

Design Resource

Kilta Making - Himachal Pradesh

Bamboo Basket

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/kilta-making-himachal-pradesh>



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2. Tools and Raw Materials
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Introduction

Himachal Pradesh is a state in India located in Northern India. Himachal Pradesh is famous for its natural beauty, hill stations, and temples. Many perennial rivers flow in the state, and numerous hydroelectric projects are set up. Hydroelectric power projects, tourism, and agriculture form important parts of the state's economy. Himachal Pradesh's history dates to the Indus valley civilization that flourished between 2250 and 1750 BCE. Tribes such as the Koili, Hali, Dagi, Dhaugri, Dasa, Khasa, Kinnar, and Kirat inhabited the region from the prehistoric era. Himachal Pradesh was ruled by many kingdoms such as the Delhi sultanate, Rajputs, Mughals, Kingdom of Gorkha, British, etc., during various periods in the past. Tourism is the primary source of income. With its diverse and beautiful Himalayan landscapes, the mountainous state attracts tourists from all over the world. The state has many important pilgrimage centers with prominent Hindu temples. Himachal Pradesh is well known for its handicrafts. The carpets, leather works, shawls, Kangra paintings, Chamba rumals, metalware, woodwork, and paintings are worth appreciating.

There is a significant variation that occurs in the climatic conditions of the Himachal due to extreme change in elevation. Snowfall is common in mountainous tracts generally above 2,200 meters. The state has a high diversity of medicinal and aromatic plants. Lahaul-Spiti region of the state, being a cold desert, supports unique plants of medicinal value, including *Ferula Jaeschkeana*, *Hyoscyamus Niger*, *Lancea Tibetica*, and *Saussurea Bracteata*. It is also known as the fruit bowl of India. Various wildflowers like gladiolas, carnations, marigolds, roses, chrysanthemums, tulips, and lilies are carefully cultivated. The cultivated fruits and flowers are carried using a basket locally known as "Kilta". A Kilta is a traditional basket, which has been in use since time immemorial for carrying produce. It is made up of bamboo, which is locally grown. Artisan Mr. Jalfu Ram from Banala village, Kullu district, HP, is a native who is residing in the region makes baskets for his use.

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Kilta making artisan and his family.



Kilta is generally used to carry farming things.



A cone-shaped basket made of a local species of bamboo called Nargal.



An old lady carrying Kilta basket.

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Tools and Raw Materials

The tools and raw materials that are used for making of Kilta are as follows:

- **Bamboo:** Main and only source of material used in the making of the basket.
- **Knife:** It is used to split and cut the bamboo during the making process and is locally known as Chakku.



The bamboo sticks are dried to make them tough.



Sickle and Knife are used for cutting and splitting the bamboo.

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Making Process

Kilta is made using bamboo, which is locally available. Different types of bamboo plants like Nargal and Toong are used in basket making. Bamboo, which is 3-4 years old, is cut down from the nearby forests, and the leaves are stripped using a knife known as Chakku. The bamboo is split and cut into the required length and width, depending on the size of the basket. The size of the bamboo strip is around half to one and half-inch in width and four to six feet in length. Splitting is done manually with the help of the knife. For making the base, thick bamboo strips are circularly arranged on the ground in such a way that the mid-point of the bamboo sticks (across the length) are touching each other. Thin strips are weaved by overlapping the base strips. The weaving happens from the bottom of the basket and progresses upwards. The technique used to weave the baskets varies according to the type of basket woven. Baskets like Dhalara, Chabdi, etc., are made using bamboo strips. Techniques like coiling, interlacing, and plaiting are commonly used in making these baskets. Once the weaving is complete, the ends are folded inwards and locked. The basket is ready for use. Women weavers make items for domestic use throughout the year.

