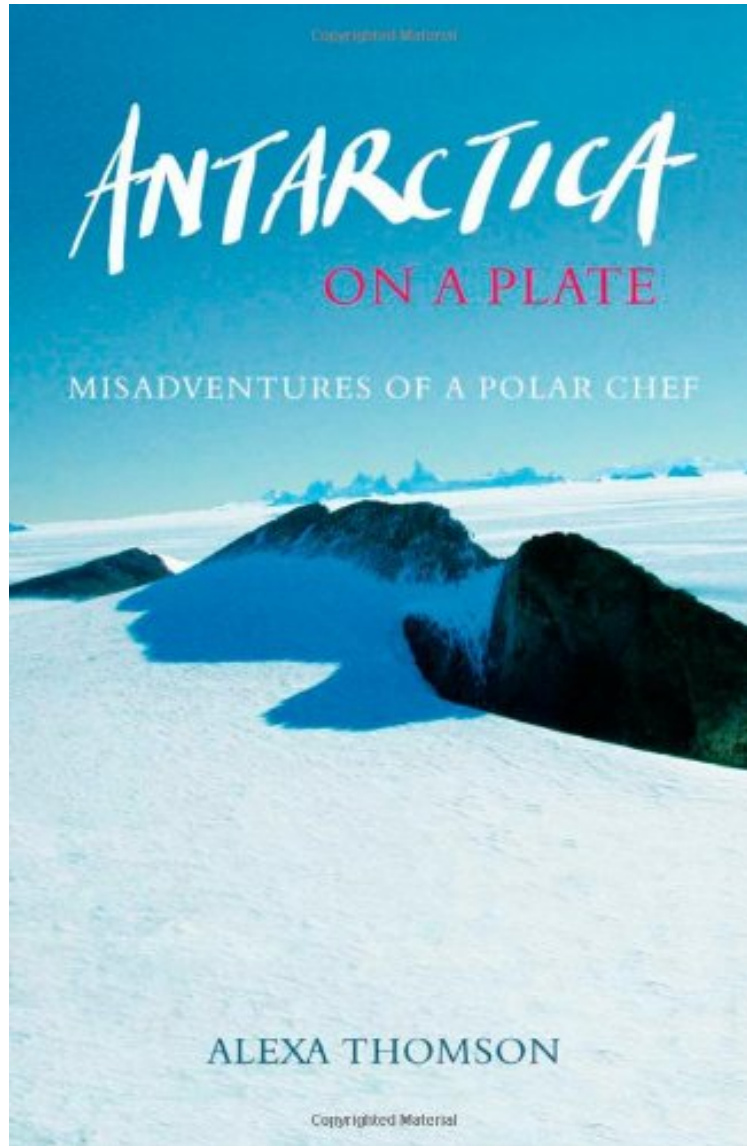


## Antarctica on a Plate: Misadventures of a Polar Chef

Alexa Thomson

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**Alexa Thomson : Antarctica on a Plate: Misadventures of a Polar Chef** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Antarctica on a Plate: Misadventures of a Polar Chef:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Can't wait to get rid of itBy NJTo sum it up: dull, dull, dull, then icky. Alexa complains and whines, constantly wondering if she is inadequate. This is interspersed with descriptions of Antarctica that are trying too hard to be literary and poetic. Not much for adventure, no epic fails in the kitchen. A different narrator could make this tale of life on the ice much more interesting. Then there is the very icky "finding

love". At first the man she falls in love with comes off as a creepy perv, and I can't say I completely changed my mind. Also, for those of you listening to the audio, it's decent, but the author cannot do accents. The imitation of a southern American accent is particularly bad. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Slow beginning

By KatSuffering from something like an early mid-life crisis, Alexa Thomson makes a spur-of-the-moment decision to apply for a job as a cook at an Antarctic base camp for a summer season. Having no previous polar experience, and having worked in mass-catering for a few years, she is unprepared and understandably anxious when she finally lands the job and preparations begin for her journey to the south. The first real problem for me with this book was the lead up to reaching Antarctica - sure, it was interesting to read about the preparations, Alexa's nervousness and meeting other polar adventurers, but it was the main reason it took me so long to get into the swing of the book. For the most part, I could understand how Alexa felt and coped with the situations that she found herself in, such as needing the toilet in your tent during a blizzard, or finding 20 hungry men in your dining tent at 5:30am demanding a full English breakfast, but at other times I found her to be quite negative about her experiences and if she was the chef in my camp I would have had a few choice words to say to her!

The most controversial part of Alexa's story is towards the end of the book, when she makes a very questionable moral choice which some readers simply won't like - and it's not expounded on enough to make readers at least understand the choice that she made. Overall I enjoyed this book - Alexa isn't an intrepid, brave explorer - she is an average woman who finds herself in an extraordinary situation and copes admirably for the most part. My favourite line from the book: "I am toiling through War and Peace. I am reading it with relish and satisfaction. Tolstoy is so dense and encompassing that Antarctica's blankness is the perfect place to immerse myself in such Russian intrigue." I'm certain there's a lot of quality reading time to be had in Antarctica - after all, what else is there to distract you except loads of ice!

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The Most Enjoyable Antarctica Book Yet

By Joyce McDonaldIf you enjoyed Dr. Gerri Nielsen's *Ice Bound: A Doctor's Incredible Battle for Survival at the South Pole* or Sara Wheeler's *Terra Incognita*, and especially if you liked Roff Smith's *Life on the Ice: No One Goes to Antarctica Alone*, you will be delighted with Alexa Thomson's "Antarctica on a Plate." Ms. Thomson rivals Roff Smith for sheer audacity in thinking that she is qualified to be hired and to travel to Antarctica, or that she can manage as a cook in tent at a base camp that is packed up and buried (sometimes for years) when not in use. Her audacity serves her well as she joyfully bungles her way around her tent kitchen, enduring exploding stoves, waves of eccentric explorers, and the possibility that any day the whole camp could get blown away. A reader who, through lack of sufficient youth, health, funds or qualifications is unable to see Antarctica firsthand can revel in the vicarious adventure of seeing it through Alexa Thomson's eyes. This reader owns and has read shelves of books about Antarctica, and "Antarctica on a Plate" has become my new favorite.

"Antarctica on a Plate" is a joyful account of a career woman who lobbies shamelessly to get to Antarctica - despite her utter unsuitability for the job. The book captures her sheer exuberance at finding herself on a continent that defies description. It's the story of three short months on a blue-ice runway where the accommodation is basic but the food is five star. Armed with an old cookbook, Alexa attempts to create three-course meals with no electricity or running water and struggles to defrost meat in the coldest place on Earth. Life in a thin mylon tent in the company of scientists, explorers and eccentrics soon begins to take on extraordinary dimensions. As 75-mile-an-hour winds blow and tensions rise, friendships - and love - are forged in this frozen neighbourhood.

About the Author Alexa Thomson has been a web designer for an investment bank and a writer for Salon.com. She divides her time between Sydney and San Francisco.