

# Do you know the history of the Matryoshka Dolls?





**Matryoshka dolls are wooden stacking dolls originally painted to look like a traditional Russian woman or 'babushka' wearing a sarafan. They are a popular souvenir and over time have become a symbol of Russia itself.**



**The dolls were first designed and painted by two men; Sergey Malyutin and Vasily Zvyozdochkin in 1890 north of Moscow, which continues to be famous for its Slavic culture and folk art.**



**The word 'matryoshka' translates to mean 'little matron' and is a common shortening of the old Russian name Matryona or Matriosha.**

**'Mater' has its roots in Latin and means 'mother' which has influenced the meaning and significance of the dolls.**



**Having a large and close-knit family is common and even important in traditional Russian culture with many generations and extended relatives playing an active role in the family dynamic, including grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins.**



**The Matryoshka doll is a symbol of the Russian babushka, a strong female matriarch and a central figure in the Russian family.**



**The idea for the dolls was based on a Russian nursery tale.**

**That old tale went something like this . . .**

# Happy Together

Once upon a time, a long time ago, there was a very little girl named Oksana who loved to run down the mountain. But she never went alone. Oksana always took one of her sisters with her. There were wolves on the mountain.



One day, all the women in her family were busy making brightly colored scarves to wear in the coming festival. Oksana's big sister had lovingly made a very small scarf, just the right size for Oksana.

# Happy Together

"There you go, my little sister," smiled Oksana's biggest sister as she tied Oksana's new scarf under her chin.

Oksana was very happy. She gave her biggest sister a hug of thanks and danced outside. Oksana swirled and twirled and spun around.



# Happy Together

"Stay close to the house," her mother called absently through the open door of the house.



"Yes, mother," Oksana said obediently. The ties of her scarf danced in the breeze. It was such a lovely day. Swirling and twirling, she moved farther and farther away from home without even noticing.

# Happy Together

Inside the house, her middle sister stood up and stretched. She leaned out the window to take a deep breath of clean mountain air.

Way in the distance, she could see a colorful speck swirling and twirling in the breeze. Her eyes narrowed. What was it? Could it be? Oh no!



# Happy Together

Shouting to her mother and grandmother and sisters, Oksana's middle sister flew down the mountain.

Her sisters ran quickly behind her.

Her mother ran swiftly behind them.

Her grandmother forgot her aches and pains and ran panting behind them.

When they all reached little Oksana, They hugged her tightly.



# Happy Together

Oksana's eyes widened nervously when she realized how very far away from home she had wandered. If not for the love of her family, she would have been all alone on the mountain. If the wolves had noticed, well, better not to think about the wolves.

Oksana and her sisters and her mother and her grandmother all walked up the mountain, happy together.

