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PROJEKT: The EU as a Palette of Cultures - Getting to Know Each Other as a Path to Tolerance and Respect

JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA: CULTURE – SPANISH FANS

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Traditional Spanish fans

One of the **traditions** that we can see in Spain are Spanish fans used not only by women but also men. In the past, fans were used for **seduction** and there was even a so-called **fan speech**. Colourful fluttering fans can be seen in centres, waiting rooms, cafes and offices. Not only Spaniards, but also tourists quickly liked them and like to buy them in shops as souvenirs.



Pear wood is the basis for making the frame of the fan, as it is **flexible and makes good ribs that make these folding fans open**.

The main production of fans is concentrated in **Valencia**. They are **painted and decorated either directly on wood or on fabric**, which is held by thin and flexible ribs. The fabric can be either cotton or silk. Fans also have lace or feather ones.



The price and rarity of the fan depends not only on the materials it is made of, but also on who painted it. In Spain there are **a number of artists who are dedicated to the decoration of fans**. Some are sought after and famous.

Fan speech

According to the salesman, the average Spaniard keeps **half a dozen or a dozen fans on hand for daily use**. It is said that hundreds of different fans can pass through the hands of



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Spanish women in their lifetime - from ordinary paper ones with an advertisement for some product, to the more beautiful and rare ones

They carry the simpler ones in their purse to work and matches them in colour with her clothes or shoes. The higher quality, more striking and elaborate ones are used as an accessory, for example, **for weddings, to church, to the theatre, to religious processions or even to bullfights.**



In the past, thanks to the way they held the fan, **women were able to communicate and give signs to the men who were courting them.** They showed affection and desire, but also jealousy. However, the so-called "speech of the fan" is now remembered only by older ladies.

However, everyone takes multi-coloured fans with prints or hand-painted flowers, flamenco dancers, or historical events. Even men and children. Especially during the hot summer, but also like now during the unusually warm autumn.

Origin of the Spanish fans

It is believed to originate in China in the mid-seventh century, although it was not until **the fifteenth century** that it reached Europe, through Portuguese traders. However, there is some evidence that the **Jesuits** were the first to introduce the fan to Europe. It quickly became **fashionable among the upper classes** and later **its use also became popular among women of all social classes.**

Since the south of Spain, due to its climate, was the place where the use of the hand fan was most quickly popularized, it quickly became a protagonist in flamenco dances, where it **adds grace and style to the movements of the dancers.**



This accessory has been acquiring such relevance throughout history that since the **19th century there has been a Royal Fan Factory in Valencia**, which contributed to formalizing the **guild of fan makers.**

