

Aran Jumper (sweater) in Irish is *Geansaí Árann*

The Remarkable Aran Sweater: from Rural Ireland to International Icon

BY IRISH TRADITIONS

An Art form from Generations Past



Aran Islands Historic Photograph of Sweaters – Early 20th Century



1910s – An Irish Fisherman from the Aran Island Irish Fishermen in Aran

Some sentences have been removed from the text below. Choose from the sentences A-I the one that best fits into each gap. Write the corresponding letter in the boxes. There is a sentence that you do not need to use.

A She commissioned the first order of an Irish Aran Sweater for her store.

B Vogue was not the only reason why Aran knitwear sprang to expansion.

C We carry a wide variety of knitwear.

D The Aran sweater has come a long way from rural Irish knitting needles to an international legacy.

E This feature in the internationally published fashion monolith was a major achievement.

F The winds and waves from the Atlantic Ocean make for challenging fishing conditions.

G Notable faces include Grace Kelly, Steve McQueen and the Clancy Brothers on the Ed Sullivan Show.

H Over the lifetime of the Aran sweater, these stitches took on various significance and meanings.

I Their goal was to make the sweaters both a work of art and functional for what their fishermen needed.

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At the turn of the 20th century, Irish fishermen needed their clothes to be resilient against water, very warm, sturdy, and simple to repair. They were constantly battling the harsh weather of the Aran Islands, off the coast of Galway and Clare.

For generations, the women on the Aran islands improved on the patterns of jumpers from the era and gave sweaters a unique Celtic touch.



Fisherman's Wife Spinning Irish Wool 1910s Aran Islands

Irish women were the ones that began knitting the tight and intricate cable, trellis, diamond, and honeycomb stitches.

Some are based on myth or hearsay (note: any family-specific patterns have been debunked). Most take inspiration from Celtic designs and their original importance in Irish artwork. Their Aran sweaters were the first ones knit with unwashed cream-coloured, or *báinín,* wool yarn. The unwashed, unscoured wool retained its natural lanolin and other oils, making it water-repellant and resistant to the cold Atlantic waves.

From a Local Treasure to a World Icon

In the 1930s Dr. Muriel Gahan helped to open "The Country Store" – a brick and mortar hub in Dublin responsible for selling handcrafted goods from rural Irish artisans.

She later helmed organizations such as The Irish Homespun Society and the Irish Country Markets Ltd – each served an integral part of showcasing Irish goods to a wider audience.

Other major players included Patons, the company first to commercially produce Aran sweaters. And the company Standún from Spiddal, a manufacturer who first exported the sweaters to the United States in 1950.





Original Aran Sweater Pattern from Patons



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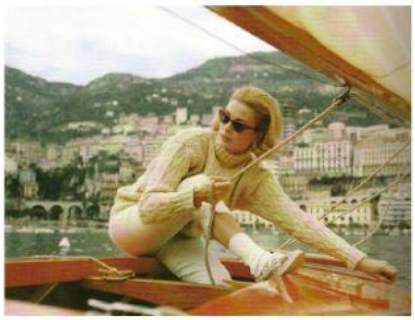
As Aran sweaters became available for purchase, the publication Vogue took notice of the intricate and masterful patterns. In 1957 Vogue published a knitting pattern for the Aran sweater.

Within a few short years, the Aran Sweater was suddenly everywhere.

Celebrities began to wear the signature cable and diamond knit patterns in magazines and film, bringing the Aran Sweater to icon status.

Within a decade, demand for Aran sweaters grew to the point that the manufacturers had to fight to keep up! The demand for Irish wool and Irish sweaters drove the value of a good handmade Irish sweater to the point where it is now considered an expensive heirloom treasure.

The First Vogue Spread featuring the Aran Sweater – Vogue Knitting 1957Grace Kelly on a Yacht in an Aran Jumper





The Clancy Brothers in their Signature Aran Sweaters.

The Modern Aran Sweater

As we pass the turn of the 21st century, hand-loomed and machine loomed knitwear has changed the industry in a multitude of ways.

As fashions change, the traditional Aran stitches have stayed a major inspiration to designers envisioning new styles of sweaters. These are not your grandad's sweaters … but they are certainly still steeped in the tradition of masterful Celtic craftsmanship. Take a close look at today's sweaters with modern silhouettes, and you'll still see the cables, diamonds, and trellises originally designed by your ancestors.

Today you'll find Merino wool, cashmere, or synthetic fibers also knit in the Aran stitches. These options help create an amazing amount of diversity in modern Aran sweaters.

Our selection varies from traditional styles of the early 20th century to modern variations of the early 21st century.

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100% Merino Wool Trinity Zip Rib Hooded



Single Button Cardigan 100% Super Soft Merino Wool



Tundra Heart Stitch Side Zip Hooded Jacket



Dromore Aran Troyer in Navy, 100% Merino Wool. Made in Ireland. in Navy.



White Two-Toned Plaited Celtic Cardigan



Cowl Neck Patchwork Sweater Plum Nua Super Soft Merino Wool. Made in Ireland.



Men's Super Soft Quarter-Zip – 100% Super Soft Merino Wool



Child's Merino Half Zip Sweater Army Green

There you have it: the remarkable true story of the Aran Sweater. If only the Irish tradeswomen of the Aran Islands could see the amazing way their art irrevocably transformed international fashion. §

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