

Small Stories



The Netherlands

These wooden clogs come from a small island in the Netherlands called Marken. Before a man got married, he carved clogs with beautiful designs for his bride.

Carved clogs
Marken, Netherlands, late 19th century
BSM P86.251



Turkey

This bowl and matching silver sandals, or nalin, was a wedding present given to a bride in Turkey 100 years ago. Silver costs a lot of money, so this was precious gift.

Silver nalin and bowl
Istanbul, Turkey, c. 1900
BSM P89.240



Sweden

Some brides in Sweden wore shoes like these. Notice that the heel is in the middle of the sole, not at the back. The bride had to walk by putting her toes down first rather than her heels, because of the way her shoes were made.

Leather shoes with inset birch bark heels
Sweden, c. 1795-1820
BSM P83.167



France

In France, a man would carve these wooden clogs and give them to his fiancé on Christmas Eve to show how much he loved her. This clog was carved from one piece of wood and is decorated with nails that form a heart.

Decorated wooden clog
Ariege, France, early 20th century
BSM P86.66



Malaysia

Some people in Malaysia originally came from China, and brought their traditions with them. Young girls learned how to make and decorate shoes, just like they would have in China. The groom's family made sure that a woman was good at making beautiful shoes before they would let their son marry her.

Beaded mules
Malacca Straits, Malaysia
BSM P79.93



Morocco

Moroccan brides wore babouches made of beautiful fabrics, with lots of decoration on them. Notice the special pink lining.

Pair of embroidered wedding babouche
Morocco, 1950
BSM P79.673



Saami

The Saami live in the most northern parts of Norway, Sweden, and Finland. Traditionally, white reindeer fur boots with curled toes were worn by both the bride and groom. This pair was made for a man and is decorated with colourful pompoms.

White reindeer fur boots
Anar, Finland, c. 1990
BSM P00.19



Zuni

The Zuni live in the southwestern United States. Traditionally, a Zuni groom had to make the wedding boots his bride would wear at the wedding. The pieces of white deerskin wrap around her legs and would be tied on with thin strips of leather.

Southwestern United States, mid- 20th
century
BSM S80.1402