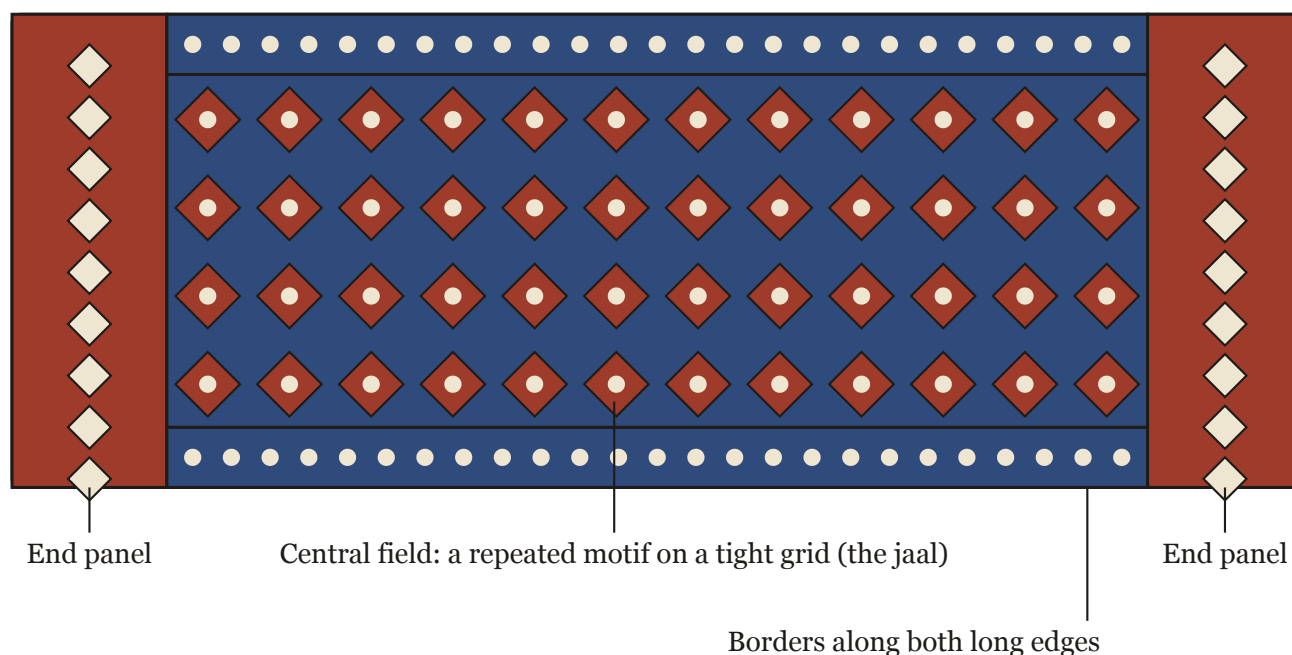


Ajrakh Motifs

A named sheet, with sources

Ajrakh is a resist-printed, naturally dyed textile made by Khatri artisans in Kutch and Barmer in India and in Sindh in Pakistan. Its motifs have names in the local language, most of them drawn from nature and the night sky. This sheet gathers the names that independent sources agree on, with what each source says they mean.



How to read these drawings. Each drawing is a simplified illustration of the form a source describes, for example “cloud” or “raindrops”. They are not copies of any artisan’s block. Real Ajrakh blocks vary from family to family and village to village; motif names are spelt in several ways because they come from Kutchi and Sindhi, not English.

Kutch Ajrakh Print of Gujarat is a registered Geographical Indication (GI Registry application 1050, certificate 22 April 2024, applicant Ajarakhpur Hastkala Vikas Sangathan). Only authorised artisans may sell cloth under that name. [P]

Compiled by Deesha Goswami, House of Falguni, Ahmedabad. September 2026.

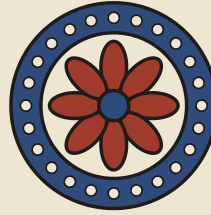


Kakkar

Also written: Kakar, Kakker

The cloud motif, a three-lobed trefoil. The same trefoil appears on the robe of the Mohenjo-daro 'priest-king' bust, which is why Ajrakh is often traced to the Indus Valley.

Sources: [G], [W], [M], [A]



Riyal

Also written: Bodi riyal (a variant)

A family of designs built around a circle. The name is taken from the riyal coin.

Sources: [G], [I], [W], [M], [R], [A]



Champakali

Also written: Champa kali

Named after the champa: a bud-like floral motif. The International Folk Art Market profile describes champa as a local shrub.

Sources: [G], [I], [M], [R], [A]

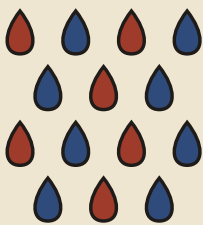


Kharek

Also written: Kharak, Kharekh, Kan kharek, Kan-karak

Dates, the fruit. Kutch is known for its own dates, kharek.

Sources: [G], [I], [W], [M], [A]



Mifudi

Also written: Keri mifudi (a variant)

Raindrops, often used as an all-over background.

Sources: [I], [M], [R], [A]



Badam

Also written: Badam-bhutta, Badam buto

An almond-shaped motif.

Sources: [I], [W], [A]

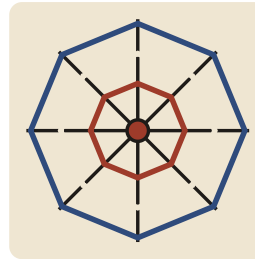


Keri

Also written: Kairi

The mango, the shape usually called paisley.

