

Basket weaving

Basket weaving is an ancient craft that uses naturally grown materials and a few very simple tools. This is one of the widespread forms of traditional craft practiced across Tajikistan. Baskets are made from young branches of trees or cane. The tree branches used are willow, mulberry, pomegranate and other similar trees that have smooth long branches. Baskets in all sorts of shapes and sizes and used for varied purposes. For example baskets for carrying breads from the bakery are round or baskets used for collecting fruits or vegetables have handles.

Basket weavers make baskets by commission according to the need of the customers. Baskets needed for carrying heavy items would be woven from slight stronger and thicker branches and have flat bottom.

Before weaving the basket branches should be soaked thoroughly before using to make them easy to manipulate and to prevent them from breaking or cracking badly.

Branches that are intended to be used for stakes should be kept straight during this process but weavers can be soaked only straightened out

before to be used. It will also be necessary at some stages in the work to soak a half-finished piece. This would commonly be necessary when a basket base is ready and extra stakes have been inserted into it and are then going to bend them up at right angles to form the skeleton for the basket sides. It is obvious that the bottom of these stakes will have to be very malleable and damp so that they can be kinked with pliers and bent up without breaking. Extra dampening may similarly be necessary when you are about to bend down the ends of the stakes to make a final top border to your work.

Bird's cages in Tajikistan are also made using basket weaving techniques. The cages are used for keeping quail or partridges.

The industrial production of baskets also has greatly limited the growth of traditional methods of basket making. But both traditional and made in factory baskets are used widely for carrying items or simply for holding items in them.





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