

## How to live in the Country

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For the entirety of my moderately long life, ever since my metropolitan beginning in the City of Belgrano I had been a city dweller. But one day, my husband, after repeatedly experiencing the joys of demonstrators clamoring in the streets with their banners and flags, pegging away for their cause while blocking a considerate portion of the road, decided to move us to the country for a more speedy commute to the office that would not involve various kinds of small matters that would impede him from getting to work on time. This plan was successful until he discovered that the time he saved would, on the other hand, lighten his pockets a wee bit every time he had to pay the toll fee.

Nevertheless, move we did, not to the other end of the country but just a few dozen miles away from the city, to a lovely, green patch of land, which unbeknownst to us, was still Buenos Aires (only, with an ish at the end).

When we first settled in this neighborhood, we were aliens, but we only learnt this when our neighbour told us, in no uncertain terms, that well water in the area was just as good (if not better) than the bottled version aliens like us were used to drinking. Upon hearing this, my husband's face and that of our neighbor (at the discovery that our definition of drinking water was limited to that of the kind wrapped in plastic) resembled what can only be compared to the expression on people's faces as they were building the tower of Babel, and suddenly discovering that communication had just become a little tricky.

Since we moved, we have had to put out a few fires, literally. It turns out that when you have a big backyard the amount of grass clippings after mowing could very well pile up into a stonhengesque mound. My gardener was not planning on burying anyone under it or performing any gardening ritual to the powers that be, so he cleverly decided to burn it, a plan that was executed with finesse and no water. The fire devoured the pile of grass like a frog would a fly, and the perfectly manicured lawn was razed to the ground. It bore a striking resemblance to a perfectly burnt piece of toast. Have I mentioned that it was pleasantly breezy that day? Long story short, two fire trucks from two different fire departments were called, (a bit over the top, my gardener mused later) since nothing much had happened apart from a bit of charred grass and the neighbor's wooden house almost being burnt to a crisp.

In the city, people would have just watered their cactus, no muss, no fuss. Nevertheless, not wanting to succumb to the eoryshness people in the country seem to be afflicted with, I tried to find some sort of positive remark to share with my neighbor (whose house was almost, I repeat, almost destroyed). He was surprisingly snippy at the time considering that his beautiful yellow cabin with the pretty overhanging gable that I had always admired was still intact. When I mentioned this, he pointed to the charred remains of an incipient orchard he had been nursing in his backyard. The Cold War had begun, and I reminisced about my days as a cactus gardener.

After this first stage of discovery, and much like Columbus when he cautiously began exploring the New World, our adventure began, and we landed (no parachutes provided) to the present stage of assimilation and incipient transmission of knowledge to the new aliens in the neighborhood, which has made me realize that I myself am not an alien anymore, they are.

The notion that they come to the county to experience nature is intriguing. I think this notion also baffled the horse that was carted away by the local authorities summoned by the aliens across the street when they sighted the dangerous beast basking in the sunshine and munching on some grass by the side of the road.

Life in the country has been peaceful. From the quaint landscape to the chirping of birds, the setting proclaims peace, that is, until the weekend comes along and aliens alight in their motorized ships to liven the atmosphere, after all, cooing and chirping are hardly enough background noise and must be replaced by cachinnations and loud music. So if you ever want to try being in two places at once, come to the country! Heavenly scenery and hellish noise await you. But do not be alarmed, peace returns to the shire once the aliens are gone for the week.

If you are planning on coming to the country in an alien capacity or if you already live there, here are some nuggets of information that might come in handy:

- Although mountain bikes and four wheelers are acceptable to aliens, stray dogs and random fauna are to be done away with swiftly and meticulously to ensure utmost safety when promenading around the neighborhood. Dogs are savage biting creatures but racing bikes pose no risk at all to anyone (unless your reflexes are not good enough to jump aside in the nick of time).

- If, like me, you own a rooster and the next door aliens have come, ready to sleep in, you might have to consider investing on a muzzle to ensure a good quality of nightly rest. Of course, you will have naps to consider too. Roosters are like English tea: you cannot refuse their song just like you would not dare refuse a good cup of English tea under any circumstances. Just like English tea, a rooster's cock- a doodle-doo is unavoidable and you must enjoy it if you are gay, if you are nervous, if it is nice, if it is cold, if you have just heard it, or if you never have.

In short, living in the country exceeds my expectations in every regard and I have been very happy learning how to de-alienate myself. If you are able to survive the process (which might be tricky if you forget to remove your shoes upon entering a country home) you can even lecture newcomers on how not to be aliens.