



Fuencaliente de La Palma

Handicraft

English edition

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Meet the craftswoman and their incredible works.

With the new developmental times and the recent appearance of other materials such as plastic, which invades everything, an important part of traditional crafts has a very uncertain destination due to the import of all kinds of cheap objects that come to replace those **made for centuries by the island's artisans.**

Trades as endearing as the tinsmith, coopers, blacksmith, boatbuilder, etc., have practically disappeared. The basketry craftswomen, who built those wonderful handmade cane basketry, rye straw baskets, boats, balayos (is a basket made with rye straw and bramble in spirally woven with a rounded bottom) and many more objects for daily work routine, are also on the way to disappearing.

Despite everything, as with other branches of culture and customs, **La Palma continues to have a rich heritage** in craftsmanship that its people have jealously preserved to this day. There are still embroiderers, potters, weavers, cigar makers, some woodworkers, and natural silk workers.

The embroidery

Embroidery is the **most significant craft work in our society**, since for decades it was an important help for the family, especially in those difficult times of the civil war and massive emigrations, when the long-suffering woman **had to carry out the home in lonely**, embroidering by candlelight late into the night. Who does not remember that popular image of rural women embroidering in the field while their goats grazed?

Towards the middle of the 20th century, many women were embroidering, especially table linen. There were small industries on La Palma that were dedicated to distributing the pieces and "sispadas" (drawn) among the women, the "distributors" collected the work already done and left a new one. Then, in the workshops, they were washed and ironed to be used for export.

These tasks, which the Portuguese probably brought us (this custom is still maintained in Madeira) have declined considerably in recent years. Despite this, it remains one of the most profitable sectors of island crafts. Apart from the materials, sets of sheets, traditional clothing, blouses, etc. are also embroidered.

Textiles

A small artisan industry that supplied households with the fibers necessary for family consumption. The most fibers used were **linen, wool and silk**, all of them produced on the island and transformed by looms originating in Portugal, of which more than a hundred are still preserved.

Linen was used primarily for the **manufacture of sheets, tablecloths, towels, men's and women's shirts, and petticoats**. Wool, for warm clothes and blankets, and natural silk, for party dresses, religious ornaments and delicate garments.

Palm basketry

Palm basketry is very present in the municipality thanks to craftswoman such as Margarita de Paz, president of Artesol. It makes a wide variety of products from palm leaves, which it **cuts, collects, dries, dyes**, etc.

Crystal jewelry

To make our products, we use **smooth glass**, usually from the effetre factory in Murano, Venice, Italy. The manufacture of the glass bead is probably the **oldest form of flaming glass**. Today, the tools and materials are modern, but the manufacturing techniques are still basically the same. However, the manufacture of the glass bead is a **completely handmade process**.

The simplest method of making a flamed glass bead is to continuously roll hot glass onto a wire or mandrel that has previously been prepared with a stripper. The roll is smoothed in the flame, then it can be shaped with a graphite or brass tool to the desired shape. This basic bead can be decorated with glass threads and / or layers of glass in transparent or light colors.

Once the glass bead is finished, it has to be cooled very slowly in an oven to avoid even stress inside the glass. When the beads have cooled, the mandrels can be removed, the holes cleaned, and the glass beads are ready for use on earrings, necklaces, bracelets etc.

They are paired with sterling silver, sometimes with cultured pearls or lava stones or Swarovski crystals, but the main piece is always crystal.

Image Gallery

Centers and Shops

First person crafting

Artesol

A mano La Palma

Image gallery





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