

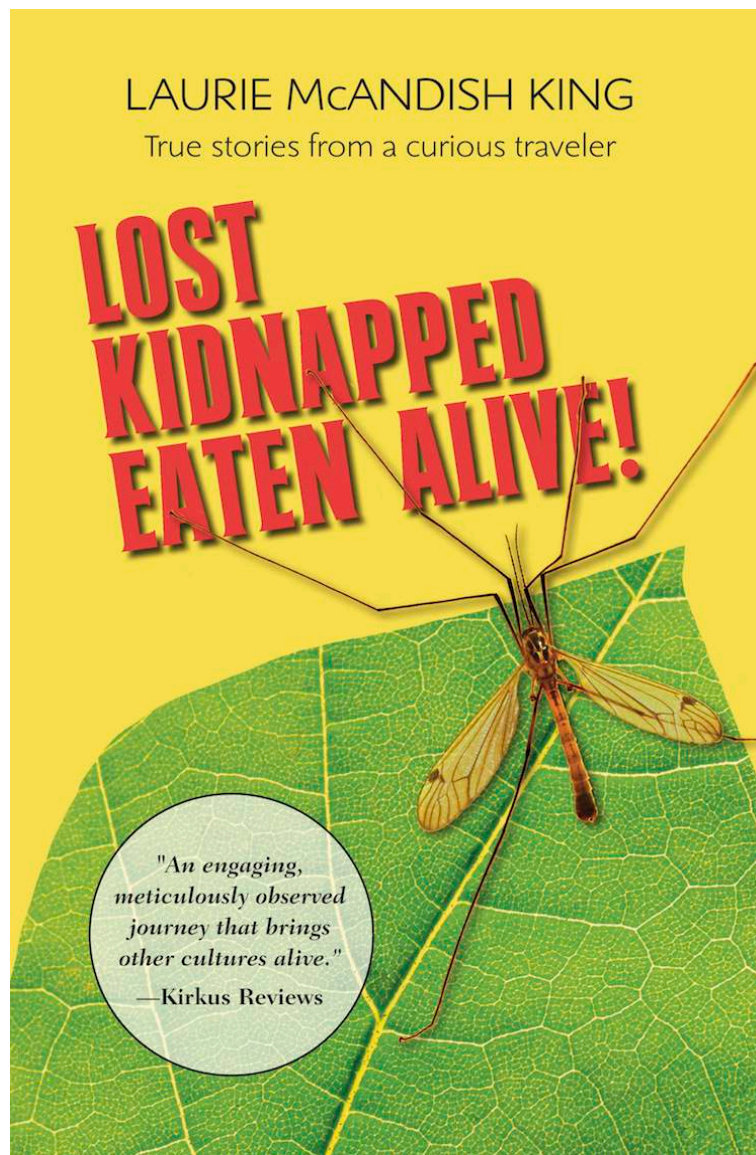
Press Kit

Lost, Kidnapped, Eaten Alive! True stories from a curious traveler

by Laurie McAndish King

Destination Insights • August 2014 • \$14.95

ISBN: 978-0985267278



Advance Praise for *Lost, Kidnapped, Eaten Alive!*

“An **engaging**, meticulously observed journey that **brings other cultures alive.**”
—Kirkus Reviews

“Part cultural tour, part prayer to the natural world ... circles the globe with lively adventures and intimate insights.”
—Publisher’s Weekly

“Wonderful story of human endurance, **masterfully told** ... stays with you throughout your day.”
—Jury panel, “Silk from Ashes”
Winner, Society of American Travel Writers 2013 Lowell Thomas Gold Award for Cultural Tourism

“French Kiss” is **sexy and funny**—a great combination.”
Jim Benning, Deputy Travel Editor, BBC.com

“King brings **uncommon heart and soul** to her travel stories. From start to finish, *Lost, Kidnapped, Eaten Alive* is a **rollicking ride.**”
—Michael Shapiro, author
A Sense of Place: Great Travel Writers Talk About Their Craft, Lives, and Inspiration

If I were to be eaten alive (or lost, or kidnapped), I’d prefer it was in the company of Laurie McAndish King. I’d be **laughing out loud as the anaconda swallowed me**, and learning fascinating facts about its digestive process and the global distribution of pythons.

—Jeff Greenwald, author
Shopping for Buddhas and The Size of the World

About the Author:



Laurie McAndish King grew up in rural Iowa, studied science and philosophy at Cornell natural science, and writing with a philosopher’s heart and mind. Her award-winning travel essays and photography have appeared in numerous publications, including *Smithsonian* magazine; Travel Channel partner site iExplore.com; the *San Francisco Chronicle*; and “The Best Women’s Travel Writing” Travelers’ Tales anthology as well as other magazines and literary anthologies. She is a founding member of *Left Coast Writers*, a board member of *Bay Area Travel Writers*, and an avid photographer—one nature photo was displayed at the Smithsonian Institution. Laurie publishes an online newsletter, *Travel Writers News*, for San Francisco Bay Area travel writers and photographers. Her five-star-rated mobile app, *San Francisco Waterfront*, is sold on iTunes.

