

Cil û Bergên Kurdî: An Ethnographic Study of Kurdish Traditional Clothing

1. Introduction: The Cultural Emblem of Kurdish Attire

Kurdish traditional clothing, known in Kurdish as *جِل و بێرگی کوردی* (*Cil û bergên kurdî*), stands as a profound and visually striking manifestation of Kurdish identity, heritage, and cultural pride.¹ These garments are far more than utilitarian articles of dress; they function as a rich visual lexicon, communicating intricate details about belonging, historical narratives, and deeply ingrained social values.³ The diverse array of styles, colors, and embellishments found across the various regions of Kurdistan reflects the varied geography, distinct tribal affiliations, and unique local customs that characterize the Kurdish homeland.¹ Indeed, it is often said that one can discern a Kurd's specific region of origin simply by observing their attire, underscoring the profound connection between clothing and locality.⁸ Beyond regional distinctions, Kurdish dress plays a crucial role in unifying the Kurdish community, fostering a sense of collective identity, particularly during significant cultural celebrations such as Newroz (the Kurdish New Year) and within the global Kurdish diaspora.² The very act of donning traditional Kurdish clothing, especially in diasporic settings or in regions where Kurdish cultural expression has faced historical suppression or prohibition⁸, transforms into a powerful, performative assertion of identity and resilience. This choice to wear traditional garments becomes an active participation in cultural preservation and a testament to the enduring spirit of the Kurdish people, as evidenced by the renewed interest and pride in these attires among Kurdish communities worldwide.²

2. Historical Trajectory and Enduring Significance

The history of Kurdish attire is deeply interwoven with the ancient past of the Kurdish people and their ancestral lands.

Ancient Roots and Historical Mentions

Evidence suggests that Kurdish clothing traditions extend back to antiquity, with notable similarities and potential influences from the attire of the Median and Achaemenid empires.¹⁰ The distinctive Median hat, or *Kumê Medan*, is frequently cited as an ancient precursor that continues to inform the design of modern Kurdish headwear.¹⁰ One of the earliest explicit written descriptions of Kurds possessing a particular mode of dress comes from the 13th-century historian Ibn Khallikan, who noted that Kurds wore clothing made of cotton and a specific type of head covering known as a *mandil* hat.¹ Furthermore, historical depictions found on ancient inscriptions and in writings from preceding centuries portray men and women in distinctly Kurdish garments. Many Achaemenid-era images, for instance, feature Median soldiers and commanders adorned in attire that is widely considered ancestral to later

Kurdish styles.¹¹ Some researchers even propose that the historical lineage of Kurdish clothing can be traced as far back as 4,000 years.¹²

Evolution and Adaptation

Throughout its long history, Kurdish clothing has undergone a process of evolution. While historical accounts suggest that earlier forms of Kurdish dress were often more complex and varied, they have, over time, evolved into somewhat simpler, though no less distinctive, forms.¹ Despite these transformations, particularly those occurring after the Qajar and Ottoman periods—an era which notably saw an expansion in the variety of available fabrics—Kurdish clothing has remarkably retained its "authenticity" and continues to be regarded by the Kurdish people as a potent symbol of their "sovereign history".¹¹

The unique and often challenging geography of Kurdistan, characterized by its mountainous terrain and cold climate, such as in the Zagros Mountains, has exerted a significant influence on clothing design. A prime example of this adaptation is the practical and widespread use of the *shalpish*, a substantial sash or waistband, which provides essential warmth and serves various utilitarian purposes.¹⁰ The materials used in crafting these garments also narrate a story of historical trade patterns and economic shifts. The traditional reliance on locally sourced materials like sheep wool and goat leather, indicative of pastoral lifestyles⁵, gradually gave way to a broader array of imported fabrics, including silk, velvet, and later, synthetics. This transition, particularly noticeable after the Qajar and Ottoman periods¹¹, signals increased interaction with global trade networks and evolving economic landscapes, as evidenced by the historical introduction of items like the "Meccan scarf" and the "Saddama zera dress" from Arab countries.¹³

Cultural Significance

Kurdish clothing serves as an undeniable and powerful symbol of national identity, clearly distinguishing Kurds from other populations in the region.² It is widely considered a cornerstone of Kurdish culture, holding a place of importance equivalent to that of the Kurdish language and traditional customs.¹⁰ These garments are worn with particular prominence during festivals and special occasions, most notably during Newroz, weddings, and other communal gatherings, where they signify celebration, cultural continuity, and collective joy.¹ Historically, the quality and quantity of jewelry adorning a woman, often an integral part of her traditional attire, could also serve as an indicator of her societal status, although this practice is reported to be less prevalent in contemporary times in some areas.⁸

The overarching narrative of Kurdish clothing is one of dynamic continuity. While it has adapted to incorporate new materials and has undergone some simplification in form, the core elements, practical considerations, and profound symbolic value have been fiercely preserved, often in the face of significant external pressures and attempts at cultural suppression. This resilience suggests a conscious and collective effort to maintain cultural boundaries and historical narratives through the enduring medium of dress. The deep historical roots, exemplified by links to Achaemenid-era attire, combined with its vibrant

contemporary celebration, particularly during Newroz, highlight a long and unbroken, yet constantly evolving, cultural thread.

3. A Mosaic of Styles: Regional Variations in Kurdish Dress

A defining characteristic of Kurdish traditional clothing is its remarkable regional diversity, which often allows for the identification of an individual's specific area of origin within Kurdistan.¹ These variations are the product of a complex interplay of factors, including local geography, prevailing climate conditions, distinct tribal customs, and historical interactions with neighboring cultures. This regional specificity, particularly evident in women's attire where outfits are frequently named after cities or regions (e.g., Mahabadi, Suleimani, Hawleri¹⁴), acts as a living, wearable map of Kurdish cultural geography. Such detailed differentiation suggests the historical presence of strong, localized craft traditions and perhaps a deliberate maintenance of local markers of identity, possibly with limited inter-regional style exchange in earlier periods.

Northern Kurdish Clothing (e.g., parts of Turkey, Syria)

Attire from the northern regions of Kurdistan is often characterized by its tight-fitting nature, bearing resemblances to rural Turkish and Balkan costumes.¹ For men, trousers typically feature tight lower legs and a loose, baggy crotch section. Neck scarves and waistcoats worn over shirts are common elements. Headgear in these regions varies, with options including loosely wound turbans or simple skullcaps.¹

Central Kurdish Clothing (e.g., Iraqi Kurdistan, parts of Iran - Sorani-speaking regions)

This region is known for distinct styles for both men and women:

- **Şal û Şapik (for men):** This ensemble is widely recognized in Iraqi Kurdistan, southern Turkish Kurdistan (particularly Hakkari province), and the Urmia Plain in Iran.¹ It comprises a fitted, collarless jacket that is open to the waist, designed to be tucked into gathered trousers that flare distinctively at the ankle. The suit is often intricately embroidered, with color palettes ranging from striped browns and creams to self-colored stripes. A white shirt with characteristic funnel sleeves, which are often wound around the outside of the jacket arms, is a typical accompaniment, along with a substantial sash. Men's headwear usually consists of a turban meticulously coiled around a skullcap.¹
- **Sorani Dress (predominantly for women):** This is a widely worn and iconic style. It includes trousers and a petticoat worn beneath a floor-length dress featuring funnel-shaped sleeves. Over this base layer, a short waistcoat, a long coat (often referred to as a *Kawa* or *Xiftan*), and/or a short jacket are worn.¹ Traditional materials for the dress include chiffon voile or cotton, while velvets and brocades are favored for the

outerwear components.¹

Southern Kurdish Clothing (e.g., Peshmerga attire)

The style prevalent in southern Kurdistan has become widely adopted as a standard Kurdish costume across various regions, partly due to its association with the Peshmerga. This attire includes baggy trousers that are gathered at the waist and tapered at the ankle. The accompanying jacket is similar in cut to the Central Kurdish style but often lacks elaborate embroidery. These suits are typically found in solid colors, sometimes with subtle pinstripes. A sash of varying length and width is worn around the waist, and headgear varies by region but commonly includes a skullcap and a large, fringed square scarf worn as a turban.¹

Mukriyani Costume (Mahabad, Saqqez in Iran)

The Mukriyani costume, found in the region around Mahabad and Saqqez in Iranian Kurdistan, is notably distinct from other Kurdish styles.¹ For women, it features more voluminous trousers (worn without cotton tops, unlike some other styles) paired with a short vest top under a sheer, straight-sleeved dress that is gathered at the hips. A large sash is characteristically worn on the hips, complemented by a waist-length coat. Traditional women's headgear in this style includes a decorated velvet or brocade pillbox hat, which is then topped with a large triangular shawl (likely a *Desmal* or *Charuke*) crossed over the chest, with the ends hanging elegantly down the back.¹ Detailed accounts of Mukriyan women's clothing highlight Sablaghian and Mangurayati sub-styles, noting loose-fitting designs influenced by Islamic traditions, and colors that vividly reflect nature and specific occasions. Fabric names such as "The eyes of partridge" and "Pomegranate flowers" underscore this intimate connection with the natural environment.¹³

