

reference guide for johnson bros china

Reference guide for Johnson Bros China is an invaluable resource for collectors, enthusiasts, and anyone interested in the rich history of this iconic brand. Johnson Brothers, a well-known English pottery manufacturer, has been producing fine china since the early 19th century. With its distinctive patterns and quality craftsmanship, Johnson Bros china remains a popular choice for both everyday use and special occasions. This reference guide aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the brand's history, popular patterns, identification tips, and care instructions, making it easier for you to appreciate and preserve your collection.

History of Johnson Brothers

Founding and Early Years

Johnson Brothers was established in 1883 in the city of Burslem, Staffordshire, England, by four brothers: Alfred, Fred, Henry, and Robert Johnson. They initially focused on producing earthenware, but their passion for quality craftsmanship soon led them to venture into fine china production. The company gained recognition for its innovative designs and durable products, quickly becoming a household name.

Expansion and Innovations

Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Johnson Brothers expanded its production capabilities and product lines. They introduced various techniques, such as transfer printing, which allowed for more intricate designs at a lower cost. This innovation helped the company cater to a growing market eager for decorative tableware.

By the mid-20th century, Johnson Brothers had established a reputation for producing high-quality china that appealed to consumers across the globe. The introduction of iconic patterns solidified the brand's status, making it a staple in many households.

Acquisition and Legacy

In 1968, Johnson Brothers was acquired by the American company, Wedgewood. Although the brand has changed hands several times over the years, it has maintained its legacy, with products still being produced under the Johnson Brothers name. The company's history and commitment to quality craftsmanship continue to resonate with collectors and enthusiasts alike.

Popular Patterns

One of the highlights of collecting Johnson Bros china is the variety of patterns available. Here are some of the most popular designs:

1. Old Britain Castles

- Description: This pattern features beautiful depictions of British castles, often surrounded by lush landscapes. The intricate detailing and rich colors make it a favorite among collectors.
- Colors: Predominantly blue and white, though other color variations exist.
- Production Era: First produced in 1920.

2. Friendly Village

- Description: This charming set showcases idyllic rural scenes, including quaint houses and pastoral landscapes. Each piece has a unique design, making it a delightful collection.
- Colors: Earthy tones, primarily green, brown, and cream.
- Production Era: Introduced in 1953.

3. Rose Chintz

- Description: A delicate floral pattern featuring intricate rose designs. The elegance of this pattern makes it popular for both formal and casual dining.
- Colors: Soft pinks and greens on a white background.
- Production Era: Launched in 1932.

4. Eternal Beau

- Description: This pattern features graceful floral motifs with a vintage touch. The combination of colors and patterns evokes a sense of nostalgia.
- Colors: Variations in blue, pink, and yellow.
- Production Era: Released in the mid-20th century.

5. Wildflower

- Description: Celebrated for its vibrant floral designs, this pattern brings a lively touch to any table setting.
- Colors: Bright colors like red, yellow, and blue.
- Production Era: Introduced in the 1970s.

Identification Tips

Identifying Johnson Bros china can be a rewarding experience, especially for collectors. Here are some helpful tips:

1. Markings

- Backstamp: Most Johnson Bros china will have a backstamp that includes the name "Johnson Bros," often accompanied by the pattern name. The design of the backstamp can change over time, so it's essential to familiarize yourself with various versions.
- Date Codes: Some pieces may include date codes, which can help you determine the production year.

2. Material and Quality

- Type of China: Johnson Bros china is typically made from earthenware, which is less durable than bone china but offers unique aesthetic qualities. Look for signs of wear, such as crazing or chips, to assess the age and quality of the piece.
- Weight and Feel: Genuine Johnson Bros china tends to feel sturdy and well-crafted.

3. Pattern Recognition

- Familiarity with Patterns: Familiarizing yourself with the popular patterns will help you identify pieces more easily. Consider consulting pattern guides or online resources dedicated to Johnson Bros china.

Care Instructions

To preserve the beauty and longevity of your Johnson Bros china, proper care is essential. Here are some care tips:

1. Washing

- Hand Washing: It is advisable to hand wash Johnson Bros china with a mild detergent and a soft sponge. Avoid abrasive cleaners and scouring pads to prevent scratches.
- Dishwasher Use: If you choose to use a dishwasher, place the china on the top rack and ensure that it is securely held in place to avoid movement during the wash cycle.

2. Storage

- **Avoid Stacking:** To prevent chips and scratches, avoid stacking plates directly on top of each other. Instead, use protective padding or separators between pieces.
- **Climate Considerations:** Store your china in a stable climate, avoiding extreme temperatures and humidity that could cause damage.

3. Microwave and Oven Safety

- **Microwave Use:** Not all Johnson Bros china is microwave safe. Check for any labels or markings indicating microwave compatibility before use.
- **Oven Use:** Similar to microwaves, most Johnson Bros china should not be used in an oven, especially if it has metallic accents.

Conclusion

The reference guide for Johnson Bros China serves as an essential tool for anyone interested in this timeless brand. With a rich history, a variety of beautiful patterns, and practical identification tips, collectors can deepen their appreciation for the artistry and craftsmanship of Johnson Bros china. By following the care instructions outlined in this guide, you can ensure that your china remains a cherished part of your collection for years to come. Whether you're starting a new collection or looking to expand your existing one, Johnson Brothers offers something for everyone, making it a delightful pursuit for enthusiasts.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the history behind Johnson Bros china?

Johnson Bros was founded in 1883 in England and became well-known for its durable and stylish china, particularly in transferware patterns. The company gained popularity for its affordable dinnerware that appealed to middle-class households.

How can I identify Johnson Bros china patterns?

To identify Johnson Bros china patterns, look for the backstamp on the underside of the piece, which often includes the name 'Johnson Bros', the pattern name, and a date code. Reference guides and online databases can help match patterns to their names.

What are the most popular patterns of Johnson Bros china?

Some of the most popular patterns include 'Old Britain Castles', 'Friendly Village', and 'Daisy'. Each pattern features distinct designs, often depicting English landscapes or floral motifs.

Is Johnson Bros china dishwasher safe?

Many Johnson Bros china pieces are dishwasher safe, but it's best to check the specific care instructions for each item. Generally, hand washing is recommended to preserve the patterns and finish.

Where can I find a reference guide for Johnson Bros china?

Reference guides for Johnson Bros china can be found in antique shops, online marketplaces, and dedicated collector websites. Books on vintage tableware may also include sections on Johnson Bros.

What is the value of Johnson Bros china?

The value of Johnson Bros china varies widely based on the pattern, condition, and rarity. Common pieces may sell for \$10-\$50, while rare patterns or complete sets can fetch hundreds of dollars.

Can Johnson Bros china be repaired if damaged?

Yes, Johnson Bros china can often be repaired if damaged. Professional restoration services can fix chips or cracks, but this may affect the value, so it's essential to weigh the decision carefully.

How should I care for my Johnson Bros china?

To care for Johnson Bros china, avoid extreme temperature changes, use gentle cleaning methods, and store pieces carefully to prevent chipping. For long-term storage, wrap items in soft cloths.

Are there any fakes or reproductions of Johnson Bros china?

Yes, there are fakes and reproductions of Johnson Bros china. Collectors should be cautious and look closely at markings, quality of craftsmanship, and compare pieces against known authentic items.

What resources are available for Johnson Bros china collectors?

Resources for collectors include online forums, collector clubs, dedicated websites, and books on vintage china. Social media groups can also be a valuable source for sharing information and tips.

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