

Celtic Symbols

Celtic Symbols: Little is known about the ancient and mysterious Celts, and one of the only things we have surviving of theirs are the symbols they used. Nearly everyone the world over can recognize a Celtic cross or knot, but few know what they mean.

Thankfully the mysteries that surround the Celts don't surround their ancient symbols, and you can easily learn what they all mean. Whether you're interested to learn about a cross, knot, or spiral, knowing what each Celtic symbol means will give you a more meaningful understanding of these people and what they believed.

It is important to note that Celtic symbols are often drawn around Celtic knots to represent spiritual unity with the divine - a connection that cannot be broken.

Triquetra:



- Originally referred to as simply a 'triangle,' the triquetra is now more aptly called a three-cornered shape.
- While the symbol was found in insular art and even showed up in the **Book of Kells**, it was almost never seen by itself alone in the medieval Celtic language.
- For the Druids, it represented the natural forces of earth, air, and water
- On a more spiritual level, it has been known to symbolize life, death, and rebirth..
- Its meaning varies from aspects of spirit, nature, being-ness, and of the cosmos.
- The origin of this symbol has been an issue of controversy for centuries.
 - Christians feel that it started with the Monks, who brought these designs along with their teachings of Christianity when attempting to convert the Celts of the day.
 - However, it's been common practice for Christianity to adopt ancient pagan symbols and rituals into its own belief system, making it a very good possibility that the original symbol was indeed Celtic to begin with.

Trinity Knot:



- The Trinity Knot is also as a **Triquetra** symbol, but with Christian symbolism.
- For Christians, the three points represent the three elements of the trinity: the **Father**, the **Son**, and the **Holy Spirit**.

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Single Spiral:



- One of the most common symbols of Celtic culture.
- The single spiral stood for the radiance of eternal or cosmic energy.
- It symbolizes growth, birth, expansion of consciousness, perseverance, and knowledge.
- It is truly a great symbol for those wanting to move forward.

Double Spiral:



- The Double Spiral is a sign of balance between two opposing spirals of contradicting activities.
- It represents that there are always two completely opposite activities going on in the universe at any given point in time..
- Related to Ying Yang, it also represents spiritual awakening and the combination of the worldly realm with the spiritual realm.
- Cycles such as birth and death, creation and distraction occur alongside each other and are thus, represented by the double spiral.

Triple Spiral:



- The Triple Spiral is also called a **triskele**.
- It is still found a several Megalithic and Neolithic sites.
- The symbol is thought to be so old that it may predate the Celts entirely.
- Many people around the world consider it a symbol of great beauty and mystery.
- The drawing represents the three powers of maiden, mother and crone.
- It is a sign of female power and especially power through transition and growth.

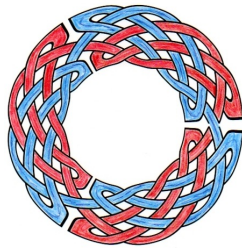
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Celtic Knot:



- These seemingly endless knots are widely recognized.
- They have their earliest beginning in Celtic culture.
- They are also the most adapted symbols that translate into Celtic Christianity.
 - These knots were used heavily on monuments as well as manuscripts, such as the 8th century Lindisfarne Gospels and the Book of Kells.
 - Still, no religious or spiritual significance has ever been attached to the knots.

Circular Knot:



- While the Celtic knot looked endless, the circular knots actually are.
- They are meant to represent infinity or even eternity.
- The idea of lasting forever was very appealing, and still is to millions, and that's why this design is still seen in the world today.

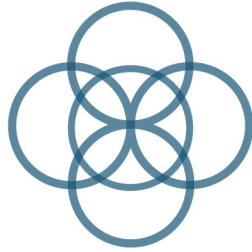
Three Rays (Arwen):



- The first and third rays in the symbol represent male and female energy (respectively).
- The middle ray represents the balance of both energies.
- Arwen is the 3rd symbol down.

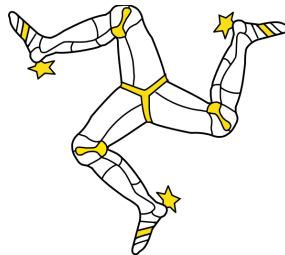
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Five-fold Knot:



- This pattern also represents balance.
- The four outer circles symbolize the four elements: earth, fire, water, and air.
- The middle circle unites the elements in reaching a balance between all 4 elements or energies.

Triskelion:



- This symbol represented progress and completion, and was very prominent in Celtic culture.
- Looking like a wheel with three spokes sticking out.
- It represents actions, cycles, revolutions, completion, competition, or man's progress.
- This symbol is shown on the flag representing the Isle of Man.

Celtic Cross:



- Associated with Celtic Christianity, this cross actually predates Jesus, long before his birth.
- Its roots dates back thousands of years and is thought to be a variation of the sun crosses.
- The center circle represents the Sun, with the extensions representing its rays.
- Among the Irish, it is believed it was St. Patrick who first introduced the symbol to the people.
 - To enable to the pagan Irish to better understand and accept Christianity, St. Patrick superimposed the Christian symbol of the cross over the Druid symbol of the wheel of the Sun (representing the eternity of life with no beginning and no end).
 - The purpose was to demonstrated the similarities between the Druid and Christian concepts on the eternity of life.
- In Christian Ireland, these symbols could be seen standing large on hills or in shaded forests, or even hanging about the neck of a Celtic priest.
- A standing cross is called a high cross or an Irish Cross.