

Northern Folk Crafts



Материал на английском языке
по региональной тематике.

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Wood-carving

- Since olden times wood has been the most widespread and popular material.
- In nearly every Northern home there is chip bird floating under the ceiling. Such birds are made by local craftsmen, with the help of an axe, a knife and a chisel.





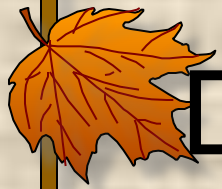
- The craftsman takes a pine log, carefully shave it, splits the end into chips and spreads them into a fan so that a bird's body and a tail emerge.





- Another log is turned into wings, then the parts are put together and a beautiful bird appears which is said to bring happiness to the home.





Decorative painting on wood

- Besides carving, folk craftsmen painted their household utensils. Distaffs, birch-bark boxes, berry baskets, bread-bins, candlesticks were painted in bright festive colours.





- The main theme is the life of the common people, rendered in a highly poetic form.
- Some of the wooden objects were adorned with a series of pictures, which, taken together, told a single story.





- The style of painting varied from one district to another. Northern Dvina painting usually features a floral design framing a scene from every day peasant life.





- Fine graphic painting is typical of the Mezen river area.

- Floral and bird patterns
- are characteristics of the
- distaffs found in the
- Kargopolsky district.





Birch-bark processing

- Not long ago one could see birch-bark items almost in every peasant family. They were used for keeping milk and sour-cream, cottage cheese butter, *kvass* and berries, mushrooms and fish.





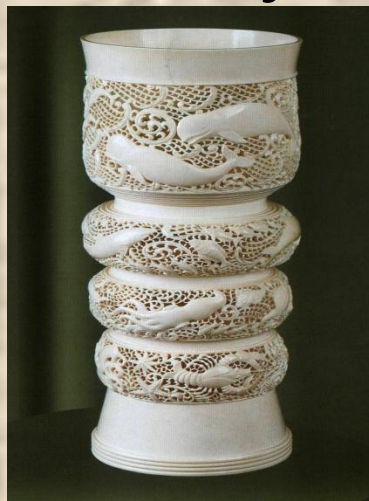
- As compared with modern kitchen utensils, birch-bark vessels called *tuyesa* or *buraki* have several advantages. Firstly, they are leak proof. Secondly, foodstuffs kept in them can stay fresh for a long time.





Kholmogory Bone-Carving

- The art of Kholmogory bone-carving is a brilliant and original phenomenon in Russian folk culture.
- The Northern art of bone-carving, rooted in the ancient past became especially well-known about 400 years ago.





- In the 16th-17th centuries bone-carvers from Kholmogory were invited to Moscow to decorate the Armoury in the Kremlin where they worked side by side with foreign masters.
- Northern masters used walrus tusk and whale tooth obtained by Pomors while sea-hunting.





- Contemporary masters develop the rich traditions of this ancient northern art. They make unique creations intended for museum collections and articles for sale.







Clay Toys from Kargopol

- The art of making clay toys in the town of Kargopol goes back to ancient times: some years ago archeologists dug up duck-shaped whistles which are 5.000 years old.

Каргопольская игрушка





- Peasant women, centaurs, cows, horses, deer, rams, hares, bears and ducks were the most typical characters of the toys. In local folklore and rituals all these animals are associated with fertility and solar symbolism.





- Later on, new motifs appeared, which depict the life of the present-day northern village.





- Nowadays, the toys are made by the Kargopol toy-making workshop and individual toy-makers who together help to preserve the ancient Kargopol tradition.





Northern Kozoolyas

- Baking *pryaniks* is another folk craft which is very popular in the North.
- Northern *pryanics*, the so-called kozoolyas occupy the special place. The origin of the word may be explained by the fact that the most popular shape of such *pryaniks* was *that of a sheep or a goat*.





- Arkhangelsk kozoolyas vary in shape and colour: they may have the form of a sheep, a horse, a reindeer, Santa Claus, a fir-tree, a basket and so on. They are usually of brownish shade (due to burnt sugar) and are decorated with coloured icing.







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