



We want to share Dalarna's rich folk costume traditions through history with our exhibit "Dressed in Dalarna". Folk costumes have evolved over time with changes in society, economy, and the arrival of new fashions and imported materials.

FOLK FASHION

In most of the country, rural people used simplified interpretations of current bourgeois fashion. This socially modified dress is usually called "folk fashion" and it had similar characteristics throughout the country during a given time period.



CLOTHING FOR DAILY USE

Folk costume denotes clothing that has locally distinctive features. This means that people from a specific village or area have dressed in a way that is drastically different from that of neighbouring communities. These unique pockets of locally specific dress are found in only a few rural areas in Sweden. There are variations for all the important milestones in one's life as well as clothing for daily work. Every woman, man and child wore folk costume as their regular clothing.

FOLK COSTUMES FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS

When rural folk stopped wearing their folk costumes daily and for special occasions, the bourgeoisie adopted this style of dress for celebrations and festive occasions. They were worn for folk music and dance events, graduation ceremonies, birthdays, Christmas eve, weddings and business and public events. Inspired by the National Romanticism of the period, different folk costumes were reconstructed or created for regions that have never had a traditional folk costume, for example places in Southern Dalarna.



VARIATIONS OF TRADITIONAL FOLK COSTUMES

Traditional folk costumes in Dalarna were still used daily during the second half of the 19th century. In general, men stopped using their traditional dress much earlier than women, and they adopted newer fashions during the 1880s. Women from many regions continued using their folk costumes well into the 20th century. Variations of traditional dress were also used in new contexts as outfits for special occasions such as folk music and dance events, Midsummer celebrations and graduation.



IN CHURCH

Every Sunday was ranked in terms of religious importance and required a special folk costume variant to be worn while at church. Other events or factors, such as high-ranking holidays, weddings, periods of mourning and seasons could affect how one was dressed.

WINTER

Winter clothing was made of lambskin or goatskin, with the fleece side used as a lining. Women's bodices and men's waistcoats could be made of chamois while aprons were made of tanned leather.



KNITTING

Women were always expected to keep their hands busy while travelling or herding animals. It was important to capitalise on every waking minute to meet the constant demand for workwear. New gloves and socks were knitted and set aside for future use.

SAMISK DRÄKT

Sweden's southernmost Sami village is located in Idre, Dalarna. Southern Sami folk costumes are used on festive and formal occasions by women, men and children. Unlike parish folk costumes, Sami folk costumes are not distinguished by parish or country borders and cover much larger regions.



THE SMALL DOLLS

In 1892, Dala Fornsal was opened for the public. Small dolls dressed in folk costumes were ordered from several parishes in 1865 and were displayed there.



FORMAL OCCASIONS

The finest, most expensive, and often more colourful folk costume variations were used for important festive occasions. Mourning attire was, however, much simpler and plainer to show that one was sombre during this solemn period.

”CROWN BRIDE”

The bride’s fantastically extravagant appearance was possible because of the materials available at the time. Silk ribbons, shiny and metallic papers, and glass bobbles were mass-produced during the second half of the 19th century. This bride’s borrowed dress is a bourgeois fashion in Rococo Revival style dating to the middle of the 19th century.



EVERYDAY LIFE AND WORK

Clothing was expensive and required a lot of time to produce. When clothes became worn out they were used while doing daily chores. These clothes were repaired and reused as it was important that nothing went to waste. This behaviour had more to do with good housekeeping than poverty.

CHILDREN'S CLOTHES

The newborn baby was swaddled with a wide woven band until the age of six months. For the christening, extra fine caps adorned with precious fabrics were used. The baby was placed in a beautifully decorated christening bag or a christening cloth was placed over the swaddling. Both boys and girls wore traditional dresses (kolt) until school age, and in some areas even longer.



THE WORLD COMES TO DALARNA – TRADE ROUTES AND GOODS

People from Dalarna were one of the country's most mobile groups, along with peddlers from Sjuhäradsbygden, the Sami, travellers and the Romani. The tradition of going on "herrarbete," or travelling for employment, was common in the area north of Lake Siljan already by the 17th century. Due to the population boom during the 18th century, the practice also spread to the parishes south of Lake Siljan. Newer materials and luxury goods could quickly reach the province quickly from cities and markets in other parts of the country or the world.

