



THE LAND OF MAYBE

A Faroe Islands Year
Tim Ecott

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"In this excellent book, Ecott's evocative telling makes me want to go to this weird and wonderful place."
Paul Theroux

"The tough, mystical, intangible character of the Faroes is captured by Ecott's gorgeously rich and descriptive writing that makes you believe you can smell the sea, hear the birds and feel the wind. A beautiful and evocative read." **Kate Humble**

"This is Ecott at his best. His prose is incisive and elegiac. From the book's opening line we are there among the gannets, the pilot whales and sea-butted cliffs, wrestling with the winds and the enigma that is this Land of Maybe. Absorbing stuff, full of the ancient lore and very modern predicaments that daily beset the proud Faroese on their rocky outpost." **Benedict Allen**

"Filled with loving detail, humour and heart, the Land of Maybe is a lyrical treat. Tim Ecott has created a raven-haunted love song to the intimate insecurity of island living and the salt-caked, tightly-braided culture of the Faroes." **A.L. Kennedy**

A beautifully-written and contemplative narrative, *The Land of Maybe* captures the essence of 'slow life' on the 18 windswept islands that make up the Faroes in the North Atlantic. Closer to the UK than Denmark, this fast disappearing world is home to a close-knit society of just 50,000 people, whose Viking roots, language and unique way of life is unlike any other in Scandinavia.

Journalist and broadcaster Tim Ecott leads us through the seasons as we follow the arrival of the migratory birds, the over-wintering of the sheep in this volatile natural environment, where people still hunt seabirds and herd pilot whales for a significant portion of their basic food needs. Bewitched by the treeless mountains which remind him of his Irish roots, Ecott writes movingly about the people, the tempestuous North Atlantic weather and the unique taste of mutton fermented in the winds which howl across the fjords.

This is not a travelogue, but a deeper exploration of how 'to be' in a tough landscape, a study of a people and a way of life with a deep connection to the past and a powerful bond with the natural world.

The Faroes offer not just a refuge from the freneticism of modern life, but lessons about where we come from and how to find balance in our lives. This book also confronts some of the deep ethical conflicts surrounding our relationship with nature and our relationship with other species.

Talking points and areas for discussion include:

- Our relationship with nature in the face of increasing human populations
- How tourism and other aspects of globalisation are changing this ancient culture
- The UK's special relationship with the Faroes - dating back to the War and much earlier
- Food - the unique food culture in the islands - fermenting meat, wild birds, farmers who never eat green vegetables and yet have one of the highest life expectancies in Europe
- Walking and extreme weather – highest wind speeds in Europe and 300 days of rain
- Slaughter: how the year begins and ends with the herding and killing of a new generation of sheep, and how the circle of life and death are embedded in this culture



About the Author

Tim Ecott is a former BBC World Service staff correspondent. He has worked widely in Africa and the Indian Ocean. He writes documentaries for radio and screen and non fiction, drawing heavily on his fondness for the natural world. Ecott's writing appears widely in UK newspapers. His first book was the international bestseller *Neutral Buoyancy: Adventures in a Liquid World* (Penguin), a lyrical history of underwater exploration and accounts of his underwater encounters with sharks, dolphins and sea cucumbers. Other books include *Vanilla: Travels in Search of the Luscious Substance* (Penguin) and *Stealing Water: A Secret Life in an African City* (Sceptre). He lives near Oxford.



**TIM ECOTT IS AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW AND TO WRITE ARTICLES.
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