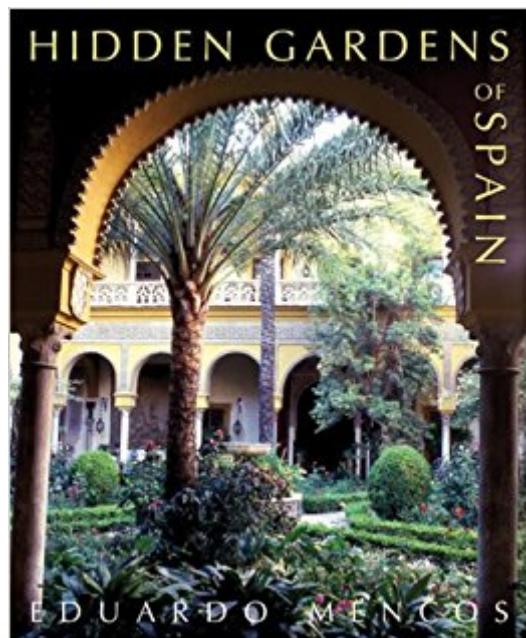


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# Hidden Gardens Of Spain



## **Synopsis**

In *Hidden Gardens of Spain* fascinating treasures from one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world are uncovered. Writer and photographer Eduardo Mencos has been given access to hidden corners of famous gardens such as the Alhambra and to private gardens known only to a privileged few. His stunning images and perceptive descriptions reveal a wealth of creativity and tranquility, from Galicia to Granada, Barcelona to the Balearics, Catalonia and the Canaries, Madrid and Mallorca. Some of the gardens he shows are historical; some the creation of their current owners; others are by eminent garden designers, such as Luis Gonzales-Camino and Arabella Lennox-Boyd.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Mencos's photographs are outstandingly good ... warmly recommended to anyone interested in Spanish gardens. The Garden Mencos takes us on an epicure's tour of the best Spanish gardens, starting in the mossy greenness of a Galician palacio in the north and ending in the black volcanic soil of the Canaries. Times What makes Eduardo Mencos's selection exciting and different is his focus on the privately owned, many of them modern, a few adventurously ultra-modern. Country Life Take comfort against the winter chill by settling down with *Hidden Gardens of Spain*. Sunday Telegraph Draw some lessons from one of autumn's crop of glamorous garden books on how to bring a bit of the Mediterranean home. Independent on Sunday

Eduardo Mencos is one of Spain's leading photographers.

Since I bought this book I've looked at it almost daily for inspiration for my own Spanish garden. The photographs of successful gardens in a climate I am not yet used to has been a huge help to choosing both a design a plant range. It is a pleasure to look at in it's own right as it is a thing of great beauty also the gardeners passions and garden histories are fascinating as well as engaging for a fellow garden enthusiast. I shared this book with my thirty year old son who also loved it as the gardens are so inspiring and so varied and different from the dry arid cacti and succulent and palm tree gardens we so often see in developments. Anyone wanting to start a new garden in Spain or has an interest in emulating fresh ideas about Spanish garden should read this wonderful book and soak up the luscious rich vegetation, plants and water features within it's pages.

Eduardo Mencos is a wonderful photographer, and it is clear that he loves gardens. The book includes gardens from all regions of Spain and at different times of the year. The range of garden styles and forms is impressive. Well done.

Beautifully illustrated book for those who like to peek "behind the walls."

I had expected more court-yard gardens (being in Spain) and more historical gardens. What we are presented are more modern gardens (mostly) at villas and mansions in the country. And they didn't always live up to my expectations. If you compare to France, gardens in Spain doesn't seem to have that high standard in design. I thought there would have been enough for a book this size to rival the French but no. Although some photos are stunning, this will not be a favourit in my humble collection.

Spain. What are your first thoughts, food, flamenco, bullfighting, sun, sand, and Hemingway? Be honest, images of beautiful homes surrounded by cool, luxurious, patios, pools and gardens didn't immediately pop into your head. Gazing at a copy of Hidden Gardens of Spain will utterly change your conception of Spain, the Spanish lifestyle and the people who create these intimate spaces. Thirty-one gardens are profiled reflecting the diverse regions of Spain. Many are classical gardens, located in exotic hispano-moorish settings such as villas, castles, monasteries, and palaces. Several modern homes and gardens are included and they re-interpret classical features. Exceptional lush photographs explore the beauty and style of Spanish gardens. Each

garden profile is accompanied by a passionate personal reflection of the owner. One owner says, "The garden is a dream and with skill and patience you can bring it to fruition no matter where you are." Many of the gardeners discuss the natural challenges they faced creating their personal spaces. Others discuss the history of their properties and gardens. Several Grande dames discuss loss of spouses and their eventual personal healing through involvement in their gardens. You may not have a volcano as a backdrop or a 1000-year-old olive tree but Hidden Gardens of Spain is full of wonderful executable ideas that would compliment a wide variety of American homes. Spanish gardens have similar features, which are practical and easily interpreted. A short list of essentials includes: patio, pool or other water feature, an emphasis on cool green foliage, strong vertical elements, and formal geometric plantings. Secret spaces, gardens within gardens that manipulate the view so only part of the garden are revealed at one time. Spanish gardens generally have a minimum of flowering plants; there are always a few varieties, for example a huge bed of agapanthus as a center point of color. Box hedges, stately cedars, and cypress are also very common. Pictured on the cover is Palacio de las Dueñas, located in Seville and owned by the Duchess of Alba. Building began in the fourteenth century and the garden is still a work in progress. Seville is incredibly hot in summer and the tinkling of the water and the refreshing coolness of the green space can be appreciated even in the photo. This portion of the garden illustrates several of the common elements, strong verticals, in this case the palm trees, low geometric box hedges outlining greenery, and a central fountain. This garden has more flowers than most. The enclosed courtyard extends the living space and blurs the boundaries between inside and outside. The courtyard also makes a secret or hidden space, revealing only this section and the remainder of the garden remains hidden from view. A modern garden, La Mirada, the author's own, uses classic Spanish elements but his choices of materials are unique. For example, he used a mixture of live and dead trees from the surrounding area to create strong verticals. In a reflective moment he admits to ripping up all the trees in order to control the landscape. A mistake for sure, because he didn't realize how hard it was to grow a tree in pure chalk soil! Geometrical elements throughout the garden are made from tinted cement and salvaged automobile glass represents "a pool". A large reflecting pool near the house serves as a true water feature and it is accented with a few water lilies. Green ivy covers the facade of the modern organic shaped house, providing a green cooling respite. Gardeners, landscape designers and those who are crazy about all things Spanish will appreciate this intimate look at rarely photographed gardens. Many of the gardens are open to the public so those planning a trip to Spain can put some of these beautiful locations on their itinerary.

A delightful coffee-table book which attacks the senses, giving a glimpse into the gardens of large Spanish estates which we mere mortals will never see. The photography is fabulous and picks out the essence (and often quirkiness) of gardens in each region. The accompanying text provides good insight into the motivations and character of the gardens' owners. It is not a book for instruction on garden design or practice - rather it is a good read for a gardener on a winters day. A high quality publication, worth its price.

Thank you

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