



TEN THOUSAND
VILLAGES



About the Artisans

Asha Handicrafts Association

Asha, which means “hope” in Sanskrit, was started by professionals responding to the abject poverty of artisans, the problem of exploitative middlemen, and the disappearance of many traditional crafts. Asha’s work has encouraged the growth of cottage industries, assisting once-impoorished individuals and families towards self-sufficiency. Today, Asha works with over 6,500 artisans in India. Benefits to artisans include marketing, design consultancy, product development, advances, interest-free loans, savings programs, medical care, and educational scholarships, uniforms, and books for children. Training is given at the local level on such issues as AIDS, family planning, addictions, domestic violence and gender discrimination, as well as seminars related to business management skills. Asha empowers women by promoting products made by women and women also hold positions of authority and responsibility within the organization.

Perfectly Paisley Tablecloth

Blue, intricate and paisley, this rectangular tablecloth is perfect for any season. Block printing is a labour-intensive method of hand-printing fabric. Artisans imprint the cloth with hand-carved wooden blocks, stamping the cloth left to right, and repeating to complete all patterns and colours. From Asha Handicrafts in India. Asha means “Hope” in Sanskrit.



Special Details:

Lengths of cotton are washed and whacked on stone slabs in the river to soften the fibres. The cloth is then spread on the ground to bleach under the hot sun before being soaked in a solution made from myrabalan flowers and milk. This enables the dyes to bond with the cotton fibres.

Meanwhile, a master carver painstakingly creates the delicate design carved into teak blocks for printing. The wood blocks are dipped in an alum and water solution and pounded onto the cloth, leaving the design on the fabric. This alum will bond to the dye when the cloth is sent for colour boiling. Each colour is block printed separately, and the cloth is washed, colour-boiled and dried between each printing.

All-natural materials are purchased from forest gatherers who collect bark, leaves, flowers and roots to make the dyes. An optional finishing step involves either hand painting additional designs, or yellow-painting with a traditional mustard-yellow paint made from myrabalan flower petals and pomegranate peels.

Materials:

cotton

Product Care:

Do not soak. Wash separately 30 degrees gentle cycle. Use mild detergents. Remove promptly. Do not bleach. Dry in shade. Medium heat ironing. Excess colour may run in first wash. Long exposure to strong light may cause colour variation. Store dark colours separately.

Travel the world with each visit to [Ten Thousand Villages](http://TenThousandVillages.com).

Learn how Fair Trade really makes a difference. Our goal is to provide vital, fair income to artisans by marketing their handicrafts and telling their stories in North America. Ten Thousand Villages sells product from more than 30 countries, providing work for nearly 60,000 people around the world.

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