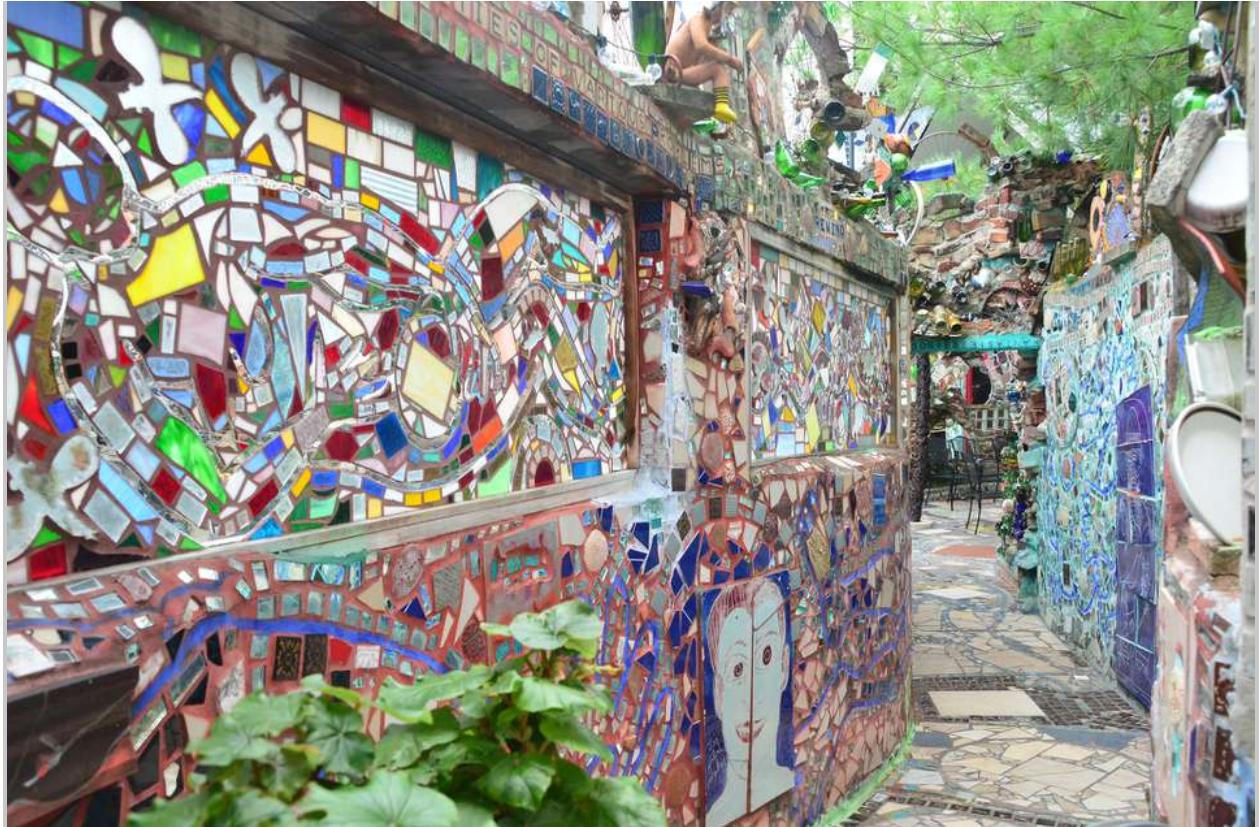


# The Magic Gardens in Philadelphia: The Complete Guide

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## Philadelphia's Magic Gardens

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Vibrant, eye-catching and incredibly whimsical, [Philadelphia's Magic Gardens](#) is a fun and fascinating destination that showcases the unique and highly-acclaimed work of renowned artist Isaiah Zagar. Featuring an expansive indoor-outdoor space on two levels, the Magic Gardens is an oasis adorned with an array of floor-to-ceiling multi-hued items, including ceramic tiles, cement, glass, plastic pieces, mirrors, bicycle parts, bottles, cans and a wide variety of found objects of all shapes and sizes.

Indeed a one-of-a-kind museum, the walls, ceilings, and corridors of this art installation are a sight to behold. Attracting art enthusiasts tourists and locals, it's considered a beloved city masterpiece that's well worth a visit.

## History

Over the years, the Magic Gardens has become a Philly landmark, but it did not pop up overnight. Instead, it's been an evolving process, as Zagar began creating his colorful tiled masterpieces in the 1960s, when he first moved to South Street with his wife, Julia.

Known as a pioneer and the leader of this gritty neighborhood's urban renaissance, Zagar first started embellishing a nearby vacant property with elaborate pieces of broken mirrors and tiles, and the rest is, well, history. This intriguing art installation has grown into an outdoor sculpture labyrinth, indoor galleries, and several passageways covered in multi-hued pieces of art.

Today, the space encompasses about half of a city block and is adorned with shimmering shades and pigments.

This sprawling art installation was inspired by Zagar's extensive global travels, as he and his wife resided in Peru while in the Peace Corps. He also enjoyed an artist residency in Rajasthan, India, and Tianjin, China. Closer to home, he also spent time at the legendary Kohler Company Pottery Foundry in Wisconsin.

The Magic Gardens survived a potential permanent closure in 2004, as Zagar did not own the land he used for his massive art installation. But when the landlord put the place up for sale, it attracted a great deal of support from the local community as well as donations from around the world. This resulted in the official creation of the Magic Gardens as a nonprofit organization, which owns and maintains the grounds. It has thrived ever since.

## Highlights

Since he began his career, Zagar has created over 200 pieces of art that are located around the world, with about 100 works on display in Philadelphia alone. Most of these pieces are situated in the neighborhood surrounding the Magic Gardens.

Not surprisingly, the Magic Gardens have appeared on many of the city's "most Instagrammable" lists. The entire art museum is jaw-dropping from top to bottom, and a few of the best photo opportunities include the outdoor labyrinth, staircases, surprising sculptures (look for the mermaid!), and the revolving exhibitions featuring other artists.

**See More Artwork**

If you're interested in exploring more art, additional works by Zagar are on display nearby at the Eye's Gallery, a cool folk art shop that's six blocks away and run by his wife, Julia. During the stroll over, you can admire plenty of his amazing work along the streets. Take your time to gaze upon some of the many colorful outdoor creations.

## How to Visit

If you wish to experience these magnificent and iconic Magic Gardens, it's best to plan in advance and purchase tickets online for a specific entrance time. This guarantees entrance at your preferred timeframe. Keep in mind that warmer months are the busiest. Most of this experience is outdoors, so be mindful of the weather. If you live in the city or would like to visit frequently, you can also purchase an annual membership to the gardens, which allows access at any time. It's recommended that you spend at least 30 minutes at this destination. Most importantly, be respectful and don't touch the walls or any of the art.

## Ticket Information

Tickets for the Magic Gardens can be [purchased online](#), and advance tickets are encouraged. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors and military, and \$5 for children. Guided walking tours of the museum and neighborhood are available. Visit the website for dates and details. The last admission is 10 minutes prior to closing.