

Under the Tuscan Sun: At Home in Italy

By Frances Mayes

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Under the Tuscan Sun: At Home in Italy By Frances Mayes

20th Anniversary Edition with a New Afterword

Twenty years ago, Frances Mayes--widely published poet, gourmet cook, and travel writer--introduced readers to a wondrous new world when she bought and restored an abandoned villa called Bramasole in the spectacular Tuscan countryside. Under the Tuscan inspired generations to embark on their own journeys--whether that be flying to a foreign country in search of themselves, savoring one of the book's dozens of delicious seasonal recipes, or simply being transported by Mayes's signature evocative, sensory language. Now, with a new afterword from the Bard of Tuscany herself, the 20th anniversary edition of Under the Tuscan Sun brings us up-to-date with the book's most beloved characters.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
In this memoir of her buying, renovating, and living in an abandoned villa in Tuscany, Frances Mayes reveals the sensual pleasure she found living in rural Italy, and the generous spirit she brought with her. She revels in the sunlight and the color, the long view of her valley, the warm homey architecture, the languor of the slow paced days, the vigor of working her garden, and the intimacy of her dealings with the locals. Cooking, gardening, tiling and painting are never chores, but skills to be learned, arts to be practiced, and above all to be enjoyed. At the same time Mayes brings a literary and intellectual mind to bear on the experience, adding depth to this account of her enticing rural idyll.

From Publishers Weekly
Mayes's favorite guide to Northern Italy allots seven pages to the town of Cortona, where she owns a house. But here she finds considerably more to say about it than that, all of it so enchanting that an armchair traveler will find it hard to resist jumping out of the chair and following in her footsteps. The recently divorced author is euphoric about the old house in the Tuscan hills that she and her new lover renovated and now live in during summer vacations and on holidays. A poet, food-and-travel writer, Italophile and chair of the creative writing department at San Francisco State University, Mayes is a fine wordsmith and an exemplary companion whose delight in a brick floor she has just waxed is as contagious as her pleasure in the landscape, architecture and life of the village. Not the least of the charms of her book are the recipes for delicious meals she has made. Above all, her observations about being at home in two very different cultures are sharp and wise.
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From Library Journal
In a carefully written story, poet Mayes (Ex Voto, Lost Roads, 1995), who chairs the creative writing department at San Francisco State University, recounts the purchase and renovation of an abandoned Tuscan villa. She begins with the 1990 search with her companion, Ed, for a summer home to take the place of the rented farmhouses of past years. They finally decide on Bramasole ("Yearning for the Sun"), a villa with 17 rooms and a garden that has been standing empty for 30 years. There is the ordeal of getting money transferred via the tangled Italian banking system, as well as bringing together the owner, builders, and government officials to get the necessary work done. The daunting process requires several years. Meanwhile, Mayes finds Italian country life a healthy antidote to hectic San Francisco, enjoying, for example, the fruits of her own garden, friends in the village, and the first olive harvest. This is an unusual memoir of one woman's challenge to herself and its successful transformation into a satisfying opportunity to improve the quality of her life.?William R. Smith, Johns Hopkins Univ. Lib., Baltimore
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Users Review

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