



## Inés of My Soul: A Novel

By Isabel Allende

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### Inés of My Soul: A Novel By Isabel Allende

This magisterial work of historical fiction recounts the astonishing life of Inés Suárez, a daring Spanish conquistadora who toiled to build the nation of Chile—and whose vital role has too often been neglected by history.

It is the beginning of the Spanish conquest of the Americas, and when Inés's shiftless husband disappears to the New World, she uses the opportunity to search for him as an excuse to flee her stifling homeland and seek adventure. After a treacherous journey to Peru, she learns of his death in battle. She meets and begins a passionate love affair with a man who seeks only honor and glory: Pedro Valdivia, war hero and field marshal to the famed Francisco Pizarro. Together, Inés and Valdivia will build the new city of Santiago and wage a ruthless war against the indigenous Chileans. The horrific struggle will change them forever, pulling each toward their separate destinies.

*Inés of My Soul* is a work of breathtaking scope, written with the narrative brilliance and passion readers have come to expect from Isabel Allende.

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## **Ines of My Soul: A Novel** By Isabel Allende **Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #3717177 in Books
- Published on: 2006-11-07
- Released on: 2006-11-07
- Format: Large Print
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x 1.32" w x 6.00" l, 1.39 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 511 pages

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

*Starred Review.* Only months after the inauguration of Chile's first female president, Allende recounts in her usual sweeping style the grand tale of Doña Inés Suárez (1507–1580), arguably the country's founding mother. Writing in the year of her death, Inés tells of her modest girlhood in Spain and traveling to the New World as a young wife to find her missing husband, Juan. Upon learning of Juan's humiliating death in battle, Inés determines to stay in the fledgling colony of Peru, where she falls fervently in love with Don Pedro de Valdivia, loyal field marshal of Francisco Pizarro. The two lovers aim to found a new society based on Christian and egalitarian principles that Valdivia later finds hard to reconcile with his personal desire for glory. Inés proves herself not only a capable helpmate and a worthy cofounder of a nation, but also a ferocious fighter who both captivates and frightens her fellow settlers. Inés narrates with a clear eye and a sensitivity to native peoples that rarely lapses into anachronistic political correctness. Basing the tale on documented events of her heroine's life, Allende crafts a swift, thrilling epic, packed with fierce battles and passionate romance. (Nov.)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

If *Inés of My Soul* isn't among Isabel Allende's best novels, it still tells a remarkable, ambitious, and heretofore untold story about one of the first female conquistadors of the New World. Allende finds so many surreal subplots in Inés's own story that the author's imagination, rather than magical realism, prevails in her attempt to recreate the 16th-century Americas. All aspects of the story entertain and educate. At the same time, the detractors have some complaints: Allende embarks on too many historical detours; she romanticizes the Spanish conquistadors; she takes a one-sided view of the native Chileans; and, in an attempt to appeal to fans of different genres, she creates a lightweight story from a very serious topic.

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From [Booklist](#)

\*Starred Review\* Fiction about the conquistador experience in the New World (although a long list does not immediately come to mind) nevertheless can't possibly get better than Allende's treatment of the subject in her latest novel, which is based on the life of a real historical character. Ines Suarez was born in golden-age Spain; she traveled to that glittering country's South American empire in search of her husband, who previously had pulled up stakes and booked passage there in search of riches. In the novel's real time, Ines is 70 years old in the year 1580, and she puts stiffly held pen to paper to compose her memoirs, recording for posterity the events of quite an extraordinary life. Once in the New World, after learning her husband had died, Ines, with her innate smarts and fortitude, takes up with a man (one of Francisco Pizarro's former officers) who not only knocks her socks off (or whatever the equivalent of such an article of clothing was back in those days) but who also, together with her, proceeds to build the city of Santiago and forge the nation of Chile. Allende's novel broadens and deepens into a richly drawn depiction of the harshness of New World colonial life. She is an exquisite handler of historical detail, always conscious of keeping her story line above sinking beneath the particulars. *Brad Hooper*

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