

# Portuguese Handicrafts

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# Portuguese Handicrafts

## What is it?

The Portuguese handicraft is part of the culture and history of the country and, in particular, of each region. Craft work in Portugal is very vast and rich, both in quantity and in quality and is closely linked to popular culture, with a particular focus on rural areas.

The type of handicrafts varies from region to region, due to the different ways of life, the different customs and traditions of the local populations.



## History

It was from the mid 90 's onwards that things began to materialize with the creation of the organization "PPART". Historically, the transmission of handicraft knowledge took place in artisan production units, sometimes in a family context, sometimes in a very close duel between craftsman and apprentice. In Portugal, increased industrialization, which affected all sectors, had a less significant impact on craft learning chains. This fact explains the existence of contexts in which artisan activity continued, specifically in the market where artisans maintain a certain commercial activity in the context of their respective communities. Likewise, the same traditional training processes were preserved, based at the same time on a hierarchical relationship between artisan and apprentice.

For a long time, this type of learning has been kept away from all developments and efforts to standardize training.



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## Examples

There are a lot of portuguese handicrafts being from embroidery, lace, tapestry, weaving, jewellery, basketry, painted ceramics and more, despite that, we choosed in our opinion the ones that are the best, the most iconic and what symbolizes Portugal the most.

**Filigree Jewellery**

**Ceramics from Caldas da Rainha**

**"Galo de Barcelos"**

**Clay pottery**

**"Tapetes de Arraiolos"**



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## Filigree Jewellery

"Filigrana" is a traditional style of Portuguese jewelry made of very fine wires and tiny metal balls, welded together to create an ornamental design.

This style of jewelry is especially popular in the northern region of Portugal, where pieces of filigree were used in the traditional wedding dress and also in the women's folklore costumes of Minho.

The most popular design is the "Heart of Viana", initially created for Portuguese queen D. Maria I who, grateful for the blessing of having been granted a male child, had a heart made in gold filigree. Other iconic designs include the "arrecadas" earrings and necklaces with "Contas de Viana".



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## Ceramics from Caldas da Rainha

In the western region of the country, Caldas da Rainha is Portugal's most popular ceramic production centre. Here, you will easily find several markets and beautiful shops where you can buy ceramic items at reasonable prices.

The traditional style of “louça das Caldas”, as it is known, includes colourful and interestingly shaped pieces for both decoration and kitchenware. From simple dinner plates to animal-shaped objects that will add creativity and personality to your home. If you visit Caldas da Rainha, make sure you go to the Bordallo Pinheiro Factory Shop, one of Portugal's most famous ceramic brands and home to this artist's original Portuguese swallows.



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## "Galo de Barcelos"

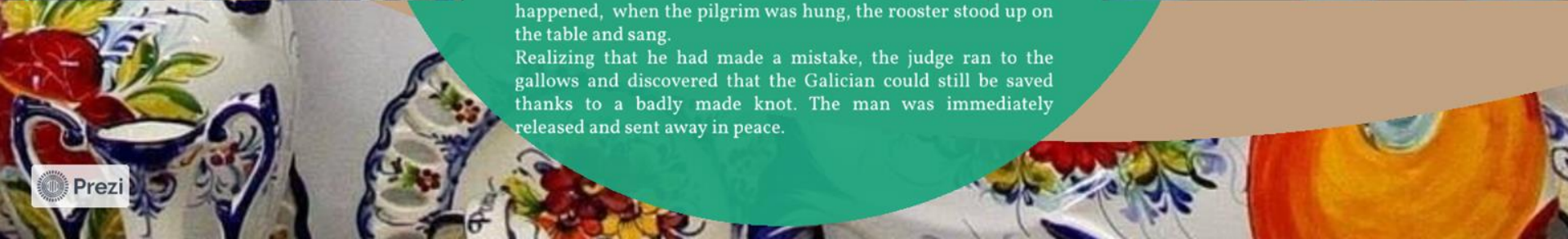
One of the most curious national symbols of Portugal is the "Galo de Barcelos" (Barcelos rooster), a colorful ceramic rooster decorated with hearts and flowers.

The legend behind sheds light on the importance of faith, justice and honour in the Portuguese culture and way of life.

Legend has it that a long time ago, in the northern town of Barcelos, an unknown Galician was arrested and accused of a crime. However, the man swore he was innocent. Sentenced to death on the gallows, he asked to be brought before the judge who had sentenced him. When permission was granted, he said: "As certain as I am innocent, that rooster will sing when they hang me!"

All those present laughed at the absurdity of such a claim, but no one touched the rooster. And what seemed impossible happened, when the pilgrim was hung, the rooster stood up on the table and sang.

Realizing that he had made a mistake, the judge ran to the gallows and discovered that the Galician could still be saved thanks to a badly made knot. The man was immediately released and sent away in peace.



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## Clay Pottery

Pottery craftsmanship is another form of traditional handicrafts in Portugal that can be easily found in many local markets and souvenir shops throughout the country.

The Alentejo region of Portugal is one of the places where the love for traditional clay pottery is especially present. The designs reflect the traditional ways of life in the fields, the colours, flowers and the warmth of the region. Any piece of Alentejo pottery you buy will remind you of what you saw and felt when you were here!





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## Arraiolos Tapestry

These beautiful hand-embroidered rugs are inseparable from the history of Arraiolos, a small town located in the beautiful region of Alentejo, in southern Portugal. Made from cotton canvas and woven with pure wool dyed in different colours, Arroiolos tapestry is known for the unique technique associated with them: the cross-stitch.

The tradition of embroidering these beautiful rugs has been a symbol of Arraiolos for centuries, with unique designs that reflect the cultural identity of its people and the styles of each era. These rugs are produced in factories by women. However, at home, the production is done by both men and women.

