

# SYMBOLISM of PYSANKY

## COLORS

*The colors used in pysanka design are steeped in symbolism. Each carries a message of good will for the recipient such as happy family life, peace, love, good health, or success.*

**BLACK:** Said to represent the absolute, constancy, eternity or the womb, black may also denote death, or eternal life.

**WHITE:** Purity, virginity, innocence, and birth, are symbolized with this color.

**YELLOW:** The symbol of light and purity. It speaks of youth, happiness, the harvest, hospitality, love and benevolence. It is the color consecrated to the light deities and is the Christian symbol of recognition and reward.

**ORANGE:** Symbolic of endurance, strength and worthy ambition, orange is the color of fire and flame. It represents the red of passion tempered by the yellow of wisdom. It is the symbol of the golden, everlasting sun.

**GREEN:** As seen in the spring renewals, green symbolizes the breaking of shackles, freedom from bondage. It is the color of fertility, freshness, health and hopefulness. In the Christian context, it represents bountifulness, hope and the victory of life over death. It is the color of Christmas, Easter and Epiphany.

**RED:** The magical color of folklore, red is considered a positive color signifying action, fire, charity, spiritual awakening. It also glorifies the sun and the joy of life and love. Consequently, pysanky with red fields or motifs are typically designated for children or youth. In the Christian symbolism, it denotes the divine love and passion of Christ.

**BROWN:** Brown is symbolic of the mother earth, bringing forth her bountiful gifts.

**BLUE:** Blue is used sparingly. It signifies the blue skies or the life-giving air and is a talisman of good health. Also symbolizes truth, fidelity, higher life and trust.

**PURPLE:** When used in pysanka ornamentation, purple speaks of fasting, faith, patience and trust.

from: [http://eggs-files.tripod.com/pysanky\\_4.html](http://eggs-files.tripod.com/pysanky_4.html)

## LOCAL RESOURCES FOR SUPPLIES

### RAINBOW FABRICS, CRAFTS & THINGS

50 Bolinas Rd., Fairfax, CA 94930  
(415) 459-5100 • web: [rainbowfabrics.net](http://rainbowfabrics.net)  
Rose Taber, proprietor

### THE CANING SHOP

926 Gilman St., Berkeley, CA 94710  
(510) 527-5010 • web: [caningshop.com](http://caningshop.com)

## SYMBOLS

*The patterns used in pysanka design are steeped in symbolism. Like the colors used, each symbol imbues the egg with good wishes for the recipient.*

**SUN:** Source of light, life and heat; can be represented as a circle, flower or spiral.

**STARS:** Fortune, growth, success; often have even numbers of points (even numbers represent good fortune).

**CIRCLES:** Powerful form of protection; evil cannot penetrate; generally go all the way around the egg as bands or belts.

**SPIRALS:** Defense or protection.

**MEANDER LINES:** Goes all round the egg in predictable pattern; eternity, cycles of nature.

**LADDER:** Prosperity, prayer; ascent to heaven.

**SPIRALS:** Defense or protection.

**TRIANGLES /BASKETS:** Holy Trinity; filled with a screen it is a net, symbolizing Christianity

**HEARTS:** Symbol of love; generally a central motif.

**DIAMONDS:** Symbol of knowledge.

**CROSS:** Christ, Four Corners of the World.

**WATER:** Wealth (no harvest without rain). Represented by two or three waves in symmetrical order.

**WHEAT:** Wishes for good health and good harvest; symbol of life work.

**PINE NEEDLES (and other tree symbols, such as leaves, acorns, etc):** Health, stamina, eternal youth, long life.

**DEER, HORSES, RAMS:** Wealth and prosperity.

**BIRDS:** Spring, good harvests, pushing away evil; feet, eyes, beaks carry the same meaning as the whole bird.

**SNAKE:** Protection from catastrophe.

**FISH:** Christianity.

**FLOWERS:** Beauty and children. Roses, poppies are popular.

from: *various sources*

## WEBSITES

**[www.learnpysanky.com](http://www.learnpysanky.com):** great, comprehensive site with patterns, resources, history and shared advice.

**[www.ukrainiangiftshop.com](http://www.ukrainiangiftshop.com):** "World's largest source of Pysanky & Pysanky supplies." Some patterns. This family has written some of the definitive books on Pysanky.

## BEGINNING PATTERNS



## INTERMEDIATE PATTERNS



## ADVANCED PATTERNS

