

Traditional handicraft day in the Erzgebirge **Experience old-fashioned craftsmanship afresh**

A diverse array of handicrafts, which may well be unparalleled throughout the world, has developed over many centuries in the Erzgebirge. These evolved as a result of the silver mining that took place for more than 800 years.

Handicraft in the Erzgebirge

The first things that often come to mind when thinking of handicraft in the Erzgebirge are wood turning, woodcarving and bobbin lace-making. This is seen in products such as nutcrackers, incense burner figurines and pyramids – pieces of art that are closely associated with this endearing mid-range mountain region.

It is precisely these three handicraft traditions that are repeatedly mentioned by visitors, and not least because they represent the allure of the Erzgebirge as a "Christmas region".

Few people know that the handicraft tradition in the Erzgebirge is much more diverse than this, and cannot merely be reduced to woodcarving, bobbin lace-making and wood turning.

Unique Erzgebirge

With an offering that cannot be found anywhere else in Germany, the Erzgebirge as a holiday destination has really taken this topic on board. The Tourismusverband Erzgebirge e.V. has been holding a traditional handicraft day every year since 2000, on the third Sunday in October. And this is not just a "standard" handicraft market – the concept, which was developed alongside the craftsmen involved, provides unique experiences for the visitors.

The craftsmen involved open up their workshops on this day and allow visitors a glance behind the scenes. The value creation process, beginning with raw materials and resulting in the finished, saleable product can thus be experienced close up.

Annual participant figures of around 150 craftsmen, associations and companies, and ever increasing visitor numbers testify to the success of this concept. Around 50 different industries and trades offer guests an interesting and diverse range of attractions every year. The traditional

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handicraft day has become a permanent fixture on the events schedule in the Erzgebirge and has an impact far beyond the region's borders.

Artistic handicraft - it's better to have the original

What makes traditional handicrafts expensive is the work that is performed manually. Here too there is a certain "Aha effect" that is evident when visitors experience the many methods involved in the production process, thus establishing a balance between the appreciation for the work involved and the price of the finished product. It is precisely this disassociation from industrial, mass-produced goods that is of central importance to the lovingly produced, one-off pieces made by master craftsmen using traditional methods.

An experience for everyone

Children, young people, families or the 'over-50s' are delighted by this event, especially the chance to try out handicraft activities for themselves. For example, the chance to work the glowing iron with the blacksmith's hammer, to blow a glass marble, to guide the iron when wood-turning or to carve a 'Spanbaum' (chiselled wooden tree). There is a rather unique atmosphere in the workshops, which is created by the master craftsman himself and is different to the normal Monday to Friday atmosphere. Here people chat, marvel and talk shop - traditional handicrafts simply make for a wonderful experience.

A competition in which only the visitors to the workshops can participate, rounds off the event each year. Numerous valuable prizes that are available to the participants are raffled in the competition, with raffle tickets distributed by the craftsmen.

Look and marvel, take part and share the experience: welcome to the traditional handicraft day in the Erzgebirge - The Ore Mountains Experience!