

THE
CRAFTSMANSHIP
IN OUR
COUNTRIES

THE ROMANIAN CRAFTSMANSHIP

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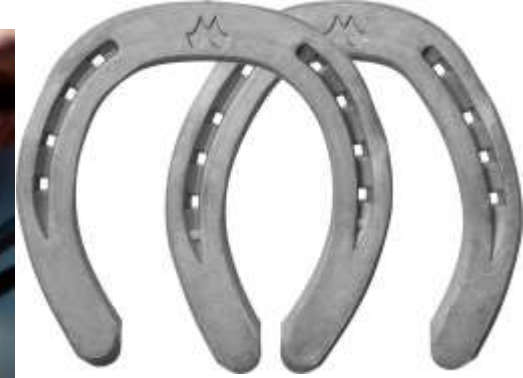
MĂRȚIȘOR - THE 1st OF MARCH TRINKET

The word Mărțișor is the diminutive of Mart, the old folk name for March (martie, in modern Romanian), and thus literally means "little March". Mărțișor, marț and mărțișus are all names for the red and white string with hanging tassel customarily given on the 1st day of March. In the olden times, the string could be red and black. Giving this talisman to people is an old custom, and it is believed that the wearer will be strong and healthy for the year to come. It is also a symbol of the spring arrival. Usually, both women and men wear it pinned to their clothes, close to the heart, until the last day of March, when they tie it to a fruit-tree twig. In some regions, a gold or silver coin hangs on the string and is worn around the neck. After wearing it for a certain length of time, they buy red wine and sweet cheese with the coin, according to a belief that their faces would remain white as cheese and rubicund as wine all year. In modern times, and especially in urban areas, the Mărțișor lost most of its talisman properties and became more a symbol of friendship, love, appreciation and respect. The black threads were replaced by red, but the delicate wool string is still a 'cottage industry' among people in the countryside, who comb out the wool, dye the floss, and twist it into thousands of tassels. In some areas, the amulets are still made with black and white string, to ward off evil. Related to the Mărțișor and also symbol for spring in Romania is the snowdrop flower.



F A R R I E R Y

Horseshoeing has long been one of the most important parts of the blacksmith's trade. A true craftsman had to know how to model a horseshoe with the help of fire or cold, and then catch it on the hoof of a horse or ox- a burden-pulling animal that is loaded with wood, grain, hay, or fruit. The forging of the horseshoe is again an occupation with an essential role in the activity of blacksmiths, who were aware of how long and how this operation must be done for the horseshoe to be durable. A farrier's routine work is primarily hoof trimming and shoeing. In ordinary cases, trimming each hoof so it retains proper foot function is important. If the animal has a heavy work load, works on abrasive footing, needs additional traction, or has pathological changes in the hoof or conformational challenges, then shoes may be required. Additional tasks for the farrier include dealing with injured or diseased hooves and application of special shoes for racing, training, or "cosmetic" purposes. Horses with certain diseases or injuries may need remedial procedures for their hooves, or need special shoes.



P O T T E R Y

Earth, water and fire came to life in the hands of the Romanian. From the mists of time, clay took various forms and uses, then was painted in the colors of the earth and burned in ovens. The pottery from Cucuteni, discovered in the Iasi area in 1884, bears witness to this millennial craft, pottery. White, red or black predominate on the vessels decorated with the spiral symbol. Cucuteni culture is one of the oldest in Europe, with an age of over 6,500 years. Horezu ceramics is a unique type of Romanian pottery that is traditionally produced by hand around the town of Horezu in northern Oltenia (Vâlcea County), close to the famous Horezu Monastery. It reflects many generations of knowledge and skills development of pottery, which is why the craftsmanship of Horezu pottery was inscribed on UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists.



DECORATING EGGS

- The painted Easter eggs are the most colorful and loved part of this religious celebration in Romania. You'll find them in every house, at every Easter meal, at church, and even at picnics. Their origin goes back at least a couple of centuries, and today they represent the most popular image of Orthodox Easter. Painting Easter eggs became an art of its own in Romania's villages, and only women mastered initially this technique. Despite the long and meticulous process, Romanian artisans have transformed Easter eggs into unique works of art. The colors and symbols used to decorate the eggs vary according to the region, but three-four colors are constantly used. Red is love, black is eternity, yellow is youth and rich crops while green represents nature, and blue means health and sunny skies. The decorative motifs are also diverse, mixing symbols like the cross or the star with nature and animal representations. The use of symbols is also influenced by regional and local elements. This is the case of the artisans from Ciocanesti, Bucovina, who use the geometrical motifs painted on the houses from their village to decorate their creations.



WOODWORKING AND CARVING

Woodworking has been an occupation of our ancestors since ancient times. Each Romanian village had its carpenters, drains and folk craftsmen trained from father to son. The peasant from the past made and maintained his own household items: furniture, tools, cooking utensils, cutlery, icons, crosses, toys for the little ones. A true craftsman feels the wood and knows the wood fiber that is needed to make barrels, buckets or buckets. As for wood carvings, they generally follow the pattern of traditional crafts. The spiral, the circle, the rhombus, the circular arc, the solar motif, the wind rose, the wolf's teeth, the snake, the flower – joined and carved - are a symbol of how folk craftsmen, over time, understood the world, life and death.



FOLK CLOTHING / TRADITIONAL FABRIC

The structure of the costume hasn't changed much, though, throughout history, and it is more or less the same throughout the Balkans. The main element remains 'ia', the shirt or chemise, made from linen, hemp or wool, which is tied around the waist with a fabric belt, narrower for women, wider for men. While men's shirts are shorter and worn over white linen trousers or leggings, women's shirts are longer, usually reaching the ankles. Women also wear aprons or wrap skirts over the shirts, back and front. Men's attire is completed with hats, waistcoats and overcoats, while women wear printed woollen scarves or embellished headbands and the same type of outer garment, which only differs in cuts and decorations.

Visually, the traditional Romanian folk costumes are very impressive. They are famous for their intricate embroideries in vivid colours and geometric or floral motifs, sometimes displaying hidden symbols. They also differ a lot depending on the region they are worn, as well as their function. Obviously, the folk costumes nowadays are only worn for special occasions, such as traditional celebrations, folk dances or weddings.



TRADITIONAL DOLLS

The dolls in traditional Romanian costumes have conquered the world over time. They were dressed in folk costumes, made of hemp, linen, gossamer, adorned with gold or silver metallic threads.

A special place is held by the figurines dressed in historical costume from the 15th century. XV-XVIII. They were produced for export or sold in shops for foreigners as Romanian souvenirs, but they were also found in handicraft shops. The images on the signs are from the catalogues produced for export, the models being approved by the specialists of the Village Museum.



F O L K M A S K S

Folk masks were used in Romania in pre-Christian times, and they were preserved for a while in Christianity.

Masks are related to the seasons, but also to birth, wedding and funeral.

In the past, there was a belief that all evil spirits gather on earth at the end of the year and they must be banished, in order to welcome the first day of the new year without all sorts of bad things.

The rituals began with the coming of what the locals call the "masked", people who wore various masks and who kicked into the talange and had forked clubs to drive away the evil.

The folk masks for casting out evil spirits are designed to be as ugly as possible, because it is believed that the ugly can be scared only with something that is even uglier.





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