



The babouche

- The babouche

Babouche / belgha is an authentic craft product, it was associated with the manufacture of leather products, the job that has made the prosperity of the city of Fez for a long time. The artisans have contributed, thanks to their intelligence and the extent of their imagination, to beautify the babouche Fassi again and again. Belgha is unisex. On the other hand, the male version remained, for several years, trapped in unchanged colors and shapes: yellow, gray and white, while that for women could be broken down into colors and shapes that took into account femininity and the elegance of the ladies.

The babouche is called "belgha" because the person who wears it reaches its objectives (yabloughou belgha synonymous arabic of the verb to reach). When you offer a babouche to someone, it means that you want him long life and the fulfillment of his wishes in life.

The babouche fassie is recognizable at its pointed end, the one with the best quality is called "Dahria" in reference to the central piece of the skin with which it is made. It has managed to retain its value in the composition of the traditional dress worn during festivals and religious occasions, or even everyday. And this thanks to the tenacity and uniqueness of the work of the artisan fassi because he knew how to combine aesthetics with good quality in the making of babouche.

- The Cherbil

Cherbil is a traditional shoe embroidered with gold or silk threads and various colors, one of the oldest shoes reserved for women of North Africa. One historian attributed the origin of the word "Cherbil" to the time of Andalusia because of the harmony and coherence that connected him to the caftan at this time. Especially since it is a symbolic reference to women, because when the man wanted to talk about a woman, he did not name it explicitly, but said "MoulatEch-cherbil" synonymous with the owner of cherbil, a description of the wise woman, with a respectable social standing and a good reputation.

The value and symbolism of the "cherbilfassi" in Moroccan women comes from the Fassi traditions, which require the groom to send his wife a certain number of traditional shoes, of which the noble cherbil constitutes the center piece.



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Although the cherbil has freed itself from the established forms, it has not changed the materials used in its manufacture even when it meets the most recent lines of fashion. The craftsmen have added heels to the original cherbil to adapt to all women, they introduced modern fabrics such as suede, mlifa (a mix of cashmere and wool), velvet and even jeans. It was decorated with some accessories, metal parts, silk buttons to meet the requirements of fashion ready-to-wear.

The manufacture of all types of babouches (belgha and cherbil) is subject to the same steps. It is to the tannery that begins the process of making belghas like other handicrafts that depend essentially on the skins in their manufacture. There are tanned skins of cows and goats and dyed in the colors most requested by the Moroccan craftsmen of the profession. Once the craftsman has received sufficient quantities of skins, he begins cutting them in his workshop following precise dimensions and shapes corresponding to the traditional models of belghas and cherbils. The craftsman applies to draw shapes and embellish the front of the leather babouche to give it a special elegance and make a work of art that will characterize the traditional Moroccan dress. However, the craftsman of the babouche does not see his role completed until he sewed the different parts by connecting them to the base of a thick leather sole, called "farasha" synonymous with butterfly. Once the assembly and the sewing of the babouche accomplished, the craftsmen put it in a mold which they commonly call "qarrass" according to the different forms and sizes.

The manufacture of a belgha requires a whole day during which the craftsman needs to retire to his workshop and start the process by cutting and polishing it to make it a precious piece considering the quality of its manufacture and its ornaments.

While making a cherbil requires five days of hard work. It is made of natural leather and adorned with two colors: gold and silver. There is also the cherbil silk, whose manufacture does not require much time because it is embroidered slightly but with bright colors. There is also another type of cherbils made with special fabrics and crocodile and snake skins, often ordered by wealthy women.

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That said, the cherbil of Fez remains the most popular product among women because it is distinguished by its workmanship and pretty embroidery. Especially since among all other cherbils, it is the most expensive at the national level.

The city of Fez is the hub of the most skilled artisans, the same ones who produce dozens of pieces through their workshop. However, the sale of most of the production is done in the traditional souk as is the tradition through an intermediary "broker crier". The latter transfers them from the craftsmen to the trader according to the need and the purchasing power.

The city of Fes remains the market par excellence of belghas and cherbils, as an authentic traditional product, and the main source of all Moroccan cities and even other African countries.



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