

## Hat making

One of the traditional and widespread types of hats among Tajik people is called *toqi*, which is also common across the Central Asian land-mass owing its peculiarities in shape, color and designs. Hat making or literary hat stitching is a craft primarily followed as profession by women. In northern Tajikistan *toqi* is called *tuppi*. *Toqi* has gender specification and women's, men's or children and elderly people wear different types of *toqi*. In addition, *toqi* has great regional and interregional diversity in types, forms, design, fabrics used, and stitch patterns. Certain *toqi* has also specific names, such as *chakan*, *iroqi*, *zarduzi*, *torduzi*, *chortark*, *chust*, *chamgul*, *muhra-dor*, *kuluta*, *arusi* and *araqchin* and so on.

*Toqi* is not worn only for protection against natural elements, but also has deep root in local beliefs. Until the 60s or 70s of the last century

men always worn *toqi* and without that no one would sit at the table to eat as eating meal bare head was considered to be sin. In addition, men had to wear *toqi* during the mourning period at least for 40 days after the funerals. Today the tradition of wearing *toqi* among the youth has greatly diminished and usually elderly or middle age men wear it.

*Toqi* consists of 7 parts: *tora* (top of the toqi), *girda* (a belt that goes round it), *astar* (inside lining), *pilta* (cotton or paper filling to give the toqi desirable structure), *sheroz* (decorative hand weave or stitched ribbon attached round the toqi), *magzi* (a plain color ribbon used in certain types of toqi e.g. *chusti* or *iroqi*) and *pupak* (pom-pom attached in one side of the toqi). *Toqi* is made both manually and also using sewing machine. The fabric for stitching *toqi* is chosen







in accordance to its type and initial form is cut depending on its shape. For example *chusti toqi* is square where else *gulduzi toqi* is round. While for *chusti* silky black fabric is chosen for *gulduzi toqi* plain cotton fabric where the patterns are embroidered using colorful thread and normally has vegetal and floral designs. The sturdiness and structure in *toqi* is given by cardboard or cotton threads inserted between liner and upper piece.

First of all the upper and liner are cut and stitched than the belt to which the upper part is attached after these two are joined and stitched together the first stage of *toqi* stitching is finished. Afterwards the external decoration is applied such as decorative ribbon woven from colorful threads or plain black silk or velvet ribbon.

In past women would worn head scarf on top of their *toqi*, but these days *toqi* is worn also without extra covering on top of it.