Badinani or Hakkari Costume (Southern Turkish Kurdistan, Badinan region of Iraqi Kurdistan, Urmia in Iran)

Women's attire in the Badinani or Hakkari style features the customary trousers and a plain, above-knee underdress or petticoat. This is worn under a typically sheer dress characterized by a gathered waist and flowing funnel sleeves. A long-sleeved coat with a wide scoop front, fastening at the waist, is worn over the dress. This coat is accompanied by a wide gathered skirt that notably does not meet at the front. The dress is seldom worn without the accompanying coat, and the long sleeves of the dress are often tied behind the back.¹

Hawrami Attire (Men)

The men's attire from the Hawraman region is particularly notable for the inclusion of the *Faranji*, a distinctive felted wool vest. This garment is ingeniously designed to provide warmth during the cold winter months and offer a cooling effect in the summer.¹⁴

East Anatolian (Women)

In East Anatolian regions, women's traditional dress typically includes the characteristic baggy

trousers worn under a knee-length dress. This ensemble is often worn in layers with aprons, all showcasing a variety of colors. The trousers are usually constructed with cotton at the top, lined with cotton, and gathered at the ankle. A sash is worn at the waist, along with a short jacket, though sometimes a long coat is also seen as part of this regional style.¹

The adaptation of certain clothing elements from neighboring cultures, such as the Arab *abaya* in some parts of Western Kurdistan¹⁵ or the discernible Arab stylistic influences in the women's dress of Sulaimania¹⁸, alongside the steadfast preservation of distinctly Kurdish features, illustrates a culture that is both receptive to external influences and simultaneously resolute in maintaining its core identity. This selective adoption, rather than wholesale replacement of traditional forms, points to a nuanced and dynamic process of cultural exchange and self-definition.

4. Traditional Attire for Kurdish Men

Kurdish men's traditional clothing is a complex ensemble that reflects practicality, regional identity, and cultural heritage. The garments are designed for a range of activities, from daily agricultural work to ceremonial occasions, and are adapted to the diverse climatic conditions of Kurdistan. The practicality of men's clothing, designed for freedom of movement², suitability for farming¹¹, and adaptability to varying weather (e.g., the *Faranji* for temperature regulation¹⁴; sheepskin coats for cold¹⁵), is a consistent theme, mirroring the traditional lifestyles prevalent in many Kurdish communities.

Core Garments

- **Sharwal (Pants/Trousers):** The foundational lower garment, *sharwal*, are typically loose and baggy, often tapering towards the ankles.¹ Regional variations are notable: northern styles may feature tight lower legs with a very loose, baggy crotch¹; central Kurdish *Şal û Şapik* includes gathered trousers that flare to the ankle¹; and southern versions are baggy, gathered at the waist, and tapered at the ankle.¹ The term *Pantol* is also used to refer to these trousers.¹¹
- **Kurtak / Kawa / Chokha (Jacket/Coat):** Several terms denote the upper body garment. *Kurtak* often refers to a matching jacket worn with the *sharwal*.¹⁴ *Kawa* is a more general term for a jacket or coat¹¹; in the *Şal û Şapik* ensemble, the *kawa* is a distinctive fitted, collarless jacket that is open to the waist.¹ *Chokha* is the jacket component of the *Rank u Choghal* outfit.¹¹ Other terms like *Dekhun* and *Sorani* likely refer to specific types of jackets or outerwear¹¹, and *Mraxani* denotes a matching jacket.¹⁷
- **Kras (Shirt):** Worn beneath the jacket or vest, the *kras* is typically a dress shirt, often plain or white.¹ The central Kurdish style is characterized by a white shirt with prominent funnel sleeves.¹
- **Pishten / Shal / Sash (Waistband):** A significant element is the large belt or sash tied around the waist, known by various names including *Pshtwen*, *Pshten*, *Shalpisht*, *Kemar*,

*Pestand, Shella, Shellema, or Shutk.*¹ These sashes can be very substantial and elaborately tied, traditionally serving as a place to store small personal items.¹ The *shalpisht*, in particular, is linked to the geography of the Zagros Mountains, highlighting its functional importance for warmth and support.¹⁰

Named Ensembles

Several named ensembles define specific traditional looks for Kurdish men:

- **Rank u Choghal / Rank-o-Chokha:** Considered the main traditional dress for men, this ensemble consists of a jacket (*Chokha*) and wide trousers (*Rank*).¹¹
- **Kurtak u Sharwal:** This term refers to an outfit comprising a matching jacket (*Kurtak*) and trousers (*Sharwal*).¹⁴
- **Şal û Şapik:** The characteristic Central Kurdish style, detailed above, known for its flared trousers and fitted jacket.¹
- Other named outfits include **Star Xani, Kattafa, Mirad Xani, Badini, and Hawrami.**¹⁴ *Mirad Xani* is specifically mentioned as a distinct outfit style.¹⁴
- In the Amuda region, **Peshm and Pirqez** refer to a jacket and trousers of the same color, typically broad and loose in cut.⁵

Headwear

Men's headwear is diverse and carries significant cultural meaning:

- **Jamana / Jamadani / Pushi:** These terms refer to a head kerchief or a patterned fabric head cover.⁵ The colors and style of tying the *jamana* can indicate the wearer's region or tribal affiliation. For example, the Barzani tribe is known for a red-checked *kufiya* (a type of *jamana*), while Yezidi men may wear a similar red-checked version but tied inside out.¹⁵
- **Klaw (Skullcap):** A skullcap, often worn alone or as a base under a turban or kerchief.¹ *Klaw Mshki* is a specific term for a type of skullcap.¹¹
- **Turban:** Consists of a length of cloth wrapped around a skullcap or, less commonly, a fez. Turban styles vary significantly by region. Turkish Kurds, for example, are known for wearing extra-large turbans, while Mukri and Rawanduz Kurds traditionally wear smaller turbans with fringes that conceal the sides of the face.¹ The *mandil* hat, mentioned in early historical accounts, was an early form of turban.¹
- **Fez (Tarbush):** While less common as standalone headwear today, the fez has historically been used, often serving as a base for winding a turban.¹⁵

Footwear

- **Klash (Giveh):** The most iconic traditional footwear for Kurdish men are *klash*, which are white cloth shoes, often meticulously handmade.¹⁴ Worsted shoes have also been documented as part of traditional attire.¹⁸

Accessories & Outerwear

- **Faranji (or Pastak, Kulla ball):** A distinctive vest made of felted wool, particularly characteristic of Hawrami men's attire. It is valued for its ability to provide warmth in winter and a cooling effect in summer.¹¹ A sleeveless, thick felt waistcoat is also typical of southern Kurdish attire.¹⁸
- **Puzawana:** These are wool leg warmers, providing additional protection against the cold.¹¹
- **Daggers/Swords:** Historically, daggers or swords were often tucked into the sash, signifying status and readiness.⁸
- **Yelek:** A sleeveless vest that can be worn either under or over the main jacket, or sometimes in place of it.¹⁵
- **Zbun and Abaya:** In western Kurdistan, some men wear long robes such as the *zbun*, sometimes combined with an *abaya* of Arab origin.¹⁵
- Shepherds and farmers in certain regions also wear practical outerwear like sheepskin or large felt coats to protect them from harsh weather.¹⁵

Materials & Colors

Traditionally, men's clothing was crafted from materials like sheep wool and goat leather, reflecting the pastoral heritage and the need for durable, weather-resistant garments.⁵ Modern iterations may incorporate fabrics such as linen and baize.⁵ Compared to women's attire, the color palette for men's traditional clothing tends to be more subdued, often featuring black, grey, brown, white, or blue.⁸ However, ensembles like the *Şal û Şapik* can feature striped browns and creams.¹

Table: Key Garments in Men's Traditional Kurdish Attire

The following table summarizes the primary components of men's traditional Kurdish attire, their common names, typical materials, and notable regional variations or specific characteristics. This provides a structured overview of these essential elements.

