



The Art of the Islamic Garden

By Emma Clark

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Now in paperback, this lavish guide explains the design and symbolism of Islamic gardens while giving practical guidance to replicating the component parts

The Islamic garden is regarded as one of the highest forms of visual art in the civilization of Islam, and this guide explains these gardens' history and symbolism, and their connections to the Quran. The principal elements are water and shade; they are also characterized by the chahar-bagh: a four-fold pattern, constructed around a central pool or fountain, with four streams flowing toward the four corners of the earth. This design is aesthetically striking; however, a true appreciation of an Islamic garden is only complete with an understanding of the spiritual symbolism manifested in its design and planting. The significance of the gardens' layout and design are explored, as well as the geometry, hard landscaping, and architectural elements, allowing a deeper understanding of the gardens' beauty. Practical instructions include recommendations for suitable trees, shrubs, and flowers, and advice on creating an Islamic garden in cooler climates.

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Editorial Review

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Symbolism is an integral element of Islamic gardens, together with elements of water and shade. Clark explicates these underlying principles within the concept of "four-fold," or *chahar-bagh*, the foundation on which Islamic gardens are arranged and constructed. For designers intent upon creating such a garden, or readers wishing to delve into the history of masterpieces like the Alhambra in Spain, Clark presents a fascinating and comprehensive overview. She also provides a good deal of information on plantings not in the traditional Islamic landscape but rather in northern climates with cold winters. Islam's appreciation of nature's beauty coexists with the notion of embracing a garden setting for purposes of reflection, and Clark's study sheds light on the links between paradise gardens and the Qur'an. Interestingly, Clark devotes a chapter to the Carpet Garden at Highgrove, Prince Charles' house in the English countryside, where a bold fountain, decorative mosaic work, and orderly layout of flowerbeds and pathways illustrate the influence and effects of Islamic garden design. *Alice Joyce*

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Review

"A fascinating and comprehensive overview." —*Booklist*

From the Publisher

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