August was the month when flies started to become a problem, buzzing round the dung heaps in the corner of every farmyard and hovering over the open cesspits of human refuse that were located outside every house. Although daily dangers were many, housing uncomfortable, and the dominant smells unpleasant indeed, life in England at the turn of the previous millennium was not at all bad, write journalists Lacey and Danziger. If you were to meet an Englishman in the year 1000, they continue, the first thing that would strike you would be how tall he was—very much the size of anyone alive today. The Anglo-Saxons were not only tall, but also generally well fed and healthy, more so than many Britons only a few generations ago. Writing in a breezy, often humorous style, Lacey and Danziger draw on the medieval Julius Work Calendar, a document detailing everyday life around A.D. 1000, to reconstruct the spirit and reality of the era. Light though their touch is, they've done their homework, and they take the reader on a well-documented and enjoyable month-by-month tour through a single year, touching on such matters as religious belief, superstition, medicine, cuisine, agriculture, and politics, as well as contemporary ideas of the self and society. Readers should find the authors' discussions of famine and plague a refreshing break from present-day millennial worries, and a very stimulating introduction to medieval English history. --Gregory McNamee

My Personal Review:
This is a light, easy-to-read, short, informative, witty, and amusing look at life 1000 years ago, in England. If you are a busybody at work or in life, and don't have time for endless volumes of detailed historical analysis, and want something light, short, and to the point, this is the book for you. Take it on a short holiday, read it on the train on the way to work, or just amuse yourself at home with a lighthearted look at life 1000 years ago. You may be surprised at some of the insights outlined here.
For example their diet was very different to ours. No spinach, tomatoe, potatoe, tea, coffee or chicken. Farming life was hard, and overall hygiene was of little importance, as without knowledge of disease subsistence and survival was placed higher on the list than clean dinner plates. Smelly residences were taken as given, as one simply lived with the inconvenience of dung from animals as part of ones daily life. No smoke from cars, or cigarretes, or noise from airplanes and highways, but smelly dung was eveywhere. There were no forks at the table, just knives. If you dropped your food on the floor, you ate it, but one recited a saintly word for the privelage. Clothes were less flamboyant, but coloured by innovative dyes. The queen in chess was of little importance and power, until Queen Elizabeth came around several centuries later. There sorts of details are just a few of the many intriguing bits of information presented in the book. There is lots more, but you will have to muse over these in that 21st century train, bus, leather lounge, clean-sheeted bed, or by that modern resort swimming pool yourself. Lucky arent we? Perhaps in another thousand years people will read about these sorts of things in their different lifestyles, think themselves lucky, and be thankful for our memories and contribution. I have no doubt they will.

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The Year 1000: What Life Was Like at the Turn of the First Millennium by Danny Danziger - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!