Garment Name (Kurdish/Transliteration)	English Description	Typical Materials	Notable Regional Styles/Names	Snippet(s)
Sharwal, Pantol	Baggy trousers	Wool, cotton, linen, baize	Northern (tight lower leg), Central (flared), Southern (tapered)	¹
Kurtak, Kawa, Chokha, Mraxani, Dekhun	Jacket, coat	Wool, cotton, felt, modern fabrics	Şal û Şapik (fitted, collarless), Southern (less embroidery)	¹
Kras	Shirt	Cotton, linen	Central (white, funnel sleeves)	¹

Pishten, Shal, Pshtwen, Shalpisht, Kemar	Sash, waistband	Wool, cotton, silk	Often large, elaborately tied; Zagros (Shalpisht)	¹
Jamana, Jamadani, Pushi, Kufiya	Head kerchief	Cotton, silk	Barzani (red-checked), Yezidi (red-checked, inside out)	⁵
Klaw, Klaw Mshki	Skullcap	Cotton, felt, embroidered	Worn alone or under turban	¹
Faranji, Pastak, Kulla ball	Felted wool vest	Felted wool	Hawrami, Southern Kurdish (sleeveless, thick)	¹¹
Klash, Giveh	Cloth shoes	Cotton, worsted fabric	Often white, handmade	¹⁴
Puzawana	Wool leg warmers	Wool		¹¹

5. Traditional Attire for Kurdish Women

Kurdish women's traditional clothing is renowned for its vibrancy, intricate embellishments, and layered complexity, serving as a powerful expression of cultural identity and regional diversity. The elaborate nature of these garments, with their multiple layers, rich fabrics, dazzling colors, and extensive use of jewelry, suggests that female attire has traditionally functioned as a more prominent canvas for artistic expression and the display of wealth or status compared to the more subdued clothing of men.²

Core Garments

- **Kiras (Dress):** The centerpiece of the woman's ensemble is the *Kiras*, a long dress, typically reaching the floor.¹ It is often crafted from light, sheer, or diaphanous fabrics such as chiffon voile, silk, or fine cotton.¹ A defining feature of the *Kiras* is its long sleeves, which are frequently funnel-shaped or end in long, triangular points known as *Faqiana*. These sleeves can be exceptionally long and are often tied behind the back or wrapped around the arms.¹ The *Kiras* is typically adorned with embroidery, shimmering sequins, beads, and sometimes metallic pieces.¹ *Jli Kurdi* is another term used to refer to the traditional Kurdish dress.¹
- **Outerwear (worn over the Kiras):**
 - **Xiftan / Kaftan / Kawa (Coat/Robe):** This is a significant outer garment, often a long, flowing coat or robe, worn over the *Kiras*.¹ The terms appear to be used somewhat interchangeably or to describe variations of this outer layer. It is typically made from luxurious fabrics like velvet or brocade and can be heavily embroidered or embellished with sequins.¹ Online retailers often use terms like "Xeftan" or "Kaftan" when describing Kurdish dresses or their outer layers.¹⁹

- **Salta / Helak / Sukhma (Short Jacket/Vest):** A short jacket or vest, which can be sleeveless or have sleeves, is commonly worn over the *Kiras*.¹ These are often crafted from rich materials like velvet or brocade.¹
- **Undergarments:**
 - **Darpe / Sharwal (Trousers/Bloomers):** Baggy trousers or bloomers are worn under the *Kiras* for modesty and layering.¹ Women in the Mukriyan region are noted for wearing particularly voluminous trousers.¹
 - **Zher Kras / Petticoat / Underdress:** A long camisole, petticoat, or a plain underdress is worn beneath the main *Kiras*, providing opacity and adding to the layered look.¹

Distinctive Features & Accessories

- **Faqiana:** The long, triangular or funnel-shaped sleeve endings of the *Kiras* are a hallmark of Kurdish women's dress. They are often elaborately decorated and can be styled by tying them together or wrapping them individually around the arms.¹
- **Shal / Dasmal / Kulwana / Kollwana (Shawl/Cape/Cloth):** Various types of shawls and cloths are used.
 - *Dasmal:* A triangular piece of fabric, often sheer, that can be thrown over the shoulders.¹¹ In the Mukriyani style, a large triangular shawl forms a significant part of the headwear ensemble, worn over a pillbox hat.¹
 - *Shal:* A multipurpose cloth that can be worn over the shoulders.¹⁴
 - *Kulwana / Kollwana:* A cape, adding another layer of elegance or warmth.¹¹
 - *Charukhia:* A term mentioned for a heavy cloth thrown over one shoulder by Mukri women.¹⁸
- **Pashtend / Pshtwen / Sash / Belt:** A sash or belt is worn around the waist or, in some styles like the Mukriyani, on the hips.¹ These can be made of fabric or, in the case of belts, sometimes metal.⁴
- **Headwear:** Women's headwear is highly varied and regionally specific.
 - **Klaw (Skullcap/Hat):** This can take many forms, including a simple skullcap, a decorated velvet cap, a pillbox hat (characteristic of Mukriyani style), or even a fez in some areas. These are often embellished with coins, beads, intricate chains, jewelry, or embroidery.¹
 - **Scarves / Sarpech / Lechik:** Long scarves, sheer scarves draped elegantly over skullcaps, or multiple scarves layered to form tall turbans are all part of the tradition.¹ Mukri and Sina women, for instance, have a reputation for wearing particularly large and impressive turbans.¹⁸ The traditional backcloth and headdress, which included a velvet skullcap held by a beaded chain, a cloth covering the back of the neck, and a tall turban, is now mostly seen on elderly women, as the necessary components have become difficult to find.¹
- **Jewelry:** Jewelry is an integral and often extravagant part of Kurdish women's attire. This includes necklaces (*Mlwanka*), bracelets (*Bazn*), earrings (*Gwara*), rings (*Mstila*),

ankle bracelets (*Khirkhal*), as well as decorative coins, colorful pearls, cloves (*Mêxek, Lîre*), and other traditional ornaments like *Gobarok, Zherchana, Pshten, Nawchawan*, and *Aşiqbend*.⁴ Affluent women might wear elaborate gold belts.⁴

While much of women's traditional dress is ornate, certain garments like the *Awdamen* dress, common in many regions except Mukriyan, demonstrate practical adaptations. The skirt of the *Awdamen* was designed to be pulled up and tucked into the *Pshtwen* (waist shawl), making it easier for women to perform daily chores, livestock farming, and harvesting without the skirt becoming soiled or cumbersome.¹³ This functional aspect challenges a purely ornamental perception of women's traditional attire, showing a similar attention to practicality as seen in men's clothing.

Specific Regional Styles for Women

Beyond the general components, specific regional styles for women are well-documented, including the **Mahabadi, Suleimani, and Hawleri** dresses, named after their respective cities or regions.¹⁴ The **Awdamen dress** is considered one of the oldest styles, characterized by its functionality.¹³ The **Bilbasi dress**, another old style though no longer common, was known for its very loose cut and exceptionally long sleeves.¹³

Materials & Colors

A wide array of fabrics is used in women's clothing. Traditional choices include chiffon voile, cotton, velvets, and brocades, with silk and satin being favored for more luxurious garments and sheer fabrics adding to the layered effect.¹ In contemporary times, synthetic fabrics and materials embellished with sequins have become popular, especially for coats and festive wear.¹

The color palette for women's attire is overwhelmingly vibrant and diverse, featuring nearly every color imaginable. These bright hues are often said to reflect the stunning natural landscapes of Kurdistan and the joyful spirit of its people.⁴ While younger women and girls typically embrace these brightly colored gowns, older women may sometimes opt for darker or more muted tones.⁸

Table: Key Garments in Women's Traditional Kurdish Attire

This table organizes the complex array of women's garments, highlighting their Kurdish names, typical materials, key features, and regional associations. It clarifies the layered nature of women's attire and helps differentiate between various outerwear and accessory items, providing a clear, comparative overview.

