wet tents, cold nights and bad maps. The helpful and kind people she met on the way and self-reliance skills kept her on the path. I was surprised at the emptiness of the rural areas Susie traversed in France. Susie kept great records of the things she saw and experienced which provided interesting detail to the book. Great read.

Never having visited France, I found this a delightful tour of new territory. It is constantly funny and beautifully descriptive. The writer of this book decides to trek across France on foot and with a tent on her back for camping. She prepares by buying comfortable walking boots and the lightest tent possible, then walks regularly at home (with her backpack weighted with books) to get in shape. Everything is great until she actually begins her walk, at which point her backpack gains weight and her comfortable footwear assaults her feet. The relating of her challenges is hilarious and the description of the country creates an experience as close to that of an actual visit as could be possible. Along her way, she takes the time to seek out hidden treasures of the countryside, and takes the reader along with detailed and picturesque descriptions of each place. She meets people who are friendly, some who are not so friendly, some who are somewhat eccentric and some who are just laugh-out-loud funny. Through it all, our walker maintains her own sense of humor and a heartwarming generosity of nature towards not only the people she encounters, but also towards the animals in her path (who fall in all the same categories of nice, not so nice, etc.), and nature in general. I heartily recommend this book for anyone interested in France, travel, European history or laughing.

A woman sets out on a journey across France to Geneva. Her sense of humor about her trip made this book enjoyable to read. Our journeys do start with that first step!

Best Foot Forward started slowly for me and as Susie Kelly strode through her designated journey, the words began to come quickly and easily for her. Her description of the environment, the language of the French that she met, the people she met on her journey and the lovely young man and his "adored" donkey became something that hooked me and held me fast. The end came too soon, I wanted her to continue the walk for months more - or not to end. This author is becoming a fast friend to take to bed with me - Kindle and a glass of red and Susie Kelly - there is little to better

it in the travel writing area. There are others who may give a more detailed history, event or description but I feel that they can't match this English, Scottish, Welsh Frenchwoman. Bon Voyage.

My first "walk" through France. Hiking in France doesn't seem as developed as on the AT, but then neither are the routes where I live, and just as here, un France, no one gets ready for tourist season any earlier than they have to! I found it wonderful that the people in France are kind of like here - some love what hikers bring as they hike and some don't. Glad I got to hear about French hospitality for once. We get too much negative, and the folks that gave us the Statue of Liberty can't be all negative. I hope someday I can walk in France. THANKS for the journey.

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