

How to...



Make Martenitsa dolls

Martenitsa decorations, made from red and white wool or cotton, are a traditional part of spring celebrations in Bulgaria. Woven dolls, pompoms, tassels and bracelets are given as gifts on Baba Marta Day (Grandma March Day) on 1 March. When a sign of spring is seen, such as a blossoming tree, a Martenitsa is often tied to it.

The ancient March festival, which is also celebrated in parts of Albania, Greece Macedonia, Moldova and Romania, has lots of folk stories attached to it. One says that Baba Marta is sometimes angry and sometimes cheerful – which is why the weather in March can be warm and sunny but also cold and frosty. Here, we show you how to make Pizho and Penda, male and female Martenitsa dolls.

What you need

- Scissors
- A ruler
- Balls of wool
- Sticky tape
- Thick card
- Small beads
- Glue

Pizho and Penda welcome spring.

TOP TIP

Glue small beads or card cut-outs on your dolls for eyes.



1 Cut two 25cm bits of wool in two colours, tie one end and tape to a table. Twist one around the other to make rope and tie the other end.



2 Cut a piece of thick card into a 20cm square. Wrap wool around the card 30–40 times, or 20–25 times if you're using thick wool.



3 Slide the wool carefully off the card. Tie one end of the twisted rope around the top. Cut through the loops at the bottom.



4 Pull the top section into a 2cm bobble to make the head, then tie around the "neck" with a piece of wool to make a tassel.



5 Repeat steps two (10–15 wraps) and three for arms, but cut both ends. Place inside the tassel. Tie wool around the "waist" and arm ends.



6 Make another doll and tie the wool at the top with the other end of the twisted rope. Divide the wool into legs and tie wool around the ends.

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