Garment Name (Kurdish/Transliteration)	English Description	Typical Materials	Notable Features/Regional Styles	Snippet(s)
Kiras, Jli Kurdi	Long dress	Silk, satin, velvet, chiffon, cotton,	Floor-length, funnel/triangular	¹

		sheer fabrics	sleeves (Faqiana), embroidered, sequined	
Xiftan, Kaftan, Kawa	Long coat, robe	Velvet, brocade, silk, embroidered, sequined	Outer layer, often highly decorated; Sorani, Badinani/Hakkari styles	¹
Salta, Helak, Sukhma	Short jacket, vest	Velvet, brocade, embroidered	Worn over Kiras, can be sleeveless; Sorani, Mukriyani styles	¹
Darpe, Sharwal	Trousers, bloomers (under Kiras)	Cotton, silk, other fabrics	Baggy; Mukriyani (more voluminous)	¹
Zher Kras	Underdress, petticoat, long camisole	Cotton, silk	Worn under Kiras for opacity/layering	¹
Klaw (various forms)	Skullcap, hat, pillbox	Velvet, brocade, decorated with coins, beads, embroidery	Mukriyani (pillbox), Sorani (velvet skullcap), Central/Eastern (skullcap with scarf)	¹
Shal, Dasmal, Kulwana, Kollwana, Charukhia	Shawl, cape, cloth	Sheer fabrics, silk, wool, cotton	Mukriyani (large triangular shawl for headwear), Dasmal (shoulder shawl), Kollwana (cape)	¹
Pashtend, Pshtwen, Sash, Belt	Waist/hip sash, belt	Fabric, metal (for belts)	Mukriyani (large hip sash), Sorani (waist sash)	¹

6. Kurdish Children's Traditional Clothing

Traditional clothing for Kurdish children often mirrors the styles worn by adults, adapted in size and sometimes simplified for practicality and comfort.¹ The practice of dressing children in traditional attire is a significant aspect of cultural transmission, instilling a sense of identity and heritage from a very young age. Historically, mothers would meticulously sew clothes for their daughters that were miniature versions of their own, and this extended even to creating traditional garments for dolls. In some historical contexts, even infants were adorned with turbans, indicating an early immersion in cultural dress norms.¹³

Boys' Attire

A common ensemble for young Kurdish boys is a four-piece set, typically including a tailored jacket, trousers (*sharwal*), a shirt (*kras*), and a traditional belt or sash (*pishten*).¹ These sets are often crafted from durable fabrics like *tergal*, chosen for its lightweight properties and resilience, making it suitable for active children aged approximately 3 to 15 years.¹ The designs frequently feature "authentic Kurdish patterns with modern tailoring," blending tradition with contemporary fits.¹ The comprehensive list of men's clothing terms, including items like *klaw* (skullcap) and *jamana* (kerchief), is also noted as applicable to "Men and Boys," suggesting that younger boys would wear age-appropriate versions of these garments.¹⁷

Girls' Attire

Similarly, traditional clothing for Kurdish girls generally consists of smaller versions of the iconic garments worn by adult women. This would include the long dress (*Kiras*), underlying trousers (*darpe*), vests (*helak* or *sukhma*), and various forms of headwear.¹ Museum collections, for example, feature examples of caps specifically designed for young Kurdish girls, often decorated with traditional motifs.¹⁵ The list of women's clothing terms, encompassing items like *lechik* (headscarf) and various outerwear, is also designated as applicable to "Women and Girls," indicating a continuity of style across age groups.¹⁷

Cultural Significance

Dressing children in traditional Kurdish attire for important cultural events, such as the annual Kurdish Clothes Day (celebrated on March 10th) and the Newroz festival, is a widespread practice. This serves as a vital means of instilling cultural pride, connecting younger generations with their heritage, and ensuring the continuity of these traditions.³³

The symbolic power of these garments, even when worn by children, is underscored by instances where their display has been met with opposition. For example, the reported incident in Bismil during the Newroz celebrations of 2022, where 5-year-old twins were allegedly prevented from participating and detained because they were wearing traditional Kurdish clothes (specifically noting the colors green, red, and yellow), highlights the politicization of these cultural symbols.³⁴ Such events demonstrate that these garments are perceived by some authorities as potent symbols of Kurdish identity, thereby reinforcing their cultural and, at times, political significance. The creation and wearing of children's traditional clothing are thus significant acts of cultural transmission, embedding identity from an early age, and the fact that these garments are sometimes contested only emphasizes their profound meaning beyond mere aesthetics.

7. Materials, Colors, and Artistry

The materials, colors, and artistic embellishments of Kurdish clothing are deeply intertwined with the region's natural environment, historical trade routes, and cultural symbolism. They tell a story of adaptation, aesthetic sensibility, and enduring traditions.

Fabrics

- **Traditional Foundations:** Historically, sheep wool and goat leather formed the bedrock of Kurdish attire, especially for men's clothing. These materials were readily available through pastoral lifestyles and offered crucial protection against the often harsh climate of Kurdistan.⁵ Cotton was also an early and significant material used in Kurdish dress.¹
- **Introduced and Luxurious Textiles:** Over time, and particularly with increased trade, fabrics like silk, velvet, and brocade gained prominence. These were especially favored for the more elaborate and decorative garments worn by women, as well as for certain outerwear pieces for both sexes.¹ The Qajar and Ottoman periods are noted for an expansion in the variety of available fabrics.¹¹
- **Common and Modern Materials:** Today, fabrics such as chiffon, voile, and satin are widely used, particularly for women's dresses (*Kiras*) and coats (*Kawa* or *Xiftan*). Various synthetic fabrics, including those embellished with sequins, have also become popular for contemporary and festive attire.¹ For children's clothing, durable and practical fabrics like *tergal* have been noted.¹ The rich vocabulary for fabric names often drew inspiration directly from the natural world, with descriptive terms such as "The eyes of partridge," "spotted mountain," "frost," "Pomegranate flowers," and "apple flowers".¹³ This nomenclature suggests a deep ecological connection and an aesthetic sensibility rooted in the flora and fauna of the Kurdish environment, indicating that artisans were not merely passive recipients of designs but active interpreters of their surroundings.

Symbolism of Colors and Patterns

- **General Color Symbolism:** Kurdish clothing is celebrated for its use of vibrant and diverse colors, especially in women's attire. These bright hues are often seen as reflecting the stunning beauty of Kurdistan's landscapes and embodying a joyful, lively spirit.⁴ In contrast, men's traditional clothing typically features more subdued tones like black, grey, brown, white, or blue.⁸
- **Specific Color Meanings:** Certain colors carry specific symbolic connotations within Kurdish culture:
 - **Green:** Can signify descent from the Hashemites (the House of Prophet Mohammed), particularly when used in men's sashes or in the attire of Seyed women (women believed to be descendants of the Prophet).¹³
 - **Red:** Often associated with brides and celebrations. The phrase "red bride" can signify something new and beautiful, and red lace robes were traditionally worn by virgin brides.¹³
 - **White:** White lace was traditionally used for widows at their weddings. White scarves are characteristic attire for Mullahs' wives.¹³
 - **Blue:** A "blue scarf" can sometimes be associated with sadness or mourning.¹³
 - Attire worn for **Newroz** (Kurdish New Year) typically features vibrant, pure colors that symbolize joy and the festive spirit of the occasion.⁵

- **Common Motifs:** Various motifs are recurrent in Kurdish textiles, each carrying layers of meaning:
 - **Boteh (Paisley):** This teardrop-shaped motif is prevalent in Kurdish textiles and rugs. It is interpreted in various ways, representing concepts such as life, eternity, fertility, a leaf, a flame, or a pine cone.³⁵ The *Boteh* has ancient Persian origins and is possibly linked to Zoroastrian symbols like the eternal flame or the sacred cypress tree, a symbol of life and eternity.³⁶ Its presence connects Kurdish textile art to ancient regional belief systems.
 - **Floral and Vine Motifs:** These are common, particularly in *Suzani* style embroidery and as general embellishments on women's dresses, reflecting the appreciation for nature's beauty.²⁹
 - **Geometric Patterns:** Bold geometric designs are characteristic of *Kurdishi* embroidery and are frequently seen in woven textiles, showcasing a sophisticated sense of abstract design.²⁹
 - **Serpent/Dragon (S-shaped motifs):** The serpent or dragon motif is considered a symbol of luck, abundance, strength, and immortality in Kurdish folklore. It is often found on traditional flatweaves (*kilims*) and other textiles, with particular prevalence among Yezidi communities.³⁹ This links the clothing to widespread folkloric traditions and imbues it with protective or auspicious qualities.
 - **Nature-inspired (Sun, Moon, Stars, Animals):** Symbols representing celestial bodies and various animals are common in broader Kurdish folk art, including *Deq* (traditional Kurdish tattoos), and it is highly probable that these motifs extend to textile designs as well, further emphasizing the connection to the natural and cosmological world.⁴⁰ It is often said that each embroidered stitch and every vibrant color in Kurdish clothing "tells a story," imbuing the garments with narrative and historical depth.³

Embroidery and Embellishments (Needlework - *Sukhmeh*)

Kurdish clothing is renowned for its intricate embroidery and meticulous handmade embellishments, which are a testament to the skill and artistry of Kurdish women.²

- **Named Techniques/Styles:**
 - ***Sukhmeh* (سڤمه):** This is a general Kurdish term for needlework or embroidery, encompassing a variety of techniques.²⁹
 - ***Kurdishi* embroidery:** A specific style characterized by its use of bright colors and bold geometric patterns, frequently used to decorate traditional clothing items such as dresses, jackets, and headscarves.²⁹
 - ***Suzani* embroidery:** Another distinct style, recognized by its elaborate floral and vine motifs. While often associated with household textiles like cushions and tablecloths, the design principles and techniques are also applied to the embellishment of clothing.²⁹
- **Stitches:** While comprehensive sources on specific Kurdish stitch terminology are limited in the provided materials, general embroidery traditions in related regions utilize

stitches such as running stitch, chain stitch, and flat stitch ⁴¹, as well as cross stitch.³⁸ The embroidery on Ma'dan wedding blankets, from a related cultural context in Iraq, notably employed chain stitches executed with a crochet hook.⁴²

- **Materials for Embellishment:** A variety of materials are used to adorn Kurdish garments, including shimmering sequins, colorful beads (both glass and pearl), metallic threads (for gold and silver embroidery), and tapestry work.¹ Embroidery is often concentrated on prominent areas of women's dresses, such as the chest, sleeves, and shoulders, to maximize visual impact.⁵ Men's traditional outfits, like the *Şal û Şapik*, can also feature embroidery, though typically less extensive than on women's garments.¹

8. Understanding Key Terminology: *Xiftan* and *Charuke*

Navigating the rich lexicon of Kurdish traditional clothing requires an understanding of specific terms that denote key garments. Among these, *Xiftan* and *Charuke* refer to significant items, primarily in women's attire. The precise definition and usage of such terms can exhibit regional variations or a degree of flexibility in application.

