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TRADITIONS, CRAFTS AND ETHNOGRAPHY

multimedia



TRADITIONAL BULGARIAN COSTUMES



Operative Program "Regional Development 2007-2013
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BULGARIAN COSTUMES

The traditional Bulgarian costume is one of the most typical elements of the Bulgarian folk culture. It is the traditional clothing which has a specific meaning in both everyday and festival activities of the Bulgarians. Each region of Bulgaria has its own costume with unique, typical motifs.

 Costumes are divided into male and female. Female costumes are more colorful and interesting than male costumes; however the male costumes also attract interest with their typical elements.

A specific code is weaved into the ornamentation of the Bulgarian costumes - in the past the Bulgarians used to rely on it for information about the family of those, who wore them, and the areas of the country, where they lived. Each costume had its message.

The Bulgarian costume contains many elements and motifs from the pagan beliefs and legends. No one wore clothes with fully symmetrical decorations, because Bulgarians believed that full symmetry was a diabolical creation. Therefore, elements were often added and removed, so that no symmetry should exist. Those were intentional mistakes in order to prevent the evil eye.



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Bulgarian women make their costumes all by themselves. As early as the age of five, little girls were starting learning to spin wheels, sew, weave, prepare the trousseau for their weddings, and from their twelfth year to the wedding, they were learned to embroider - this was the highest skill of all domestic crafts. Embroidery used to have great symbolic value. It was believed to protect the human

body from evil spells and spirits. People believed that cutting a part of the embroidery of one's garment would blaze a trail for the evil spirits and make the person vulnerable. Bulgarian women were allowed to embroider only until their wedding day - after that they were having the right to do it again only when their own daughters become 12 years and they need to learn how to do it.



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Commonly, female costumes are divided into: two-apron, tunics, Sayan and one-apron clothes. The male costumes are divided into white-cloth and black cloth costumes.





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The two-apron female costume is widespread in Northern Bulgaria. It consists of a shirt, two aprons (front and back) and a belt. A wide variety of this type of national costumes can be seen in the Regional History Museum in Pleven. The male costumes in Pleven area are of the white-cloth type and consist of a belt, a tunic-like shirt, pants and outer garments.





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Most of the decoration of the Sazan clothing is at the neckline and the sleeves. The costume consists of colorful Saza (overcoat), jacket, skirt and belt. The Saza costume used to be widespread in southern and

southwestern Bulgaria.

The tunic is typical for southeastern Thrace. It consists of shirt, tunic, apron and belt; the typical decoration is most noticeable at the foot of the dress and the neckline.



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The one-apron costume can be seen mostly in the Rhodope area. It consists of a shirt and an apron. The black-cloth male costume, which is typical for the Middle Rhodope Mountain region, consists of a tunic-like shirt, wool trousers in a dark color, outerwear and a cap.



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A rich collection of costumes, typical for the Middle Rhodope region, can be seen in the Regional History Museum in Smolyan. More information on costumes in various regions and the symbolic meaning of the elements and the decorations on them can be obtained in the Bulgarian museums. Almost

each urban museum in the country has an ethnographic collection, which represents the typical costumes of the region. Extremely rich collections from all over the country are stored in the National Ethnographic Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Science and the National History Museum.





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