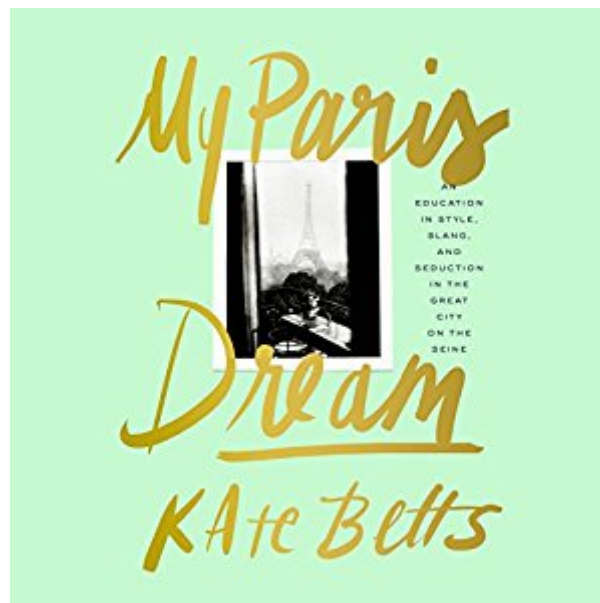




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My Paris Dream: An Education In Style, Slang, And Seduction In The Great City On The Seine



Synopsis

For fans of *How to Be Parisian Wherever You Are*, *My Paris Dream* is a charming and insightful memoir about coming of age as a fashion journalist in 1980s Paris by former *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* editor Kate Betts, the author of *Everyday Icon: Michelle Obama and the Power of Style*. "You can always come back," my mother said. "Just go." As a young woman, Kate Betts nursed a dream of striking out on her own in a faraway place and becoming a glamorous foreign correspondent. After college - and not without trepidation - she took off for Paris, renting a room in the apartment of a young BCBG (bon chic, bon genre) family and throwing herself into the local culture. She was determined to master French slang, style, and savoir faire and to find a job that would give her a reason to stay. After a series of dues-paying jobs that seemed only to reinforce her outsider status, Kate's hard work and willingness to take on any assignment paid off: Her writing and intrepid forays into la France Profonde - true France - caught the eye of John Fairchild, the mercurial fashion arbiter and publisher of *Women's Wear Daily*, the industry's bible. Kate's earliest assignments - investigating the mineral water preferred by high society, chasing after a costumed band of wild boar hunters through the forests of Brittany - were a rough apprenticeship, but she was rewarded for her efforts and was initiated into the elite ranks of Mr. Fairchild's trusted few who sat beside him in the front row and at private previews in the ateliers of the gods of French fashion. From a woozy yet mesmerizing Yves Saint Laurent and the mischievous and commanding Karl Lagerfeld to the riotous, brilliant young guns who were rewriting all the rules - Martin Margiela, Helmut Lang, John Galiano - Betts gives us a view of what it was like to be an American girl learning about herself, falling in love, and finding her tribe.

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Customer Reviews

This is an engrossing read about Kate Betts's years in Paris in the late 80s-early 90s. If you have ever wanted to live in Paris, or meet Yves St. Laurent, or if you just want to read a good story well told (with a dash of *A Sentimental Education*), this is the summer book for you. The prose is clear and vivid, and the stories are good with just the right amount of doubt about some of the exclusionary aspects and unkindnesses of both French society and the fashion world. While there is romance in the book, the real focus is a young woman finding herself in the working world and coming to terms with her ambitions and her doubts. That's important for women, especially young women, to think about. This would be an ideal gift for a young college graduate making her (or his) way in the world.

I loved *My Paris Dream*. About the time Kate Betts went to Paris, I went to New York City. So, I felt she was writing about my experience. While New York City was glamorous to me, a kid from Colorado, Kate's Paris experience was wonderful. I loved reading about the Parisians and the places she went and the clothes she wore. I went through much of that in NYC, changing my dress, my habits and ideas about life. Kate is so frank in the book about her thoughts, the people she lived and worked with, the places she traveled to and her career. Her evolution into an adult and career woman was intriguing. I hated to put the book down. I wanted to know more about what was going on in Kate's life. I LOVE Paris, but can't imagine assimilating into the Parisian life style. She brought it to life. I love this book; if you love fashion, Paris, Europe or coming of age books, this is one to read.

I was initially attracted to this book because of the post-graduation year in France - I, too, went to France for a year after college, though I was in Aix-en-Provence vs. Paris and was a student vs. a worker. Along the way I discovered other points of commonality with the author: she went to Choate, I went to Choate; she went to Princeton, I went to Princeton; she is a writer and editor, I am a writer and editor; she lived (lives?) and worked (works?) in New York, I lived and worked in New York. All of that aside, the book holds enormous appeal for anyone interested in France, fashion, or simply the experience of being a young American abroad. Her descriptions of the French, their mores, their habits, their music, their food, their way of life, all ring true and take us right into the heart of the

French world and society. But in my view the author is at her best in her introspective reflections on her coming of age. This, in the end, is the real value of the book to me. The fashion aspect - yeh, I can take it or leave it, central to her story though it is. Refreshing, written in an honest and appealing style, masterful at times, a book to recommend to friends and return to. Bien fait et merci, Katherine. I look forward to more from this writer.

While I found some parts of this book interesting, overall it felt a bit shallow (and a lot boring). There are loads of (too many) details about fashion designers and clothing (probably because the author is comfortable writing about that topic), but the more personal aspects (her experience of the events, her actions toward people - especially men) were glossed over and not particularly insightful. If you're looking for a behind-the-scenes look at Paris fashion in the late '80s, this book is for you. If you are looking for a poignant memoir, maybe not.

If you're interested in fashion, this is a great book on styles and trends beginning in the 80's when the big fashion houses were coming into their own. Kate is dropped right in the middle of it soon after graduating from Princeton. Her french friend, Bibianne and her children help develop her french language skills, as well as her new boyfriend, Herve, who is most patient with a young, ambitious woman looking to get ahead as a young journalist working for a fashion magazine. Kate faces plenty of pressure as she starts to scale the corporate ladder. There is enough back-biting and jealousies festering to load up a Louis Vuitton trunk. Still, Kate manages to find the good flaneurs to enjoy the glory of France and fashion both! A fun, fast-paced read!

I loved this book. I spent a few months in Paris as a young student and flirted with the idea of staying longer term to try and work so this book really resonated with me. I was very impressed with Kate's spirit, determination, incredible commitment to her work and ultimately her extremely successful career. She certainly had some very useful connections when she first arrived in Paris which helped kickstart her new life in Paris - lucky her! The book was fun and inspiring and is a great insight how rewarding it can be to take the road less travelled.

This book touched me on many different levels. As someone who has also fled to Paris looking for.... Something, I was entranced by Betts' engaging story. Her experience was somewhat atypical and you would imagine it being difficult to relate to a fashion-type but her self-awareness and engaging storytelling made it absolutely engrossing. Highly recommended for anyone with a Paris

dream of their own and/or even a remote interest in fashion or journalism.

It was fun to live vicariously through Kate Betts and experience what it would have felt like to both be in the fashion world, as well as the fashion capital in the 1980s. It was interesting to see that she never really assimilated, despite becoming fluent in the language and having close French relationships.

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