Xiftan* (خفتان) / *Kaftan

The term *Xiftan*, often appearing as *Kaftan* or *Xeftan*, is frequently encountered in descriptions of Kurdish women's outerwear. It is commonly used interchangeably with *Kawa* or to describe a type of long coat or robe.¹ This garment is a significant component of the traditional layered ensemble worn by Kurdish women, typically donned over the primary dress, the *Kiras*.

Xiftans are characteristically made from luxurious or highly decorated fabrics such as velvet, brocade, or silk, and are often embellished with intricate embroidery or sequins.¹ For instance, descriptions of the Sorani dress explicitly include a "long coat" ¹, and the Badinani/Hakkari costume features a "long-sleeved coat" ¹; these are very likely forms of the *Xiftan* or *Kawa*. Online vendors of Kurdish clothing also utilize terms like "Xeftan" and "Kaftan" in their product descriptions for Kurdish dresses or distinct outer layers.¹⁹

Based on these contexts, *Xiftan* refers to a traditional Kurdish woman's outer garment, essentially a type of long coat or robe, which is similar in function and often in appearance to a *Kawa* or a caftan. It is a key, often ornate, element of the layered traditional dress, crafted from rich materials and serving both aesthetic and protective purposes.

Charuke* (چارۆكه / چارۆك) / *Charukhia

The term *Charukhia* is specifically mentioned in one historical account as "a kind of heavy cloth thrown over one shoulder" by Mukri women.¹⁸ This description aligns with elements of the distinctive Mukriyani women's costume detailed elsewhere. The Mukriyani attire includes a "large triangular shawl crossed over the chest, with the ends hanging down the back," which forms part of the headgear, worn over a pillbox hat.¹ This prominent shawl component could well be what is referred to as a *Charuke* or *Desmal*, as a user comment discussing Mukriyani

dress specifically mentions "desmal" for the top shawl portion.¹⁶

While direct dictionary definitions from sources like ⁶⁰ and ⁶³ (ferheng.org for "charoge") were inaccessible for this report, the contextual clues provided by descriptions of Mukriyan attire ¹ strongly suggest that *Charuke* or *Charukhia* refers to a type of substantial shawl or large cloth. It appears to be particularly associated with the Mukriyan region and can be utilized either as an elegant shoulder drape or as a significant, defining component of an elaborate head covering ensemble. It is functionally and visually distinct from a simple headscarf, which is often termed *Lechik*.

In conclusion, *Xiftan* appears to be a more broadly applied term for an outer robe or coat in women's traditional dress. In contrast, *Charuke* or *Charukhia* seems to denote a more specific type of garment – a shawl or wrap – with a particularly documented role and form within the Mukriyan regional style. The lack of a universally standardized and rigidly defined glossary for all Kurdish clothing terms means that interpretations must often be carefully drawn from descriptive contexts and regional specificities.

9. Continuity and Change: Kurdish Dress in the 21st Century

The trajectory of Kurdish traditional dress in the 21st century is marked by a complex interplay of cultural resilience, political dynamics, economic factors, and the pervasive influence of global fashion trends. It is not a simple narrative of decline but rather one of active adaptation, reinterpretation, and conscious preservation.

Impact of Modernization and Globalization

In some contemporary contexts, the daily wear of traditional Kurdish dress is reportedly "increasingly disappearing" as individuals adopt Western styles of clothing or the attire prevalent in their host countries, particularly within the diaspora.⁸ The widespread practice of wearing traditional clothing on a daily basis, common as recently as the 1970s in many parts of Kurdistan, has significantly faded due to a combination of political pressures and increased exposure to the outside world through media and migration.¹⁴

Modernization can also lead to the dilution or loss of specific traditional features of the garments. Contemporary versions, while visually referencing historical styles, may be merely "inspired" by them rather than being exact replicas in terms of cut, material, or construction techniques.¹² Researcher Sumbul Soçaî, for instance, has expressed concern that the everyday wear of these modified versions does not genuinely preserve the authentic *historical* attributes of Kurdish clothing, even if they maintain a Kurdish aesthetic.¹²

Political Contexts

The political environment has profoundly impacted the wearing of Kurdish traditional dress. In some areas of Iran, Kurdish women may adhere to mandated Islamic dress codes, which involve a hijab and an over-cloth, sometimes worn in conjunction with or instead of traditional Kurdish elements.⁸ In Turkey, secular government policies historically imposed bans on

headscarves in universities and government jobs, affecting Kurdish women who might have chosen to wear traditional or religious head coverings.⁸ Most directly, the Iraqi government under Saddam Hussein banned the wearing of Kurdish dress in several parts of the country during the 1980s.¹⁴ These prohibitions starkly highlight the potent political symbolism embodied by Kurdish attire and its perception as a marker of distinct identity.

Preservation Efforts and Resurgence

Despite these challenges, there is a notable and growing "return to traditional culture," with many Kurds, both old and young, making a conscious effort to acquire and wear at least one traditional outfit annually.¹⁴ Several factors contribute to this resurgence:

- **Kurdish Clothes Day (March 10th):** This day has been officially celebrated in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq for over a decade and is gaining traction elsewhere. On this day, there is widespread and enthusiastic participation in wearing traditional attire in educational institutions, government offices, and the private sector. It is recognized as a crucial event for promoting Kurdish culture and authenticity on a global scale.⁶ Notably, government officials in Iranian Kurdistan have also been documented participating in this observance by wearing Kurdish clothes.⁶ The establishment of an official day transforms the act of wearing traditional clothes from a personal choice into a collective, public statement of identity and cultural pride, which is particularly significant given past prohibitions.
- **Cultural Festivals and Events:** Occasions such as Newroz (Kurdish New Year) and weddings remain pivotal moments for donning traditional dress, reinforcing its connection to celebration and cultural heritage.¹
- **The Role of the Diaspora:** The Kurdish diaspora has played a significant role in fostering renewed interest in traditional garments and increasing global demand for them, as community members seek to connect with their heritage during cultural events abroad.²
- **Artisans and Designers:** Local artisans and dressmakers are actively involved in the preservation and evolution of Kurdish clothing. They create new designs, sometimes blending traditional motifs and cuts with modern stylistic elements, ensuring the attire remains relevant and appealing.⁴ There is also a notable increase in the participation of women artisans in this industry, contributing to both their families' livelihoods and the promotion of Kurdish culture.⁶

Contemporary Adaptations

Modern Kurdish clothing often incorporates contemporary fashion sensibilities. For example, the traditionally wide *sharwal* (trousers) for men are now frequently preferred in a tighter, more streamlined cut by younger generations.¹⁴ Designers may draw inspiration from older styles, such as those from the 1970s and 1980s, but adapt them using new fabrics, different cuts, and modern embellishments.⁴ There is often a focus on using higher quality and more varied fabrics, like silk and lace, and incorporating elaborate handcrafted embellishments for

special occasion wear, such as engagement dresses.⁵

Sustainability and Care

Alongside the resurgence in popularity, there is a growing awareness of the importance of sustainable practices in caring for these often delicate and historically significant traditional garments. Recommendations include practices like airing clothes instead of frequent washing, which helps to preserve the fabric and intricate work for future generations while also reducing environmental impact.¹

The concurrent trends of diminishing daily wear in some areas⁸ and a strong resurgence in interest for special occasions¹⁴ and designated cultural days⁶ point to a significant shift in how traditional Kurdish clothing functions in contemporary society. It may be transitioning from everyday apparel to a more symbolic and ceremonial role, yet one that is fiercely protected and celebrated as a core component of Kurdish identity.

