

Elegance of filigree, a journey through Iran's exquisite metalwork tradition



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Filigree work in Iran is a distinguished sub-branch of traditional metalwork, showcasing intricate craftsmanship in creating decorative dishes using thin silver wires. While silver is a common metal used, filigree art also incorporates copper and gold to craft exquisite pieces. Cities like Zanjan, Ardebil, and

Isfahan are renowned for their expertise in this handicraft, each with its unique style and specialization. Tools such as filigree threads, silver ingots or wire, and rolling machines are essential in the creation process. The meticulous steps involved in crafting filigree dishware include material selection, wire preparation, template placement, thread fill-

ing, soldering, cleaning, and finishing touches. Common motifs like botteh jegheh adorn these products, adding to their allure. Silver is predominantly used in filigree work; however, copper filigree products are gaining popularity due to their affordability. These intricate designs are not limited to dishware but also extend to jewelry items like rings, pins, chains, and plaques,

enhancing their aesthetic appeal. Cities like Zanjan, Isfahan, and Ardebil stand out for their expertise in filigree work. Zanjan is known as the "filigree capital" of Iran, producing a wide range of silver products with arabesque and geometric designs. Isfahan's filigree workshops focus on high-quality plated silver dishware coated with polyester for

enhanced appearance. Ardebil boasts a rich history of handicraft development with filigree art prevalent in jewelry making. The difference between Isfahan and Zanjan filigree work lies in the karat of silver used and design patterns. Isfahan typically uses 90-95 karat silver, while Zanjan employs 99.9 (100 karat) silver, with more delicate patterns. Learning filigree work can

be pursued online or in-person, offering individuals the opportunity to create unique products for sale. Iranian handicrafts like filigree work attract tourists with their beauty and diversity. Exploring the best examples of this art form in cities like Isfahan and Zanjan promises a captivating experience showcasing the rich cultural heritage of Iran.

Explore Pakistan: A land of natural wonders



EXCLUSIVE

Nestled amidst the towering peaks of the Himalayas, Karakoram, and the Hindu Kush ranges lies a region of breathtaking beauty and awe-inspiring landscapes - the northern areas of Pakistan. It comprises Chitral Valley, Swat Valley, Naltar Valley, Naran and Kaghan, Fairy meadows and part of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Renowned globally for its pristine natural beauty, diverse culture, and warm hospitality, this region offers an unparalleled experience for adventurers, explorers, nature lovers and culture aficionados alike.

A tapestry of natural splendor

The northern areas of Paki-



stan are a mosaic of stunning natural features, from snow-capped peaks to lush valleys, crystal-clear rivers, and azure lakes. Among its most iconic landmarks is the mighty K2, the second-highest peak in the world, which invites mountaineers and trekkers from across the globe to conquer its formidable slopes. The region is home to five of the 14 eight-thousanders, including K2, and additionally has more than fifty mountain peaks above 7,000 metres (23,000 ft). Three of the world's longest glaciers outside of Earth's polar regions are found in Gilgit-Baltistan. Trekking and mountaineering are at their best here. The convergence point of the world's three mightiest mountain ranges the Karakoram, the Himalayas and

the Hindukush in a small town Jaglot is the scenery offered by nature only in this area. The region is also home to several other lofty peaks including Nanga Parbat, Rakaposhi, and Tirich Mir, each presenting a challenge and a spectacle for those who dare to venture into their realms. The Karakoram Highway, often dubbed the Eighth Wonder of the World, snakes through these mountains, providing one of the most breathtaking and safest road trips on earth alongside the mighty Indus River. Venturing further into the heart of the northern areas unveils a treasure trove of natural wonders. The Hunza Valley, with its terraced fields, orchards laden with apricots, and the



iconic Baltit and Altit forts, offers a glimpse into the rich history and vibrant culture of the region. Nearby, Attabad Lake, formed as a result of a landslide in 2010, mesmerizes visitors with its striking turquoise waters against the backdrop of rugged mountains.

Cultural richness and heritage

Beyond its natural splendor, the northern areas of Pakistan are steeped in history and culture. The region is inhabited by diverse ethnic groups including the Shinas, Wakhi, Burusho

(or Hunzakuts), and Baltis, each with its own unique traditions, languages, history and cultural festivals.

One of the most captivating aspects of the region's culture is its music and dance. Traditional tunes echoing through the valleys, accompanied by the graceful movements of dancers clad in vibrant attire, offer a glimpse into the soul of the northern areas.

The architecture of the region is equally fascinating, with ancient mosques, forts, and historical sites dotting the landscape. The Baltit Fort in Hunza, dating back over 700 years, stands as a testament to the region's rich heritage, while the picturesque Khaplu Palace in Skardu offers a

glimpse into the royal past of the Baltistan region. Shangrila Resort Skardu is an awesome treat surrounding Kachura Lake. The colorful flowers and lush green lawns give full serenity combined with pleasant weather.

Adventure awaits

For adventure enthusiasts, the northern areas of Pakistan offer a playground like no other. From trekking and mountaineering to rock climbing, white-water rafting, and paragliding, the region presents a myriad of adrenaline-pump-



ing activities against the backdrop of some of the world's most spectacular scenery.

The Karakoram Range, in particular, is a mecca for trekkers, with trails leading through remote valleys, past shimmering glaciers, and alongside glistening alpine lakes. The K2 Base Camp trek, in the shadow of the majestic peak itself, is a bucket-list experience for many adventurers, offering a challenging but immensely rewarding journey through some of the planet's most rugged terrain.

Paradise on Earth

While the northern areas of Pakistan are a haven for travelers seeking adventure and natural beauty, they are also fragile ecosystems that require careful preservation and sustainable tourism practices. Efforts

by local communities, government agencies, and conservation organizations are essential to protect the region's pristine environment and cultural heritage for generations to come. The local flora and fauna are also very unique.

The northern areas of Pakistan stand as a testament to the incomparable beauty and diversity of our planet. From its towering peaks to its vibrant culture and warm hospitality, this region captivates the hearts and minds of all who are fortunate enough to experience its wonders. Whether seeking adventure, cultural enrichment, or simply a moment of awe-inspiring tranquility, the northern areas of Pakistan offer an unforgettable journey and a lifetime experience into the heart of nature's grandeur.

