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What do the viking runes mean

The ancient Vikings had their own methods of finding their final destination. But their compasses were much more than a guiding device. By Samuel Hogarth Verified Expert When settlers first arrived in Iceland in 874CE, they brought the Old Norse religion with them. This included belief in and worship of the Æsir and Vanir, the Gods of the Norse religion. It also incorporated ideas about magic and how it could be utilized for personal success in a variety of ways. The original inhabitants and their descendants developed a series of Icelandic magical staves; symbols to channel magic. These staves have become intertwined with Norse mythology today, so the symbols appear in many places. One of the most popular of these staves is Vegvisir, or the Viking Compass.How do you pronounce Vegvisir?Pronounced "VEGG-vee-seer", this word translates to 'sign post' or 'way finder'. It is an eight-pointed shape, with each point having a unique design. It is one of many Icelandic magical staves, or galdrastafir, which were supposedly used to channel magic in specific ways. There were sigils for protection, strength, guidance and assistance with specific tasks or areas of life. In many cases, the symbols were made by combining the runes that made up the Old Norse alphabet. They were drawn onto specific areas of the body or physical objects, such as the side of boats or buildings. Despite Iceland officially being Christian since the 10th century, Old Norse mythology has survived and is undergoing a resurgence.What does the Viking Compass mean?The Viking compass does not necessarily date back to the Viking era, which ran from the eighth to the eleventh centuries. Vegvisir is mentioned in the Huld (Hidden) Manuscript, collected together in the late 19th century by Geir Vigfusson. The Manuscript is a collection of 30 magical symbols from various times and explanations of their purpose. Vegvisir's intent is described as follows: "If this sign is carried, one will never lose one's way in storms or bad weather, even when the way is not known."And so, the symbol was drawn onto the forehead to ensure that the person didn't get lost when leaving home. Supposedly, it was drawn with blood.It's possible that the symbol did not exist at all during the Viking age. It's more likely that it appeared much later, and was borrowed by the Nordic people from elsewhere in Europe. Nonetheless, it carries a heavy importance in Icelandic culture today. The Old Norse religion has seen a resurgence in the Nordic countries in recent decades. In 2017, over 1% of Icelanders belonged to Ásatrúarfélagið (The Ásatrú Fellowship), which was the religion of the Vikings. This religion involves the study of the Old Norse Æsir gods, such as Óðinn, Þórr and Loki.As a result, Norse mythology and everything connected to it has risen in popularity. This has manifested in visual art, music, jewelry, decoration, and business. Björk, the famous Icelandic singer, had Vegvisir tattooed on her arm in 1982, bringing the symbol into the mainstream. In 2020, Vegvisir can be seen in paintings, as tattoos, as decoration, and on bracelets and necklaces. Even if it has no actual connection to Viking culture, a connection has certainly been created. As a result of the association, Vegvisir and other Norse protection symbols have a strong significance in Iceland.Vegvisir vs AegishjalmurDue to it looking fairly similar, Ægishjalmur, another magical staff, is sometimes confused with Vegvisir. In fact, Ægishjalmur not only looks different, but it also serves an entirely different purpose as a magic channeler. Also known as the 'Helm of Awe', Ægishjalmur (pronounced "EYE-gis-'hlowim-er") is also an eight-pointed magical staff. But unlike its Way Finder cousin, the Helm of Awe's eight trident points are all traditionally identical. Additionally, the symbol contains a circle in the center. It was drawn onto the forehead to protect the warrior who wears it and strike fear into the enemy. In the Poetic Edda, composed and compiled by Snorri Sturluson, the Helm of Awe was worn by the dragon Fafnir. The dragon attributed his success in guarding his treasure hoard to his wearing of the Helm of Awe. The poem states:The Helm of AweI wore before the sons of menIn defense of my treasure;Amongst all, I alone was strong,I thought to myself,For I found no power a match for my own.As it happens, the warrior Sigurd slew Fafnir and took Ægishjalmur, presumably a physical object, for himself.Other Icelandic StavesIf one wanted the selected symbol to have the desired effect, it was very important to follow the instructions correctly. The staves had to be drawn in the right place and in some cases a spell had to be uttered. Let's take a look at some of the other staves you may see around Iceland.ThjofastafurThis sigil is specifically for protection against thieves, however, it doesn't stop you from being stolen from. Rather, it will show you the face of the thief. You first had to carve Þjofastafur (Thjofastafur) onto the bottom of a wooden bowl. Then you fill the bowl with water and flowers from the yarrow plant. After reciting a certain charm, the thief's face will be revealed in the water. VatnahlífrThis staff offers protection from drowning and should be worn under the right arm. Drowning would have been a real danger for Icelanders; fishing has always been a significant part of its culture. From 1940, swimming lessons became mandatory for all children in Iceland. The death rate from drowning gradually lowered, and today there are very few deaths by water in the country. Since basically, every town in Iceland has a public swimming pool or hot springs, everyone has a safe place in which to learn. Gapaldur and GinfaxThese staves are used solely for assistance in the sport of Icelandic wrestling, known as Glíma. They were painted on paper or wood and placed in specific spots in one's shoes to be sure of victory. Gapaldur went under the heel of the right foot, and Ginfax under the toes of the left foot. Of course, the question is - what if both combatants wore the magical staves in their shoes?Whichever of the staves most appeals to you, you will likely find a piece of jewelry depicting it. Or, if you're really committed, you could just have the staff tattooed onto your skin. See how many of the Nordic symbols you can spot as you travel around Iceland. Look for them in company logos, artwork, and on souvenirs in gift shops. One thing is for sure, the prominence of these symbols will continue to grow. The Ásatrú Fellowship is the fastest-growing religion in Iceland. A temple is currently under construction in Reykjavik and will be open to all when it is complete.Samuel Hogarth, Reykjavik Cars. Have you been watching the TV show Vikings on television lately and it's making you feel in touch enough with your inner warrior to try and teach your kids about viking history and culture? Perhaps your kids just started learning about vikings in school or became really intrigued by the time period after they saw the movie How to Train Your Dragon? Either way, we're a little bit obsessed with viking themed crafts right now and we're also pleasantly surprised by how many cool viking themed crafting tutorials are out there to help us indulge that interest! Check out these 15 DIY projects that will make you and your kids really feel like viking warriors by the time you're finished. 