Sources: [M], [A], [L]

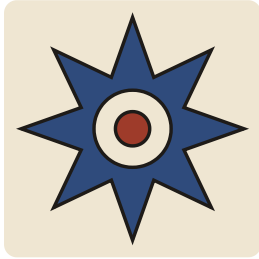


Koyaro

Also written: Koyyaro

A spider's web.

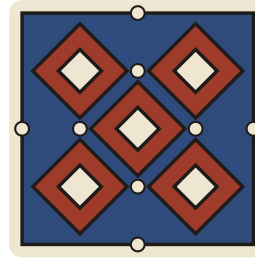
Sources: [I], [A]



Eight-pointed star

The eight-pointed star is one of the most recognisable Ajrakh motifs, part of the night-sky imagery the craft is known for.

Sources: [I]



Jaal

A web or lattice: the grid that holds the central field of the cloth together. The Crafts Museum describes the field as a repeated motif on a tight grid.

Sources: [G], [W], [C]

Parts of the cloth

Name	What it is
Chheda	the design printed at both ends of the cloth
Bopai	a running border that separates the motif sections
Madagulo	the lowest border; the source glosses mada as girl and gulo as flower
Tinnaro	three lines above the madagulo
Butto	the motif row above the tinnaro

Border names as recorded on an Ajrakh sample in the M.S. University of Baroda Textile Art Museum [M]. Layout from the Crafts Museum, New Delhi [C].

Printing stages

Stage	What happens
Rekh	outline printing, which leaves the white outlines
Kat	printing the black outlines
Phulli / Kan	resisting the small star-like areas
Gach / Khor	a two-step resist printing
Ekpuri and Bipuri	printed on one side of the cloth, or on both

Sources: [G]

More names in the record

These names are documented, but we could not verify their shape from written sources, so we have not drawn them.

Name	Note	Sources
Mohar	Also Ambri Mohar. The word also names the mohur, a gold coin.	[W], [M], [A]
Jalebi	Recorded as Jalebiya, Jaleyb and Jileb.	[G], [W], [M]
Taaviz	Also Tavith and Taweez; the word means an amulet. Wikipedia also lists Taweez Challo and Hasho Taweez.	[I], [W], [M]
Pencho	The Baroda sample uses pencho all over the central field in a one-drop brick repeat.	[M], [R], [A]
Char pa ek		[M], [R]
Nipad		[G]
Grinari		[G]
Raiya		[G]
Amlaliya		[G]
Saudagiri	A family of patterns on smaller grids, with more organic motifs inside a symmetrical lattice.	[G]
Sitar		[M]
Mohammad shahi		[M]
Ginni		[M]
Jimardi		[M]
Morpeech		[A]
Ishq pech	Also Badam ishq pech.	[W]
Ghaleecho		[W]
Wal		[W]
Chaanp		[W]
Chakki		[W]
Challo		[W]
Moti juran		[W]
Hasho jo asl		[W]
Hasho selemee		[W]
Hasho jo bazar		[W]

Where these names come from

The colours carry meaning too, but sources disagree. D'source (NID) gives red as earth, black as darkness, white as clouds and blue as the universe [D]; other accounts give blue as the sky, red as the land or twilight, and white as the stars. We report both rather than choose.

[G] Gaatha, Indian Craft Archive: Ajrakh Printing, Ajrakhpur (Gujarat). <https://gaatha.org/Craft-of-India/ajrak-gujarat-history-process/>

[I] International Folk Art Market: artist profile of Sufiyan Ismail Khatri, Ajrakh printer, Kutch. <https://folkartmarket.org/ifamartiststories/sufiyan-ismail-khatri>

[W] Wikipedia: Ajrak (section on jaal designs, Sindhi names). <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ajrak>

[M] Ajrakh sample in the Textile Art Museum, Faculty of Family and Community Sciences, M.S. University of Baroda, recorded on Traditional Indian Printed & Resist Textiles (2014). <http://indianprintedandresisttextiles.blogspot.com/2014/03/more-from-treasure-chest-of-indian.html>

[R] The Registry of Sarees: Ajrakh, the ancient craft of block-printing. <https://www.theregistryofsarees.com/blogs/news/ajrakh-the-ancient-craft-of-block-printing>

[A] Amounee: Ajrakh. <https://amounee.com/en-us/pages/ajrakh>

[L] Project Loom: Ajrakh, Part 6, Motifs and meanings. <https://projectloom.shobanarayan.com/ajrakh-motifs-and-their-meanings/>

[C] Crafts Museum, New Delhi, on Google Arts & Culture: Ajrakh, Rhythm of Blues. <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/ajrakh-rhythm-of-blues-crafts-museum-delhi/WAWWhiXYIwIA8A>

[D] D'source, Ajrakh Block Printing, Kutch (Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Sandhya B., NID Bengaluru). <https://www.dsourc.in/resource/ajrakh-block-printing-kutch-gujarat/introduction>

[P] Intellectual Property India, GI Registry: Kutch Ajrakh Print of Gujarat, application 1050. <https://search.ipindia.gov.in/GIRPublicSearch/Application/Details/1050>

Corrections are welcome, especially from Ajrakh printers. Write to the studio at houseoffalguni.com/pages/contact. Every correction is dated on the web page.