

Head for the *Hills*

Ever think of moving from the city to the countryside? It's no small feat, but can certainly be a rewarding process.

BY ROBERT HECKERT | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALISSA HESSLER

Getting out from under the gray skyscrapers to live in a quiet town is an exhilarating process. There are many factors to keep in mind, but Alissa Hessler's new book *Ditch The City and Go Country: How to Master the Art of Rural Life From a Former City Dweller* will give you detailed insight about what it takes to make this transition.

A REASON WHY

First, you should understand why you want to move to the country. "Ask yourself your top reasons for wanting to leave the city," Hessler writes. "Most people find it helps to have a bigger mission in mind to keep committed to their new rural locale when times get tough. An ancestral history in the area, a solid job, children in school or owning a home will strengthen your resolve to stay when difficulties arise."

After you've thought over your reasons for moving, the next step is to start looking for a home. However, finding the right house means more than having the proper square footage. "Beyond just the home itself, there are many things to factor in when it comes to home and living expenses living rurally," Hessler writes. "Water, sewer and garbage—things maybe you never thought about in the city—are suddenly entirely your responsibility." Have a home inspector look at the house and any outbuildings. If they come back with a laundry list of items that need repairs, maybe that's a sign to move on.

SIRI, WHERE SHOULD I LIVE?

Before you make the move physically, move in virtually.

You may be moving to the country to escape all the screens in the city, but before you toss your computer out the window, use it to check out your new home town.

Facebook. See if the town has a Facebook page. What local events are coming up and what are people saying about the town? If you decide to move there, this page will be a helpful resource if you need an extra hand with moving in and settling down.

Yelp. This is a handy website to see the quality of the local businesses. Look at what the locals and tourists are saying. It will also give you a better idea of what items will be easily available and what items might be a challenge to get.

Move Advisor. This app can create a streamlined checklist of what you need to accomplish for your move, and if you need to find a rental truck, it can pull up a list of popular rental companies nearby.



In the forest, the only sounds you hear are birdsong and the comforting crackle of a fireplace.

"It takes time to quiet that fast paced, instantly gratified city brain... I encourage you to relax and not give in to the urge to get settled immediately."



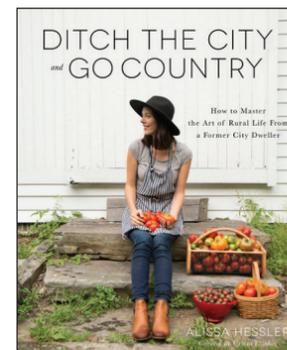
Without a landlord or association, you're free to paint and decorate your spacious patio however you want.



GET COMFORTABLE

Settling in to your home may be an unsettling process. "It takes time to quiet that fast paced, instantly gratified city brain," Hessler writes. "I encourage you to relax and not give in to the urge to get settled immediately." You may miss what you had in the city, but that's a natural process. The key to fully making the transition is to embrace whatever your community loves. If they get excited over a sporting event or seasonal activity, participate. "See if you can volunteer to help run things," Hessler says.

You may be intimidated as you make efforts to integrate yourself into the daily lives of your community, but taking risks and getting your hands dirty is exactly what you signed up for when you decided to move to the country.



Ditch The City and Go Country: How to Master the Art of Rural Life From a Former City Dweller by Alissa Hessler, published by Page Street Publishing, © 2017; pagestreetpublishing.com.



Barns are built to last, but make sure you have a professional examine it, so it doesn't become a liability. Once you have the all clear, the barn can be a great place to host huge events.

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