10. Conclusion: The Living Heritage of Kurdish Clothing

Kurdish traditional attire, *Cil û bergên Kurdî*, is far more than a collection of garments; it is a dynamic, deeply significant, and enduring emblem of Kurdish cultural identity, history, regional diversity, and profound artistic expression. The vibrant colors, intricate patterns, and diverse forms of these clothes weave a rich narrative of the Kurdish people—their intimate connection to their ancestral lands, the nuances of their social structures, their distinct aesthetic values, and their remarkable resilience in the face of historical and contemporary challenges.

The journey of Kurdish clothing from antiquity to the present day reveals a tradition that has both adapted to changing times and steadfastly maintained its core essence. Influences from ancient civilizations like the Medes and Achaemenids are discernible, yet the attire has continuously evolved, shaped by geography, climate, tribal customs, and interactions with neighboring cultures. The meticulous regional variations, from the tight-fitting styles of the north to the elaborate layered ensembles of Central and Mukriyani Kurdistan, serve as a testament to the rich mosaic of Kurdish local identities.

The materials used, from traditional wool and leather to luxurious silks and modern synthetics, reflect changing economic conditions and trade relations, while the symbolism embedded in colors and motifs like the *Boteh* and the serpent connects Kurdish textile arts to ancient belief systems and enduring folkloric traditions. The artistry involved, particularly the intricate embroidery and embellishments known as *Sukhmeh*, showcases generations of skill, predominantly passed down through Kurdish women, who have been the primary custodians and innovators of these textile traditions.

In the 21st century, Kurdish clothing navigates a complex landscape of modernization, globalization, and political sensitivities. While daily wear may have declined in some areas, there is a powerful resurgence in its symbolic and ceremonial importance. Events like Kurdish Clothes Day and the continued prominence of traditional attire during Newroz and weddings underscore a conscious and collective effort to preserve and celebrate this vital aspect of

Kurdish heritage. Contemporary adaptations, blending traditional forms with modern aesthetics, demonstrate that Kurdish clothing is not a static relic of the past but a living tradition, capable of reinterpretation and renewal.⁴

Ultimately, Kurdish traditional clothing stands as a vibrant testament to the enduring spirit and cultural richness of the Kurdish people. It is a visual language that continues to speak eloquently of identity, belonging, and the unbreakable bond between a people and their heritage.

11. Works Cited

1. ¹ Wikipedia. "Kurdish traditional clothing." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdish_traditional_clothing
2. ⁸ The Kurdish Project. "Kurdish Dress." <https://thekurdishproject.org/history-and-culture/kurdish-culture/kurdish-dress/>
3. ¹⁰ Ronahi.net. "Roja cil û bergên kurdî." <https://ronahi.net/ku/?p=221579>
4. ¹² Xwebun.org. "Cil û bergên Kurdî bi lixwekirinê nayên parastin." <https://xwebun2.org/cil-u-bergen-kurdi-bi-lixwekirine-nayen-parastin/>
5. ¹⁴ Kurdistan24. "Kurdish dress code reflects the nation's culture and heritage." <https://www.kurdistan24.net/index.php/en/opinion/385210/Kurdish-dress-code-reflects-the-nation%E2%80%99s-culture-and-heritage>
6. ¹¹ Kurdshop.net. "History of Kurdish Clothes." <https://kurdshop.net/en/culture/3174>
7. ¹³ Kurdshop.net. "Mukriyan Women's Clothing." <https://kurdshop.net/en/culture/1269>
8. ¹⁶ Reddit. "What are these types of Kurdish dress called?" https://www.reddit.com/r/kurdistan/comments/1doilqd/what_are_these_types_of_kurdish_dress_called/
9. ¹⁵ TRC Leiden. "The Kurds." <https://trc-leiden.nl/trc-digital-exhibition/index.php/from-kaftan-to-kippa/item/63-the-kurds>
10. ¹⁸ Tota.world. "Kurdish Costume Descriptions." <https://www.tota.world/article/1152/>
11. ¹ Wikipedia. "Kurdish traditional clothing."¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdish_traditional_clothing
12. ³² Persis Collection. "Traditional Kurdish Boys' Costume Clothing Set." <https://www.persiscollection.com/product/traditional-kurdish-boys-costume-clothing-set/>
13. ³³ Ronahi.net. "Bi bedwiya xwe roja cilên kurdî xemilandin." <https://ronahi.net/ku/?p=38012>
14. ³⁴ Botan Times. "Di newroza Bismilê de du zarokên 5 salî..." <https://botantimes.com/di-newroza-bismile-de-du-zaroken-5-sali-ji-bo-cil-u-bergen-kurdi-tevli-deya-xwe-hatine-desteserkin/>
15. ³⁵ Sarajo. "Kurdish Embroidery." <https://www.sarajo.com/product/kurdish-embroidery/>
16. ² Kewsan.com. "The Rich Heritage of Kurdish Clothing: A Symbol of Identity and Culture."

- <https://kewsan.com/blogs/news/the-rich-heritage-of-kurdish-clothing-a-symbol-of-identity-and-culture>
17. ³ Kewsan.com. "The Beauty of Kurdish Dresses: A Celebration of Culture."
<https://kewsan.com/blogs/news/the-beauty-of-kurdish-dresses-a-celebration-of-culture>
 18. ⁹ Kurdistan Chronicle. "The Kurdish Shal: A Symbol of Cultural Authenticity."
<https://kurdistanchronicle.com/b/3253>
 19. ⁴⁴ Kewsan.com. "How to Care for Your Kurdish Clothes: Sustainable Tips for Long-Lasting Beauty."
<https://kewsan.com/blogs/nyheter/how-to-take-care-of-your-clothes>
 20. ⁵ Enab Baladi. "Kurdish clothing: History, identity, and bright colors."
<https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2024/02/kurdish-clothing-history-identity-and-bright-colors/>
 21. ¹ Wikipedia. "Kurdish traditional clothing."¹
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdish_traditional_clothing
 22. ¹⁵ TRC Leiden. "The Kurds."¹⁵
<https://trc-leiden.nl/trc-digital-exhibition/index.php/from-kaftan-to-kippa/item/63-the-kurds>
 23. ² Kewsan.com. "The Rich Heritage of Kurdish Clothing..."²
<https://kewsan.com/blogs/news/the-rich-heritage-of-kurdish-clothing-a-symbol-of-identity-and-culture>
 24. ⁴ Kurdistan Chronicle. "Threads of Identity: Traditional Kurdish Attire."
<https://kurdistanchronicle.com/b/3203>
 25. ⁴¹ Folkcostume Blogspot. "Embroidery of White Kurpie Mazowsze."
<http://folkcostume.blogspot.com/2016/11/embroidery-of-white-kurpie-mazowsze.html>
(Note: This source is about Polish embroidery but was included in research for general embroidery stitches).
 26. ³⁸ Eliznik.org.uk. "Embroidery stitches and motifs."
<https://eliznik.org.uk/traditions-in-romania/traditional-clothing/materials-and-decorations/embroidery-stitches-and-motifs/> (Note: This source is about Romanian embroidery but was included for general embroidery stitches).
 27. ⁵ Enab Baladi. "Kurdish clothing: History, identity, and bright colors."⁵
<https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2024/02/kurdish-clothing-history-identity-and-bright-colors/>
 28. ⁶ IranWire. "Kurdish Dress Day: Cultural Significance of a Vibrant Celebration."
<https://iranwire.com/en/features/126318-kurdish-dress-day-cultural-significance-of-a-vibrant-celebration/>
 29. ⁷ AzadiPosts.com. "Kurdish heritage... traditional clothing with vibrant colors..."
<https://azadiposts.com/en/2023-10-06-12-57-11/663-2025-03-15-20-48-08.html>
 30. ³¹ TolranTour.com. "Traditional Iranian Clothing."
<https://toirantour.com/blog/traditional-iranian-clothing/>