Lost, Kidnapped, and Eaten Alive! is available from independent bookstores and online at
IndieBound.org Amazon & BN.com

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www.lauriemcandishking.com

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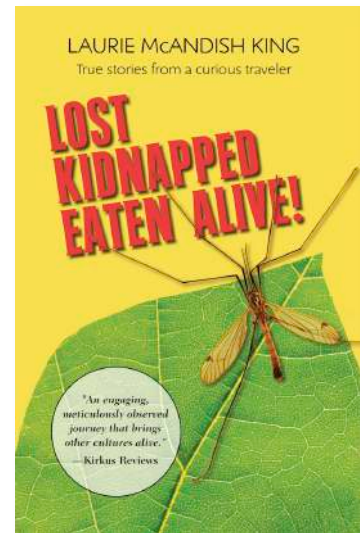
True stories from a curious traveler, delivers entertaining and lively adventures with intimate insights on culture and nature around the globe.

What happens when a practical Midwestern gal sets off to explore the world? Laurie McAndish King's travels seem innocent in the planning stage, but surprising adventure follows.

Lost, Kidnapped, Eaten Alive! (Destination Insights / August 2014 / \$14.95 / ISBN: 978-0985267278), invites the reader to relax and enjoy the ride as the intrepid King finds herself tracking lions without a gun in Botswana ... attempting to eat a horse in southern Italy ... marrying a Maasai warrior in Kenya ... and sampling the world's most expensive coffee—brewed from the excrement of a small Balinese mammal.

Whether she is lost in Melbourne, kidnapped in the Tunisian desert, or eaten alive by the blood-sucking denizens of tropical North Queensland, King's stories—quirky, poignant, occasionally unsettling, and often funny—are inspiring and entertaining.

King masterfully retells her journeys from decades of travel in this collection of 23 select stories. A fine read for a broad audience, both armchair travelers and globetrotting pros—like Jim Benning, Deputy Travel Editor for BBC.com—find *Lost, Kidnapped, Eaten Alive!* intriguing and enjoyable.



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Excerpt from *Lost, Kidnapped, Eaten Alive!*

(1022 Words, with permission from the publisher, Destination Insights.)

One determined woman, her bra, and 11,640 tiny insect eggs made a big difference in the lives of survivors in war-torn Croatia. This story won the Society of American Travel Writers 2013 Lowell Thomas Gold Award in the Cultural Tourism category.

Silk from Ashes

“When war has happened to you, that is different from seeing it on the television in your living room,” Jan Hasnal says. “Thousands were displaced. Old ladies—they arrived in Dubrovnik carrying plastic bags with all their things. They were cousins of the people I bought fruit from at the market; they were the mothers of my friends. I saw fear and disaster in their eyes.”

There is no fear in Jan Hasnal’s eyes—instead, they reflect the determination and resourcefulness of her Croatian heritage. Hasnal is explaining what life has been like in Dubrovnik since the war. She tells me the story of 11,000 tiny eggs, her bra, and heroic transmutation.

Dubrovnik, “The Pearl of the Adriatic,” is a comfortable labyrinth of white stone buildings, red rooftops, and green shuttered windows. To the north and east are forests of oak and pine; to the south and west, sandy beaches and transparent turquoise waters. The soil is thin and rocky; nevertheless, residents have scraped out a living for centuries.

A smallish harbor in the medieval Old Town belies the city’s historic importance as a center of diplomacy, once rivaling Venice with its prowess in navigation, shipping, and trade. By some estimates, Dubrovnik boasted the highest GDP in the world during her Golden Age from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. But these successes, along with its position on the Silk Route, left Dubrovnik ripe for plunder, and the city was besieged by invaders.

Ruled successively by the Byzantine, Venetian, Hungarian, and Turkish empires, the wealthy merchant republic encircled itself with protective turrets and towers; in some places, the city’s fortified walls are as much as twenty feet thick. But that was not enough to stop Napoleon’s forces as they lobbed 3,000 cannonballs at Dubrovnik in 1806. Italians and Germans occupied the city during World War II. And in the freezing December of 1991, Serbian forces attacked and laid siege, ruthlessly cutting off all water and electricity, reducing centuries-old buildings to rubble, and blanketing the pale city with smoke and ash. Dubrovnik was devastated, but her citizens endured.

Jan Hasnal was there, helping with the relief efforts. “We started where we could,” she recounted, “to share underwear. Refugees streamed in from the countryside, and we put them in hotels. We shared whatever we had in our homes as women made queues, waiting for soup or powdered milk. They had nothing; they couldn’t even cook their own meals. The Red Cross sent clothes, but you had to sign an affidavit if you received even one shirt—it was humiliating. We needed to find some work for the refugees, so we cut up good clothes into strips and the women put them back together into recycled garments, to keep their fingers busy, to help their mental health.

