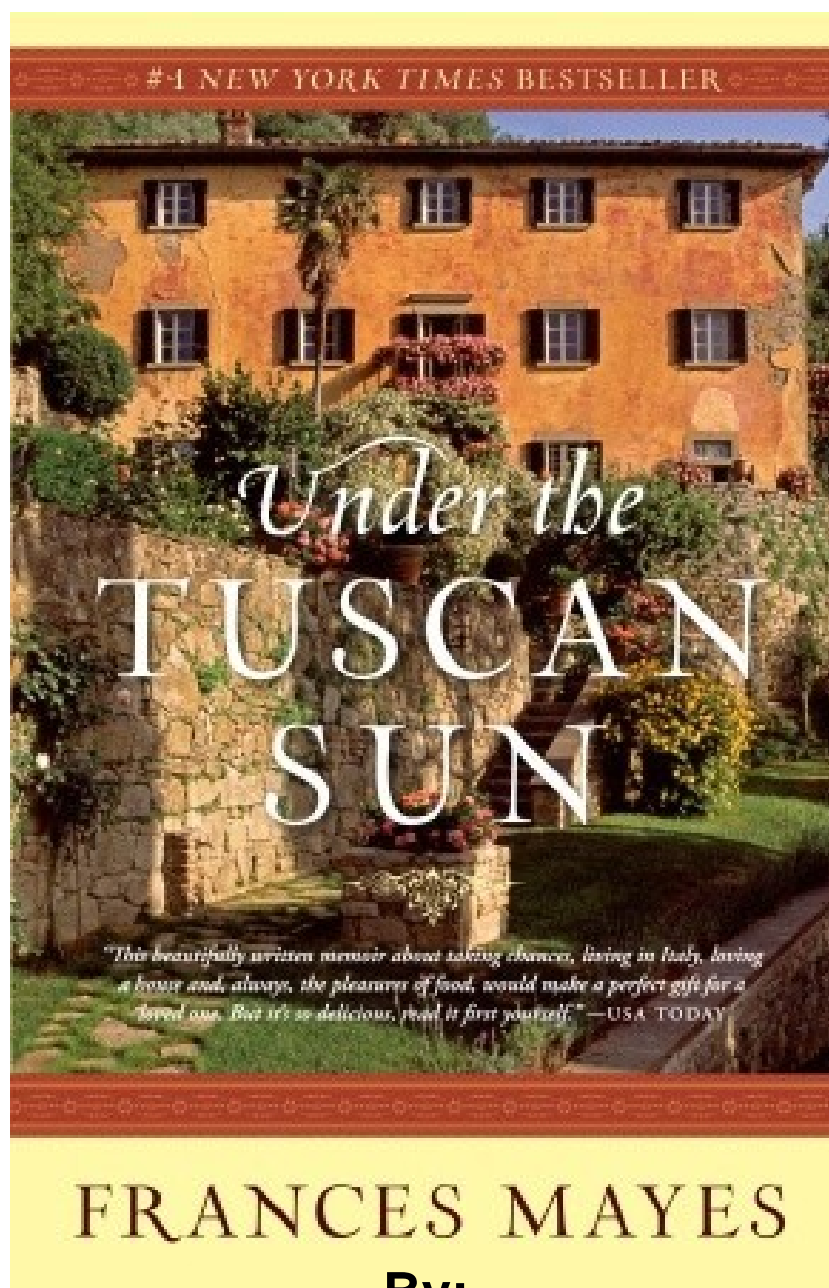


## Under the Tuscan Sun Book PDF Download



**By:**  
**Frances Mayes**

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## What people Say:

### Ali

WARNING: THIS BOOK IS THE MEANDERING INCOMPLETE THOUGHTS OF A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN THAT EATS LIKE A ITALIAN SUMO WRESTLER AND BOUGHT A DISASTER OF A HOUSE THAT NEEDED A HUGE AMOUNT OF REPAIR. THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO THIS BOOK. Perfect if you are practicing speed reading. You could skip every other sentence and still understand that she actually enjoys fixing up this crappy house in Italy. Absolutely nothing like the movie. Disappointing.

### SJ

I didn't finish it. And, frankly, that's not like me at all. The book is well reviewed, and well written. And yet, somehow, I just really didn't like it. The author can truly write, and the topics were of great interest to me, but I felt the entire time like she was untouchable. She was encased in her own experience and at no point did I feel welcomed or able to understand her. Her life path never really found a commonality with my own, nor did she make me love her. In the end, I did myself the

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## Tara

I hear a lot of crap about how this book is silly, fluffy, boring, slow, unstructured, unserious. I've had three people now (all men =p) tell me it's "chicklit." First of all, is that supposed to be an insult? Second: What? Perhaps this all has something to do with how popular the book was and continues to be. Regardless, don't let the naysayers dissuade you from giving it a try.

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The writing is poetically beautiful, illuminating a place that is equally so. Plenty of "place writing" does a disservice to the locations it tries to praise, but Mayes isn't just in love with Tuscany, she's also an astonishingly good writer, and she's sensitive to the fact that she is an outsider and therefore writes as one who does not "know" the culture. She's constantly delighted with new discoveries, and she shares them in such a way that you can share them, too.

The real genius here, though, is in the scope. It's not all sweeping vistas and Renaissance churches in this telling; Mayes transforms the details of daily life, and she considers big questions, too. Food and drink, new friends and neighbors, the non-human inhabitants of her house and land, the joys and frustrations of foreign gardening, the colors and textures and tastes daily encountered are all given their moments. The next moment, Mayes ruminates on the vagaries of renovating a house in a foreign country (this is what the book is ostensibly about), the reasons a person leaves their own homeland to find a home elsewhere, and the ways a person is changed by what they find in that elsewhere.

