

Exquisite Crafts of Kashmir

Kashmiri handicrafts are prized possessions all over the world for their exquisite craftsmanship. Kashmiri carpets, in both wool and silk with their Persian design, papier-mache items ranging from jewellery boxes to mirror frames, intricately carved walnut wood furniture and accessories, stone jewellery boxes, beautiful woollen shawls, crewel embroidery on furnishing material sold by the meter and more, you will find it all in Srinagar. Row upon row of shops filled with handicrafts lines the streets. The array is awesome. There are objects to suit every pocket, for the variety within each craft is wide.



Woodcrafts

Kashmir woodcrafts, renowned for intricate carvings, reflect the region's rich artistic heritage. Crafts like Khatamband and Pinjrakaari, featuring floral and geometric patterns, showcase Kashmiri culture. Walnut wood's fine grain and durability make it ideal for hand-crafted furniture, jewelry boxes, and home decor. Evolving from ancient stone carvings to woodwork during the 14th-century Sultanate, these crafts were influenced by Turkish and Persian styles, with decorative latticework (Pinjrakaari) and carved houseboats becoming popular in the 19th and 20th centuries, especially among European tourists.



Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir

Tourism Department, Civil Secretariat, Srinagar/Jammu
Srinagar office (May - Oct): 0194 2506061 Fax: 2506001
Jammu office (Nov - April): 0191 2542922 Fax: 2564386

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Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir
Tel: +91 1942502279 Fax: +91 1942502281
24 Hour help line: 0194 2502512
www.kashmirtourismofficial.com



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Copper work
Copper engraving thrives in Kashmir due to local demand, seen in delicate utensils like the essential tea-serving Samovar. Skilled artisans cluster in areas like Hazratbal, Zaina Kadal, and Khanyar.



Papier Mache
Kashmir's papier-mâché is renowned for its intricate hand-painted floral and geometric designs on dried and molded paper. Creations like Qalamdans, jewelry boxes, and home decor items showcase artisans' skill, often taking weeks to complete.



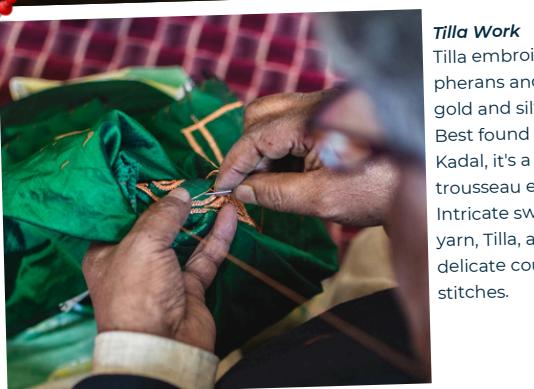
Willow Wicker
Willow wicker, a Kashmiri craft similar to cone basket making, uses locally grown willow reeds to create items like baskets, trays, and furniture. The products are both functional and decorative, blending tradition with utility. Willow clusters are primarily in Ganderbal, with the best experience found by visiting basket makers near Hazratbal.



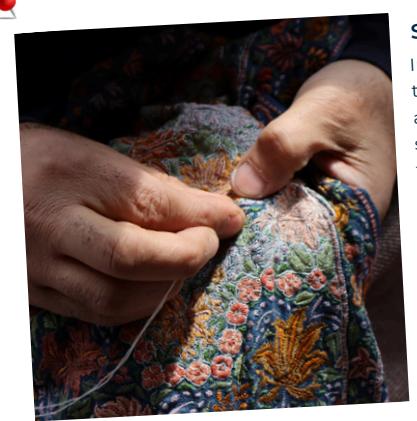
Carpets
Kashmiri carpets are renowned for their intricate craftsmanship and vibrant designs, blending Persian, Turkish, and local motifs. Introduced by the Persians in the 14th century, fine silk and wool weaving has flourished in Kashmir since the Mughal era, making these carpets among the most expensive in the world. Designs are hand-knotted on vertical looms, following a talim or script. Featuring floral, paisley, and geometric patterns, these carpets are made using high-quality wool and silk. Kashmiri carpets, symbols of luxury, remain highly sought after by collectors and designers worldwide.



Kashmir Pashmina
Pashmina is synonymous with Kashmir; hence was called 'cashmere' when it spread to the West. A luxury fabric woven here for decades, Kashmiri Pashmina is a combination of both material and traditional processes. Developed and refined by Kashmiri artisans to make the fabric of incredible lightness, strength and lustre, this process is believed to retain the uniqueness of Pashm - the reason why genuine Pashmina cannot be woven on machines.



Tilla Work
Tilla embroidery graces pherans and shawls with gold and silver zar yarns. Best found near Zaina Kadal, it's a Kashmiri girl's trousseau essential. Intricate swirls of gold yarn, Tilla, are secured by delicate couching stitches.



Sozni Embroidery
Introduced by mystics and Sufis, this needle embroidery employs a distinctive darning stitch, still seen as a meditative connection to the divine. Master artisans, using a solitary silk strand on Pashmina, dedicate years to adorning shawls and apprals with intricate motifs. The emblematic almond buteh, a mystical motif on Kashmiri shawls, later became the 'paisley' after English imitations.



Crewel & Chain Stitch
Quite unlike the fine needle embroidery on shawls, Aari work is another kind of traditional embroidery done mostly by women with the help of a hooked needle or an awl. Shawls, pherans and other apparel are embroidered with fine cotton threads, but the same embroidery is also called crewel work when used on thick draperies & upholstery with coarser dasuti fabric and woollen yarns. The fully worked chain-stitch rugs, cushions and leather embroidered accessories with intricate floral designs are distinctly treasured gifts to take back from Kashmir.



Namda
Namda flooring, a traditional Kashmiri craft, involves creating felted wool carpets through compression and matting rather than weaving. Adorned with vibrant hand-stitched embroidery of floral and animal motifs, these carpets are both warm and decorative. Efforts to revive this art aim to preserve its cultural significance and boost its global appeal.



Pottery
Kashmiri pottery, known for its vibrant designs and traditional techniques, reflects the region's cultural heritage. Dalgate pottery, produced in Rainawari and Khanayar, is famous for its colorful glazed tiles, martbands, and hukkahs.



Kani Shawls
Kani shawls, a treasured Kashmiri craft, are intricately woven using fine pashmina wool and wooden spools called kanis. Known for their elaborate patterns inspired by nature, these shawls require months or even years to create. Renowned globally, Kani shawls embody the rich heritage and artistry of Kashmir.