

Glossary of Rug Terms:

ABRASH: A change in the color of a rug due to differences in the wool or dye batch. The color change runs across the rug and is most likely to occur at the top.

BOTEH: A pear-shaped figure often used in oriental rug designs, characteristic of the paisley pattern. The boteh may represent a leaf, bush or a pinecone.

CHAIN STITCH: A crochet stitch used in rug construction that consists of successive loops to lock the final weft in place at the end of a rug.

DHURRIE: A flatwoven rug from India, usually made of cotton or wool.

ENDLESS KNOT: A buddhist emblem symbolizing long duration, often used with other symbols.



TURKISH KNOT

FIELD: The part of a rug's design surrounded by the border. The field may be blank or contain medallions or an over-all pattern.

FRINGE: Warps extending from the ends of a rug which are treated in several ways to prevent the wefts and knots from unravelling.

GUL: A medallion either octagonal or angular in shape, used in Turkoman designs. It is often repeated to form an all-over pattern in the field.



PERSIAN KNOT

PERSIAN KNOT: Looped around one thread with only a half-turn around the other thread.

PILE: The nap of the rug or the tufts remaining after the knotted yarns are clipped.

PLAIN WEAVE: The simplest interlacing of warp and weft.

PRAYER RUG: A rug with a representation of mosque or arched prayer area. Columns may be shown supporting the arch with a lamp hanging from the arch's apex.

SOU MAK: A flatweave rug made from a technique that produces a herringbone effect.

TAPESTRY WEAVE: Any variety of weaves where the pattern is created by ground wefts that do not run from end to end.

TURKISH KNOT: Tied around two adjacent warp threads.

WARP: Comprising the structure, parallel warp yarns run the length of the rug and are interlaced with wefts.

WEFT: The yarns woven horizontally through the warps.

WEFT-FACED: A rug where the weft yarns are more closely spaced than the warps.



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The hand-made Oriental rug is not simply a work of art, but a journey in time and space to an ancient realm of beauty and mystical charm. No other art form bridges so many centuries, spans so many cultures, and captivates so many people as that of the Oriental rug. Iran, India, China, Pakistan, Turkey, Nepal, Afghanistan, Rumania, Russia and Armenia are the countries from whose talented artisans come these truly exquisite creations. From the famous Pazyrk carpet, discovered in a



STEEL COMBS

2,500 year old Siberian burial site, to the most contemporary utilizing modern designs, these woven treasures represent centuries of the most exquisite artistry and meticulous craftsmanship. And remarkably, the method of creations has remained relatively unchanged for over two millennia.

The process begins by shearing only the finest sheep's wool, then washed free of lanolin. It is then "carded," to straighten the fibers, then spun. Next it is dyed in giant boiling vats as many as twenty times by master dyers, then hung to dry. Indeed, each part in the process is considered an art in itself.

Rug designs are inspired by the world surrounding the artisans, both contemporary and historic. Gardens, mountains, forests, shrines, hunting grounds and animals all play a part in the rugmaker's vision. But many contemporary images may also be found. It is not unusual to see a war scene, a Mondrian, Miro, Kandinsky or a re-introduction of a famous design period such as Art Deco, Nouveau, Aubusson, Savonnerie or Arts & Crafts.

In villages and cities, each design is methodically reproduced to scale on a paper graph called a "cartoon" from which the weavers construct the rug, one knot at a time.

Nomads, on the other hand, do not use cartoons, but their remarkable designs are woven from memory and have been passed down generation to generation.

The weaver then begins a painstaking job that will take months, if not years, to complete. Using their design as a constant reference, the weaver builds the rug from thousands, often times millions of individually tied knots made with the help of a loom.

The loom has remained largely unchanged over the centuries. The most primitive forms are the nomadic or horizontal designed with easy portability in mind. Village and city rug making utilize the vertical loom, consisting of two vertical beams, comprising the rug's width, called the "warp" threads.

The warp threads, which usually are made of cotton or wool yarns, are tightly stretched along the length of the loom. In a pile rug, pieces of differently colored woolen yarn are nimbly "knotted" around each pair of warp threads. As each row of knots is completed, weft threads are inserted across the width of the loom and a new row is begun. The weft and the warp thereby make up the hidden foundation of the rug and the knots create the pile and the pattern. Typically there are two types of knots — the Turkish and the Persian.

An average weaver can tie between ten and fourteen thousand of these in a day, amounting to roughly one or two inches of woven carpet

between several weavers working together. Two weavers can complete an 8' x 10' carpet of 250 knot per square inch in approximately five to six months.

After several rows of knots have been tied, a metal comb is used to beat and compress the knots. Weaving threads produce an irregular pile, which is then trimmed evenly with scissors. After the long and arduous work of the weaving is completed, the rug is cut from the loom. The extra threads remain unknotted and form the fringe. A flat-weave or kilim is tied to secure the knots at both ends. The rug is thoroughly washed, dried and then sheared one last time to even out the pile. It is then ready to ship to customers worldwide. Yet, in the end, few people have a true appreciation of the meticulous, labor-intensive process that has gone into making their own unique work of art.

We hope this information has served to stimulate your appreciation of this truly incredible art form and that you will further explore its vast treasures. In doing so, we are sure you will soon discover that beneath the beauty, elegance, craftsmanship and artistry, the Oriental rug is an experience, a journey to another time and place, a captivating feast for the senses that lasts a lifetime and beyond.



NOMADIC LOOM



◀ HAND-DYEING THE YARNS