Is it cliché to say that I was changed by the experience of reading this, and that I am again, every time I revisit the book? Too bad, then -- this book is on my top shelf. I wish I could write like Frances Mayes.

## Leftbanker

I had some friends come to visit me here in Spain and one of them was readin

I had some friends come to visit me here in Spain and one of them was reading this book. I had read it before and thought very little of it. As I am now in the middle of editing my own travel book about Spain I practically yanked this away from them to reread. I have to say that my first impression of

was accurate. As I edit my book about life in Spain I am a little worried about what I feel to be a lack of structure and focus in what I have written. After rereading this book my work seems like a textbook example of structure. She just seems to comment randomly about her rather privileged life in Italy. This book should serve as how not to write. It's truly ghastly writing at every step without a hint of insight to be found anywhere.

This thing is like

of travel memoirs, or whatever the hell you want to call it. She is not as clumsy a writer as Dan Brown; I refer more to the immense popularity of this book. I just don't get it. I just don't see

why it is that we all have to be reading the same book. I suppose that this is how the publishing industry works. They would much rather force one book down our collective throats than to print and market a series of books better suited for a range of tastes. I guess they find this sort of book to be inoffensive enough to cover a wide range of readers who are looking for a book about living in Italy. A more interesting take on this subject would be a lot riskier.

Just an anecdotal observation on my part but in travel memoirs when writers don't speak the local language very well they litter their writing in English with foreign words. For me this book is "creative writing" gone bad, and isn't all "creative writing" just writing gone bad?. If you removed all of the adjectives and adverbs the book would be about ten pages long.

I never felt like reading more of this no matter where I was in the narrative. As far as the premise to the book, I really couldn't care less about some prosperous couple's work they are doing on an Italian country estate. I don't know why this sort of story is so appealing to American readers. All of home improvement had little or nothing to do with Italy. One of the most important things to learn about life in Europe is how their cities work; at least this is one of the most important things that I've learned in my years in Spain. A country house is more for locals who are fed up with life in the city. It will take me many more years to reach this stage of assimilation. Being isolated on your Italian country estate doesn't have much to do with Italy. She probably went weeks without ever speaking to an Italian that wasn't among her service employees.

Every noun is propped up by a description, as if nothing is able to stand on its own. The Italians in the book come across as mere stereotypes. I'm surprised I didn't read about Guiseppe, the old organ grinder with his monkey. For a woman who has spent a lot of time in the country she has precious few insights about what life is like in that country other than her rather untraditional versions of Italian recipes.

On the back cover of the book they say that the author is a gourmet cook. The first thing that came to my mind was that she may have qualified as a gourmet cook in America back when the book was first published but among the Italians she probably rates somewhere in the bottom middle of household hash slingers. From her recipes I didn't get the impression that she was creating any miracles in the kitchen. This isn't trying to take anything away from her skills, it's just that in Mediterranean countries the bar for culinary prowess has been raised rather high. Like being a distance runner in Kenya, to be considered an above average cook in this region of the world you have to be truly remarkable. Judging by the heavenly cooking smells wafting into the stairwell of my small building in Valencia it seems that really good cooks aren't exactly a rare commodity.

I suppose people are in love with the idea of moving to a country estate in Tuscany and nothing else really matters. I just couldn't give a shit about her petty bourgeois issues with restoring a country home. For me it's just a load of really uninteresting gibberish, like someone recounting a dream. The author revealed few truly insightful observations about Italy or Italian life. I doubt that she learned much Italian in all of her time spent there. As she is a university writing professor she writes in the clunky college professor manner that has shaped and destroyed so much American writing.

This just seems like it appeals to the fanny pack wearing crowd of international travel, the folks who read those awful yuppie travel magazines, keep their cash in a money belt, and see travel as nothing more than a shopping opportunity. I'd like to set the author of this book up on a blind date with the guy who wrote the awful

## Amanda

At 66 pages in, I'm throwing in the towel.

Somewhere around the age of 22 or 23, I decided I was done with library books. Now, don't get me wrong, I love and appreciate libraries. I became a reader because of access to wonderful libraries. But, as an adult, I'm OCD enough not to enjoy the concept of library books. Wondering how many people read them while on the toilet, encountering books that smelled like ash trays, finding potato chip crumbs wedged between pages 32 and 33, encountering a sticky

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The thing is, I was so punchdrunk giddy with the idea of buying my own books and not being limited to what was on the library shelves that I was pretty damn bad at it in the beginning. I bought anything and everything that struck my fancy. Part of this was also because I was willing to see if I was the kind of person who would like these books that I didn't have access to previously. A book about a woman moving to sun-drenched Italy and finding herself? Why not? Maybe I'm the kind of person who could like that. My shelves are still filled with secret shames I acquired in those heady days of biblio-freedom.

Let's just say that, today, I am not the kind of person who would ever pick this book up.

is not a bad book. It's just not a



book. As far as I can tell, here is the basic premise:

- 1) Frances and Ed search all of Italy for the perfect summer house and have terrible trouble finding the place that's meant for them (talk about rich people problems, eh?)
- 2) Frances and Ed buy the house that speaks to them--and apparently the house is saying, "Freeze! Gimme all your money and no one gets hurt!" Because this house needs some serious work.