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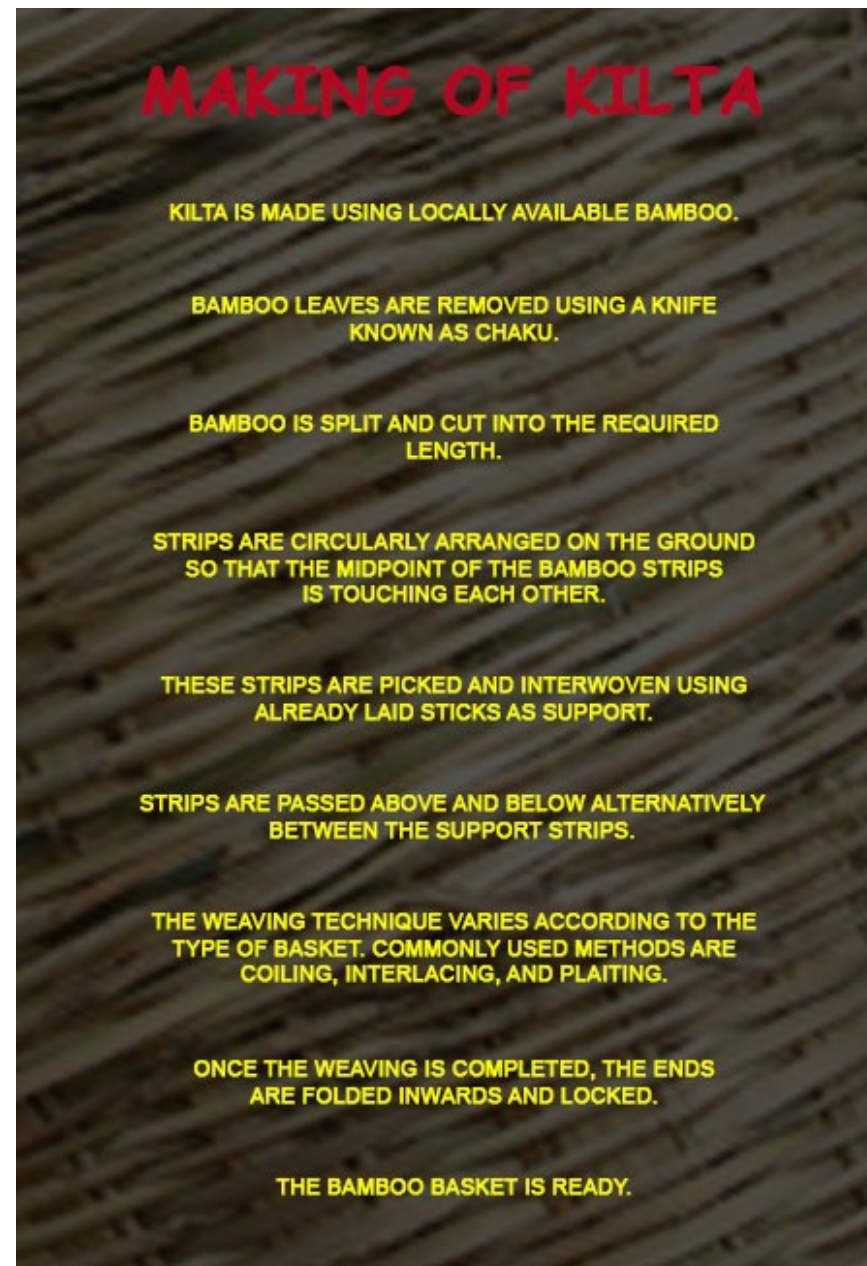
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Flow Chart:



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Nargal is a local species of bamboo.



The bamboo strips are cut into strips for Kilta making.



The strips are arranged in a circular fashion in order to start weaving.

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The bamboo strips are soaked in water to retain moisture and to get flexibility while weaving.



Once the base is weaved the strips are folded to weave the sidewalls of the basket.

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Two varieties of grass are used in the local basketry, the thick Toong, and the thin Nargal.



Likewise the sticks are weaved evenly right next to each other making the basket firm.



Artisan building the walls of the basket or Kilta which gives strength to the Kilta.



The edges of the sticks are folded and given a finishing look.

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Products

Kilta baskets are a part of the daily lives of the people of Himachal Pradesh. These are used since ancient times. These baskets are being approximately three feet in height and can be made in a day or two. The price of the Kilta ranges between INR100 to INR250.



A finished bamboo basket is used for many purposes.



Kilta is usually made in different sizes as per the requirement.

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Video



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Contact Details

This documentation was done by Prof. Bibhudutta Baral at [NID, Bengaluru](#).

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