

## Macramé



Macramé is the art of tying knots to create beautifully patterned textiles with a lace-like effect.



### **Do you see or use knots in everyday life?**

Pretty much all of us know how to tie a simple knot. We tie our shoes and knot ribbons onto gifts, but there are so many different types of knots and their uses! Knotting has been an important adjunct to the everyday life of people from the earliest days.

The Incas and other ancient cultures used knots to record and communicate information before the invention of writing. Their *Quipu* (also spelled *kipu*) method used a wide variety of colored strings and sometimes several hundred knots, all tied at various heights, and could record dates, statistics, and even episodes from folk tales.

One of the earliest recorded uses of macramé-style knots as decoration appeared in the carvings of the Babylonians and Assyrians, where fringe-like plaiting and braiding ornamented the costumes.

It is believed that the modern art of decorating with knots originated with 13th-century Arab weavers. They knotted the excess thread and yam along the edges of hand-woven fabrics into decorative fringes. The meaning of the Arabic term *migramah*, from which the word macramé (Spanish) is derived, is



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variously rendered as "striped towel," "ornamental fringe," or "embroidered veil." The technique traveled to Spain with the Moorish conquest, and from there it spread eventually throughout Europe.

European sailors are credited with spreading knot knowledge around the world, with the beginning of international trade through sailing ships. Knots had many practical uses aboard their ships and knot tying was an essential skill while sailing. However, sailors made macramé objects in off-hours during long voyages. They often bartered knowledge of one knot for instructions on how to complete another, or barter their knotted goods such as hammocks, belts and hats at ports.

Knots were considered "common property," and grew into a worldly folk tradition. In many cultures knots symbolize unbreakable pledges. Actual knots have been used in marriage ceremonies for some time, including the tradition of tying the wrists of the bride and groom with twine.

Macramé was widespread in the Victorian era. It was used to make household items such as tablecloths, bedspreads and curtains. Many Victorian women used knotting to create "inexpensive lace."

Macramé regained popularity during the 1970s. It played a huge part in counterculture fashion by providing fun, fringy, and unique ways to express one's individuality. With minimal supplies required it's becoming hip again.



Master the basic macramé knots to create your own masterpiece. We prepared these step-by-step guides to help you get started!

#### Macramé bottle holder

- [Video instructions](#)
- [Printable instructions](#)



#### Macramé bookmark

- [Video instructions](#)
- [Printable instructions](#)