“One old lady asked me, ‘My dear, can you bring me a silkworm? I am very ashamed to be wearing my neighbor’s clothing.’ I asked the authorities, but they were no help. They thought because of the bombing someone in Dubrovnik had gone crazy, asking for silkworms instead of food.”

Dubrovnik and silkworms go back a long way. Although the Chinese, who discovered silk, guarded it zealously, legend has it that two monks smuggled silkworm eggs and mulberry seeds out of the country in bamboo canes, letting the rest of the world in on the secret. For hundreds of years, silk was traded along with other precious commodities—gold and silver, pepper and spices—and by the fifteenth century Dubrovnik supplied it to much of Europe. Rural Croatian women used a traditional method of raising silkworms, in which they wrapped tiny silkworm eggs in cloth and placed them between their breasts, where it was warm and the eggs would hatch.

Perhaps this history of silken intrigue inspired Jan Hasnal. In 1993, she founded an organization called Desa, with the goal of helping both local women and the influx of refugees cope with the social and psychological horrors war. Desa sponsored embroidery workshops in the refugee camps, providing a sense of purpose and the beginnings of economic independence for the women there.

Hasnal wanted to find silkworms so the women could reclaim their livelihoods, but was thwarted by a ban on transporting insects. She persevered for years, finally locating silkworm eggs in Lyon, France, and convincing women there to donate eleven grams of them—about two teaspoons full. A silkworm egg is the size of a pinpoint, and eleven grams are enough to produce 11,640 silkworms. Jan carried the tiny eggs the same way Croatian women had traditionally carried them—in her bra. “I couldn’t get them across the border any other way, she explained. Maybe it is the destiny of the silkworm to travel incognito.”

And, in a wooded valley near Dubrovnik, women once again produced silk thread the traditional way, beginning by carefully incubating the eggs of a blind, flightless moth, *Bombyx mori*. They fed fresh mulberry leaves to the young silkworms many times a day for more than a month. When the silkworms were fully grown—about three inches long—the creatures stopped eating and began to spin their fluffy white cocoons, which were ready to be harvested after four or five days. The cocoons were stirred in hot water and their delicate threads, sometimes as much as a kilometer in length, were reeled onto a holder, dried, and processed with soap and—ironically—the ashes that had covered Dubrovnik.

Soon the women of Desa were using silk thread and their embroidery skills to recreate the area’s traditional folkloric costumes, replacing heirlooms that had been destroyed during the war. Intricate red and gold embroidery, tassels and cross-stitches, floral and geometric patterns, brightly colored scarves and sashes and blouses and jackets—all began to reappear in Dubrovnik.

These women had endured bombs and occupation, siege and starvation...and they had found a way to transmute ashes and silkworms into dignity and independence. All with the help of 11,640 insect eggs hidden in the cleavage of a brave woman’s breasts. “There were many obstacles,” Jan Hasnal said. “But I am so glad I did it.”

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Books and Awards

Laurie McAndish King's writing and photography have won prestigious awards and honors. Her essays and articles have appeared in anthologies from leading travel publishers, including Lonely Planet, Travelers' Tales and Wanderland Writers, among others.

Select Books



- Wandering in Paris: Luminaries and Love in the City of Light* (Wanderland Writers, 2013)
Travel Stories from Around the Globe (Bay Area Travel Writers, 2012)
Wandering in Bali: A Tropical Paradise Discovered (Wanderland Writers, 2012)
Animal Addict's Guide to Global Volunteer Travel (Dog's Eye View Media, 2011)
Wandering in Costa Rica: Landscapes Lost and Found (Wanderland Writers, 2010)
The Best Women's Travel Writing 2009 (Travelers' Tales, 2009)
Venturing in Italy: Travels in Puglia, Land Between Two Seas (Travelers' Tales, 2008)
Venturing in Ireland: Quest for the Modern Celtic Soul (Travelers' Tales, 2007)
30 Days in Italy: True Stories of Escape to the Good Life (Travelers' Tales, 2006)
The Thong Also Rises (Travelers' Tales, 2005)
The Kindness of Strangers (Lonely Planet, 2003)

Awards

- **Society of American Travel Writers *Lowell Thomas Gold Award*** in the Cultural Tourism category (2013) for "Silk from Ashes."
- **Smithsonian Magazine's 7th Annual International Photo Contest, 1st Place, Natural World Category** (2010).
- **Book Passage Travel Writers and Photographers Conference, Annual Travel Story Award Winner** (2003 and 2013)
Bay Area Travel Writers
 - ***Best Travel Article/Essay*** (2008 and 2010)
 - **Planet Earth Award** for *Travel writing that helps to sustain or enhance the unique and valuable character of a place.* (2008 and 2010)
- **Travelers' Tales Solas Award** (2007 and 2008)





About

Since 2006, **Destination Insights** has been designing and publishing travel books. As publishing and digital printing has evolved, services have expanded to include custom-designed print books, for both traditional and independent publishers, as well as self-published authors. Digital formats include eBook, iPad, Kindle, and other e-readers.

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