



Morocco: Courtyards and Gardens

Achva Benzinberg Stein

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In the North African land of Morocco, every *dar*-dwelling, religious institution, or commercial building is organized around an interior, walled courtyard that provides privacy from the bustle of urban streets and an outdoor space for social interaction and tranquil meditation. Over the course of centuries, ornamental schemes have evolved to incorporate not only native plant life but also intricate water features and patterned tile work known as *zellij*, all of central significance to the Moroccan culture and climate.

Vitally important for providing shade and catching breezes in an arid landscape, Moroccan gardens are designed and cultivated with vibrant color and aromatic plants. Author Achva Benzinberg Stein explores the three main types of gardens—the simple and elegant paved patio form of the *ouest ed-dar*, the more elaborately planted *riyad*, and the *agdal*, an open, cultivated landscape. Striking color photographs, including numerous aerial views, show gardens and courtyards in Marrakech, Fez, and elsewhere.

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