

Dreamcatchers

Dreamcatchers are a very popular Indigenous symbol that has become popular even in non-Indigenous culture; you can find them in many markets and souvenir shops across Canada.

Where do they come from?

The Ojibwe, an Indigenous people who live in Canada and the United States, originally created dreamcatchers. In Ojibwe culture, spiders are viewed as protectors. Before the Ojibwe people spread out in North America, Spider Woman would weave webs by the beds of all children to capture the rays of the sun. As the Ojibwe people spread out, Spider Woman could not reach every child, so mothers and grandmothers began to make dreamcatchers in memory of this.

How are they made?

Dreamcatchers were traditionally made using a wooden hoop and sinew, with beads and feathers added to some designs. Now, they often use string or strips of leather instead of sinew. The string is woven around the hoop, in a design similar to a spider web. Beads are sometimes placed at random points throughout the design. The feathers are used to decorate the dreamcatcher, and are usually placed hanging from the hoop.

What do they symbolize?

Dreamcatchers symbolize many things! The hoop symbolizes strength and unity because its circular shape has no beginning and no end. Some people believe the beads catch bad dreams, which disappear when the sun shines on them. Many dreamcatchers connect the string to the hoop at eight points, to symbolize the legs of Spider Woman. The feathers may represent breath or air, and are also helpful for entertaining babies, who dreamcatchers were initially made for. Dreamcatchers are usually placed over your bed, keeping you safe from bad dreams!

