

The Meaning Of Celtic Design Tattoos

There's been a growing interest in tattoos lately, and Celtic tattoo designs are no exception. Celtic tattoos have become a favorite design choice. It is no secret why these are so popular. They are oftentimes done in blackened color with lots of shading and the symbols used are intricate and beautiful. It's thought that Celtic tattoo designs trace their origins back to a clan that inhabited the British Isles called the Picts. Just about all historians think that the Picts tattooed themselves by puncturing their skin with red-hot tools to produce complex and permanent artwork on their body. Later on, they began to using a blue pigment derived from the leaves of a native plant.

The designs created by the Picts began to have a mysterious religious and symbolic significance. Celtic artwork and symbolism embodied a mix of Druid and Christian religions. The Celts didn't have a printed language and alternatively communicated their customs and beliefs by word of mouth. Once the first Christian missionaries arrived to the British Isles they established written communication within the Celtic culture. At the same time the monks adopted many of the active Celtic beliefs, and symbols into the Christian religion. This was done in order to bridge the gap between the Druid beliefs and those of the Christians. A great deal of this work was saved by the Christian monks in the "Books Of Kells" which is today housed at Trinity College in Ireland. Therefore the early tattoo designs of the Picts evolved over time and blended with Christian beliefs to form what we know of as Celtic artwork today. The Celtic Cross and Shamrock are two such designs that have survived the test of time.

The Meaning Behind Celtic Symbols

The Celtic Knot

Most Celtic artwork starts with a common knot design. These are attractive knots of interlaced lines that cross over one another repeatedly to produce an exquisite design. These knots don't have a start or an end they are simply a perpetual knot that goes on eternally. These interwoven lines are thought to symbolize the spiritual and the physical realms of life, which become entangled with each other.

Celtic Tree Of Life Tattoo

Among the favorite themes of Celtic tattoo designs is the Tree Of Life. This in all likelihood goes back as a symbol to the Druidic religion, which was a nature, based religion. Trees frequently symbolize life, growing from a seed into a tree much like a person grows from a child into an adult. Trees are often seen as a life giving plant and are venerated in many naturalistic faiths. There is also an association with Christianity in the Adam and Eve story in which Eve eats the fruit from a tree.

The Celtic Cross Tattoo

Among the most popular and most lasting Celtic designs is the Celtic Cross. The symbolism here is obviously Christian and comes from Jesus on the cross. These are beautiful crosses done with interlacing lines of Celtic knots.

Celtic Heart Tattoos

Another favorite Celtic design theme is a heart. Celtic heart tattoos are once again intertwined knot work in the shape of a heart. Generally done in black color only but can also be done in color. These are exquisite designs and make great tattoos. These are particularly popular among women.

More Symbols Include:

Anchor: Steadfastness

Bell: Weddings, Anniversaries.

Chain Links: Linking of Lives, # of children, Years together.

Cross: Faith, Marriage.

Diamond: Wealth, Good Fortune.

Dragon: Symbol of Wales, Protection.

Flowers: Affection or Courtship, Friendship.

Heart: Love.

Horseshoe: Good Luck and Happiness.

Key: Home

Knot: Everlasting, together forever.

Leaves: Love Grows.

Ship: Smooth passage through life.

Vine: Love Grows.

Wheel: Willingness to work for a loved one.

Double Spoons: The Couple Together Forever.

Triple Spoons: Family.

About the Author

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