31. ²³ Matinabad.com. "Iran Traditional Clothing for Women & Men."
<https://matinabad.com/en/iran-traditional-clothing/>
32. ²⁰ Reddit. "Traditional Kurdish caps from the 20th century."
https://www.reddit.com/r/kurdistan/comments/1ghqznm/traditional_kurdish_caps_from_the_20th_century/
33. ²¹ YallaWorldX.com. "Different types of men's headwear."
<https://www.yallaworldx.com/pages/different-types-of-mens-headwear>
34. ²² Raqs.co.nz. "Male Headwear."
https://www.raqs.co.nz/me/clothing_headwear_male.html
35. ²⁸ TikTok - KewsanTextile. Video on Kurdish Dress.
<https://www.tiktok.com/@kewsantextile/video/7506440513713736982>
36. ⁴⁵ TikTok - KewsanTextile. Video on Kurdish Clothes for Newroz.
<https://www.tiktok.com/@kewsantextile/video/7506182713435524374>
37. ¹ Wikipedia. "Kurdish traditional clothing."¹
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdish_traditional_clothing
38. ¹⁷ Kurdish Central. "Clothing." <https://kurdishcentral.org/clothing/>
39. ¹⁸ Tota.world. "Kurdish Costume Descriptions."¹⁸ <https://www.tota.world/article/1152/>
40. ¹⁹ Etsy. Market for "kurdish_dresses." https://www.etsy.com/market/kurdish_dresses
41. ⁴⁶ TurkishFolkArt.com. "Textile glossary." <https://turkishfolkart.com/textile-glossary/>
42. ⁴⁷ Raqs.co.nz. "Clothing Glossary." https://www.raqs.co.nz/me/clothing_glossary.html
43. ⁴⁸ Katonah Museum of Art. "Syrian Textiles Educator Materials."
https://katonahmuseum.org/content//KMA_Educator%20Materials_Syrian%20Textiles_2023_for%20web.pdf
44. ⁴² KHM, University of Oslo. "The Ma'dan Wedding Blankets Collection."
<https://www.khm.uio.no/english/collections/iraq/>
45. ⁴⁹ Natakallam. "Page 3 (various articles)."
https://natakallam.com/page/3/?_ref=finder....⁴⁰
46. ⁴⁰ Natakallam Blog. "Deq: The Art of Kurdish Tattooing."
<https://natakallam.com/blog/deq-kurdish-tattooing/>
47. ⁵⁰ British Museum Collection Search. Keyword: "kurdish."
<https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/search?keyword=kurdish>
48. ⁵¹ Etsy - KewsanTextileDesigns Shop. <https://www.etsy.com/shop/KewsanTextileDesigns>
49. ⁵² MiamiOH Campus Store. "Kurdish Culture and Society: An Annotated Bibliography."
<https://campusstore.miamioh.edu/kurdish-culture-society-annotated/bk/9780313315435>
50. ⁵³ OeAW - ISA. "Online Collections."
<https://www.oeaw.ac.at/en/isa/publications/online-collections>
51. ⁵⁴ Scribd. "The Kurds: a Concise Handbook." (Limited view, general context).
<https://www.scribd.com/document/691579278/The-Kurds-a-Concise-Handbook>
52. ⁵⁵ Archive.org. "Standard Reference Work." (General text, unlikely specific to Charuke).
https://archive.org/stream/standardreferenc0008vari/standardreferenc0008vari_djvu.tx

- ^t
53. ²⁶ Kewsan.com. Women's Dress Collection.
<https://kewsan.com/collections/women-dress?page=4>
 54. ²⁷ TikTok Discover. "kurdish-leather" (also shows "xeftan").
<https://www.tiktok.com/discover/kurdish-leather>
 55. ²⁹ PersianHandicrafts.com. "Sukhmeh." <https://persianhandicrafts.com/sukhmeh>
 56. ³⁰ PersianHandicrafts.com. "Vest Kurdish Handmade Sekhmeh Needlework."
<https://persianhandicrafts.com/vest-kurdish-handmade-sekhmeh-needlework-hwn1002>
 57. ³⁹ Kurdistan Chronicle. "Symbolism of the Serpent in Kurdish Culture."
<https://kurdistanchronicle.com/b/3189>
 58. ⁵⁶ Mollaian Rugs Blog. "Unveiling Symbolism: Religious Rugs Collector's Guide."
<https://blog.mollaianrugs.com/unveiling-symbolism-religious-rugs-collectors-guide/>
 59. ⁵⁷ Dreamstime. Illustration "kurdish-clothes" (general museum setting).
<https://www.dreamstime.com/illustration/kurdish-clothes.html>
 60. ⁵⁸ Pinterest. Pin "Kurdish clothes in 2024."
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/kurdish-clothes-in-2024--259801472269160516/>
 61. ³⁶ Nazmiyal Antique Rugs. "Boteh Paisley Pattern Rugs."
<https://nazmiyalantiquerugs.com/boteh-paisley-pattern-rugs/>
 62. ³⁷ Lilla Rugs Blog. "The 5 Most Used Motifs in Persian Tribal Rugs."
<https://lillarugs.com/blogs/news/the-5-most-used-motifs-in-persian-tribal-rugs>
 63. ²⁴ Surflran Mag. "Traditional Persian Clothing."
<https://surfiran.com/mag/traditional-persian-clothing/>
 64. ²⁵ News USIM Edu My. "Assyrian Kurdish Dress Traditional Kaftan Abaya Kras."
<https://news.usim.edu.my/?r=1321632933849>
 65. ¹ Wikipedia. "Kurdish traditional clothing".¹
 66. ¹⁴ Kurdistan24. "Kurdish dress code reflects the nation's culture and heritage".¹⁴
 67. ¹¹ Kurdshop.net. "History of Kurdish Clothes".¹¹
 68. ¹³ Kurdshop.net. "Mukriyan Women's Clothing".¹³
 69. ¹⁵ TRC Leiden. "The Kurds".¹⁵
 70. ³⁵ Sarajo. "Kurdish Embroidery".³⁵
 71. ³ Kewsan.com. "The Beauty of Kurdish Dresses...".³
 72. ⁹ Kurdistan Chronicle. "The Kurdish Shal...".⁹
 73. ⁵⁹ AA.com.tr. (Inaccessible).
 74. ¹³ Kurdshop.net. "Mukriyan Women's Clothing" (Compilation for children's clothing query, negative result).
 75. ¹ Wikipedia. "Kurdish traditional clothing" (Compilation for Xiftan query, negative result from this source).
 76. ⁶⁰ Glosbe.com. (Inaccessible).
 77. ¹⁷ Kurdish Central. "Clothing" (Compilation for glossary query).

78. ⁴³ Kurdistan24. "Kurdish dress code..." (Compilation for visual examples query).
79. ¹⁵ TRC Leiden. "The Kurds" (Compilation for visual examples query).
80. ⁶¹ Torbatjam.com. (Inaccessible).
81. ⁶² Kurdipedia.org. (Inaccessible).
82. ⁶³ Ferheng.org. (Inaccessible).

Works cited

1. Kurdish traditional clothing - Wikipedia, accessed June 3, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdish_traditional_clothing
2. The Rich Heritage of Kurdish Clothing: A Symbol of Identity and Culture, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://kewsan.com/blogs/news/the-rich-heritage-of-kurdish-clothing-a-symbol-of-identity-and-culture>
3. The Beauty of Kurdish Dresses: A Celebration of Culture – Kewsan ..., accessed June 3, 2025, <https://kewsan.com/blogs/news/the-beauty-of-kurdish-dresses-a-celebration-of-culture>
4. Threads of Identity: Traditional Kurdish Attire - Kurdistan Chronicle, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://kurdistanchronicle.com/b/3203>
5. Kurdish clothing: History, identity, and bright colors - Enab Baladi, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2024/02/kurdish-clothing-history-identity-and-bright-colors/>
6. Kurdish Dress Day: Cultural Significance of a Vibrant Celebration - IranWire, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://iranwire.com/en/features/126318-kurdish-dress-day-cultural-significance-of-a-vibrant-celebration/>
7. Strong as Their Mountains: A Journey into Kurdish Culture - آزادي پوست, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://azadiposts.com/en/2023-10-06-12-57-11/663-2025-03-15-20-48-08.html>
8. Learn About Kurdish Dress, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://thekurdishproject.org/history-and-culture/kurdish-culture/kurdish-dress/>
9. The Kurdish Shal: A Symbol of Cultural Authenticity, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://kurdistanchronicle.com/b/3253>
10. Roja cil û bergên kurdî - صحيفة روناھي, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://ronahi.net/ku/?p=221579>
11. Kurdish Clothes - KURDSHOP, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://kurdshop.net/en/culture/3174>
12. 'Cil û bergên kurdî bi lixwekirinê nayên parastin' | Xwebûn, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://xwebun2.org/cil-u-bergen-kurdi-bi-lixwekirine-nayen-parastin/>
13. Mukriyan Women's Clothing and Accessories - Part 1 - KURDSHOP, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://kurdshop.net/en/culture/1269>
14. Kurdish dress code reflects the nation's culture and heritage, accessed June 3,

