

Foreword

Robinson Crusoe, who was washed up on an island and built up his life from scratch, was for me the real hero. When I read his story, I felt some of the power you must feel when you are from no one dependent, when you built your own house, gather your own food and come up with new ideas with all the tools and material nature gives you. No energy bills, no mortgage, no phone or e-mail. An echo of the life like my distant ancestors must have lived.

I read with the same fascination about Christopher Knight, the man who drove at one day through the woods of Maine, got out his car and went to live among the trees. And then there is Miriam Lancewood who gave up her job to live with her husband in the wilderness of New Zealand from the wind for seven years.

At the same time I realized I can't do anything myself or know anything about outdoors. I'm feeling always too cold or too hot, I lose my gloves. My kitchen knives are blunt. I don't know of what materials my sweater and pants are made. I am powerless when I want to light up the barbecue and the firelighters are out of stock. When camping I'm already feeling cold when it's under 15 degrees outside. I don't know which plants I can eat, I don't know the name of the tree in front of me. And when I tie a rope, I use the dumbest knot that exists. A knot which you can't untie and must cut open with scissors.

It wasn't cool to join the scouting club when I was younger, and military service was something I wanted to avoid at all costs.

I always looked down on a camper who set up his tent perfectly and who piles up his logs in a geometric way. The same applies to people who walk through the woods in camouflage suits. And for some reason that's why I never took making fire, tying knots and wearing waterproof clothing serious. Those things didn't belong to me.

And now I ask myself: why?

Whether you are a boy scout, a know-it-all, command or chaotic city boy, it's magical to make your own fire, knots are brilliant and the fresh air is delicious.

This book is an introduction to what the English call bushcraft, an introduction to your inner Robinson Crusoe. And it shows you how you can survive in the wilderness with a minimum of luggage, how you can respectfully use the supplies and treasures that nature offers you with the knowledge of our ancient ancestors and nature people. Not because you're scared that the power will turn off and the chaos breaks out, neither because you have to operate behind enemy lines but because it gives you a good feeling when you know how you can save yourself.

It is not a hardcore woodcraft or bushcraft book, rather an acquaintance with the beautiful techniques which were of great importance for tens of thousands of years to people so you will look at a different way to the forest and every forest walk becomes an experience. But also to realize which things really matter. What the base is of daily life.

Maybe this book will light something up in you because it's hard to let go once you get acquainted with bushcraft, there will be something you want to know more about. It opens your eyes for the way our ancestors looked to nature. A way that makes you look differently to modern existence with appointments, telephones, artificial lights and burn-outs. And a look that makes you curious to tying knots, eating wild plants and making fire.

Gerard Janssen

Table of contents

01 Outdoor

1.1 History

02 Equipment

2.1 Wool, fuzz and fleece

2.2 Sleeping outside

2.3 Backpack

03 Set up camp

3.1 Location, location, location

3.2 Built a hut

3.3 Make a bed

04 Make fire

4.1 The first steps

4.2 Sparks

4.3 Sorts of firewood

4.4 Campfire

05 Water and bread

5.1 Drinkwater

5.2 Food

06 Robe and knife

6.1 Robe

6.2 Knives

07 Find the way

7.1 Navigation

7.2 Communicate

7.3 Predict the weather

08 Hygiene and first aid

8.1 Cleaning

8.2 First aid kit

8.3 What to do at accidents