1. Cereal box viking helmet What better way to really enjoy your crafting process than to upcycle something while you're at it? Kix Cereal happens to agree! They'll show you how to turn regular cardboard pieces from an ordinary cereal box into a mock viking helmet that's perfect for sailing a pretend longboat. 2. Juice carton viking ship Are you fresh out of empty cereal boxes but you're still love to get your kids crafting with readily available kitchen supplies? Then grab your nearest empty juice carton instead! We adore this easily made longboat by Happy Brown House because the juice carton does all the hard work by giving you the shape and you can simply help your kids embellish their boat however they please! 3. Water bottle viking boat Do you like the idea of helping your kids make their own viking longboat but you'd prefer to help them make one that will actually float, rather than getting soggy and sinking like the one above would? Then try following in Mama's Kram's footsteps and making the base of your boat out of empty plastic water bottles instead! 4. Authentic viking bread recipe Not every viking related DIY project has to be and artsy craftsy one meant for little kids. Believe it or not, there are still many age old viking recipes kicking around that will let you play viking in the kitchen too, whether your kids are old enough to help you or not. Check out this authentic recipe for viking bread on Raising Lifelong Learners. Have you always loved the iron, copper, and bronze jewelry that you've seen in pictures of vikings but you've never seen anything similar in modern, mainstream stores? Try making your own instead! You don't have to break the bank to make novelty viking jewelry; simple use some tinfoil, copper wiring, and rhinestones to make the rune-like markings, just like Angelic Scalliwags did here. 6. Viking runestone Speaking of viking runes, have you ever looked up the language and markings and investigated what your favourite quote or the names of your loved ones might look like? Well, Home School Days suggests using modeling clay to scratch the symbols onto the surface and create a runestone just like you might have found in viking villages thousands of years ago. 7. DIY viking Kubb set Historical accounts of daily viking society have taught us about a game called Kubb. If you ask us, this will be one of the most interesting viking crafts of all to your kids because it's an interactive one that they can actually play with after, and they'll learn from doing so. Check out how Sustainable Living Projects made this authentic Kubb set out of three short wooden blocks and five sharpened sticks. 8. DIY aged viking map Maybe your kids are so intent on playing viking that they're been begging you to help make them props for a while now, but you're ready to go all out and really give them the full "viking experience"? Then they're going to need a map for going on voyages! Check out how Angelic Scalliwags made this "authentic" viking map from modern graphing paper! 9. Easy viking lunch Have you and your kids been making viking crafts all day and now it's time for lunch, but they're just not ready for a break from all the themed excitement yet? Then make sure lunch follows suit! We love the way Happy Brown House shaped the top of the sandwich, gave it banana horns, and used raisins and pretzels for some detail in order to make an awesome little viking helmet meal. 10. Leather iron age shoes Perhaps you're actually the one with the viking intrigue, rather than your kids, and you're looking to make yourself a DIY craft that you might actually use and feel rather proud of? Then we definitely suggest these gathered leather shoes that are actually an accurate representation of what women would have worn in the Iron Ages when vikings ruled. Get the pattern for creating your own pair of leather shoes from Earth and Living. 11. Cardboard viking shield Did your kids love their cereal box helmets so much that they're back and begging you for more easy viking gear that won't take long to make? Then grab the next closest cereal box and get to work on this adorable little cardboard viking shield! Kix Cereal shows you how it's made. 12. Painted paper vikings Sometimes you just can't beat a little bit of classic paint and paper crafting time! Just because you've handed your kids standard painting supplies, however, doesn't mean they can't still incorporate their love of viking stories into their arts and crafting time. Check out these hilarious little painted vikings on Painted Paper Art. 13. Viking hat cake Maybe your kids love vikings so much that they actually asked you to throw them a viking themed birthday party? Well, if you ask us, we think that sounds like a great idea! We're also glad to report that Bombshell Bling has you covered when it comes to the party cake because they've already made a cake design that looks like a classic horned viking's helmet! 14. Backyard viking play tent Have you and your kids just finished reading about viking shelters and homesteads, talking at length about how they built their homes on the road as they went off to grand expeditions throughout the lands? Well, then we think they'll pretty excited to read about how Adventure in a Box made this gorgeous viking tent in their backyard and then outlined the process so that you can make one too! 15. Clothespin dragon Okay, okay. There's no real historical or scientific fact confirming that vikings actually had dragons that they battled or tamed and flew around on. The dragons were, however, a symbol of power and success in viking society, so we figured we'd be safe putting at least one viking themed craft on this list! This adorable little dragon is actually made from a clothespin and some construction paper, which we think is fantastic.(found on Kix Cereal) Do you know someone who loves Viking era things as much as we do? Share this post with them for a little bit of crafting inspiration!

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