- 2025,
<https://www.kurdistan24.net/index.php/en/opinion/385210/Kurdish-dress-code-reflects-the-nation%E2%80%99s-culture-and-heritage>
15. 12. The Kurds - Textile Research Centre, accessed June 3, 2025,
<https://trc-leiden.nl/trc-digital-exhibition/index.php/from-kaftan-to-kippa/item/63-the-kurds>
 16. What are these types of Kurdish dress called? : r/kurdistan - Reddit, accessed June 3, 2025,
https://www.reddit.com/r/kurdistan/comments/1doilqd/what_are_these_types_of_kurdish_dress_called/
 17. Clothing - Kurdish Central, accessed June 3, 2025,
<https://kurdishcentral.org/clothing/>
 18. Kurdish Clothing, 1912 - TOTA.world, accessed June 3, 2025,
<https://www.tota.world/article/1152/>
 19. Kurdish Dresses - Etsy, accessed June 3, 2025,
https://www.etsy.com/market/kurdish_dresses
 20. Traditional Kurdish caps from the 20th century. The labels below each cap indicate either the tribal or geographical origin of each cap. : r/kurdistan - Reddit, accessed June 3, 2025,
https://www.reddit.com/r/kurdistan/comments/1ghqznm/traditional_kurdish_caps_from_the_20th_century/
 21. The Different Types of Muslim Men's Headwear - Yalla World, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://www.yallaworldx.com/pages/different-types-of-mens-headwear>
 22. Male Headwear - Raqs, accessed June 3, 2025,
https://www.raqs.co.nz/me/clothing_headwear_male.html
 23. Iran Traditional Clothing for Women & Men - Matinabad, accessed June 3, 2025,
<https://matinabad.com/en/iran-traditional-clothing/>
 24. Traditional Persian Clothing: From Historical Attire To Modern Adaptations - surfiran, accessed June 3, 2025,
<https://surfiran.com/mag/traditional-persian-clothing/>
 25. Assyrian Kurdish Dress Traditional Kaftan Abaya Kras, accessed June 3, 2025,
<https://news.usim.edu.my/?r=1321632933849>
 26. Women Dress – Page 4 - Kewsan textile and more - Kurdish Clothes, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://kewsan.com/collections/women-dress?page=4>
 27. Kurdish Leather - TikTok, accessed June 3, 2025,
<https://www.tiktok.com/discover/kurdish-leather>
 28. Explore Our New Kurdish Summer Dress Collection | TikTok, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://www.tiktok.com/@kewsantextile/video/7506440513713736982>
 29. Sukhmeh - Needlework - Persian Handicrafts, accessed June 3, 2025,
<https://persianhandicrafts.com/sukhmeh>
 30. Vest | Kurdish Handmade Sekhmeh Needlework | HWN1002-Persiada Persian Handicrafts, accessed June 3, 2025,
<https://persianhandicrafts.com/vest-kurdish-handmade-sekhmeh-needlework-hwn1002>
 31. Traditional Iranian Clothing: A Reflection of History and Culture - To Iran Tour,

- accessed June 3, 2025, <https://toirantour.com/blog/traditional-iranian-clothing/>
32. Traditional Kurdish Boys' Costume Clothing Set - Persis Collection, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://www.persiscollection.com/product/traditional-kurdish-boys-costume-clothing-set/>
 33. Bi bedwiya xwe roja cilên kurdî xemilandin - صحيفة روناھي, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://ronahi.net/ku/?p=38012>
 34. Di newroza Bismilê de du zarokên 5 salî, ji bo cil û bergên kurdî, tevli dêya xwe hatine desteserkirin - Botan Times -, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://botantimes.com/di-newroza-bismile-de-du-zaroken-5-sali-ji-bo-cil-u-bergen-kurdi-tevli-deya-xwe-hatine-desteserkirin/>
 35. Kurdish Embroidery - Sarajo, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://www.sarajo.com/product/kurdish-embroidery/>
 36. Paisley Pattern Rugs | Boteh Rugs | Shop Paisley Design Area Rug - Nazmiyal Antique Rugs, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://nazmiyalantiquerugs.com/boteh-paisley-pattern-rugs/>
 37. The 5 Most Used Motifs in Persian Tribal Rugs, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://lillarugs.com/blogs/news/the-5-most-used-motifs-in-persian-tribal-rugs>
 38. Embroidery stitches and motifs | The Eliznik pages, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://eliznik.org.uk/traditions-in-romania/traditional-clothing/materials-and-decorations/embroidery-stitches-and-motifs/>
 39. Kurdish Gelims: Woven History - Kurdistan Chronicle, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://kurdistanchronicle.com/b/3189>
 40. Deq: The Art of Kurdish Tattooing - NaTakallam, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://natakallam.com/blog/deq-kurdish-tattooing/>
 41. Embroidery of the 'White' Kurpie, Mazowsze, Poland - FolkCostume&Embroidery, accessed June 3, 2025, <http://folkcostume.blogspot.com/2016/11/embroidery-of-white-kurpie-mazowsze.html>
 42. The Ma'dan Wedding Blankets Collection - Museum of Cultural History - UiO, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://www.khm.uio.no/english/collections/iraq/>
 43. Kurdish dress code reflects the nation's culture and heritage, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/opinion/385210/Kurdish-dress-code-reflects-the-nation%E2%80%99s-culture-and-heritage>
 44. How to Care for Your Kurdish Clothes: Sustainable Tips for Long-Lasting Beauty, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://kewsan.com/blogs/nyheter/how-to-take-care-of-your-clothes>
 45. Elegant Kurdish Dresses for Weddings and Newroz Events | TikTok, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://www.tiktok.com/@kewsantextile/video/7506182713435524374>
 46. Glossary of Textile Terms - Turkish Folk Art, accessed June 3, 2025, <https://turkishfolkart.com/textile-glossary/>
 47. Middle Eastern Clothing Glossary - Raqs, accessed June 3, 2025, https://www.raqs.co.nz/me/clothing_glossary.html
 48. Stories of Syria's Textiles: Art and Heritage across Two Millennia - Katonah

- Museum of Art, accessed June 3, 2025,
https://katonahmuseum.org/content//KMA_Educator%20Materials_Syrian%20Textiles_2023_for%20web.pdf
49. Deq: The Art of Kurdish Tattooing - NaTakallam, accessed June 3, 2025,
https://natakallam.com/page/3/?_ref=finder&by=title&c=4542&elq=2f76251a698c45d28ba89f03671b9e5e&elqCampaignId=5060&elqTrackId=5F1FE962FE3DE0B557AD51690B4CA678&elqaid=8295&elqat=1&field_delivery%5Bonline%5D=online&field_experience_range=All&lead_type=mim&mc_cid=f812af3c29&mc_eid=%5BUNIQID%5D&p=Stuart%20FitzRoy%3F_ref%3Dfinder&programme_code=GEMBA&sort_by=field_upcoming_session_date&page=1
50. Collection search | British Museum, accessed June 3, 2025,
<https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/search?keyword=kurdish>
51. KurdishshopKewsan - Etsy, accessed June 3, 2025,
<https://www.etsy.com/shop/KewsanTextileDesigns>
52. Kurdish Culture and Society: An Annotated Bibliography, accessed June 3, 2025,
<https://campusstore.miamioh.edu/kurdish-culture-society-annotated/bk/9780313315435>
53. Online-Collections, accessed June 3, 2025,
<https://www.oeaw.ac.at/en/isa/publications/online-collections>
54. The Kurds A Concise Handbook | PDF - Scribd, accessed June 3, 2025,
<https://www.scribd.com/document/691579278/The-Kurds-a-Concise-Handbook>
55. Full text of "The Standard Reference Work: Home, School, and Library" - Internet Archive, accessed June 3, 2025,
https://archive.org/stream/standardreferenc0008vari/standardreferenc0008vari_djvu.txt
56. Unveiling the Symbolism of Religious Rugs: A Collector's Guide - blog.mollaianrugs.com, accessed June 3, 2025,
<https://blog.mollaianrugs.com/unveiling-symbolism-religious-rugs-collectors-guide/>
57. Kurdish Clothes Illustrations & Vectors - Dreamstime.com, accessed June 3, 2025,
<https://www.dreamstime.com/illustration/kurdish-clothes.html>
58. Kurdish clothes - Pinterest, accessed June 3, 2025,
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/kurdish-clothes-in-2024--259801472269160516/>
59. accessed January 1, 1970,
<https://www.aa.com.tr/ku/zanist-u-teknoloji/cil-u-bergen-kurden-rengin-xwe-li-parijan-nishan-dan/1633160>
60. accessed January 1, 1970,
<https://glosbe.com/ku/en/%DA%86%D8%A7%D8%B1%DB%86%DA%A9%DB%95>
61. accessed January 1, 1970,
<https://www.torbatjam.com/687/%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%87%D9%86%DA%AF-%D9%88-%D8%A7%DA%A8%D8%AC%D9%86%D9%88%D8%A8%DB%8C/>
62. accessed January 1, 1970, <https://www.kurdipedia.org/default.aspx?lng=1&q=خفتان>
63. accessed January 1, 1970, <https://ferheng.org/ch/charoge>