

The Rita Rugs Buyers Guide

- Rug Quality
- Measuring Rooms
- Designs and Styles





The worst mistake a buyer can make is go by price alone, because there are many factors upon which price depends.

Just as housing costs in the city of Chicago are different in different neighborhoods, so are the prices of 6-by-9 Bukhara rugs.

When you decide to invest in a quality handmade Oriental area rug , you also want to make sure it is the right size, the right color, and the right design. That's why Rita Rugs believes in keeping thousands of rugs in stock for you to choose from. The more knowlegable you are about Oriental rugs, the more you'll come to appreciate Rita Rugs.



Advice to buyers by Sudershan Goel, Founder and Owner

Welcome to Rita Rugs, one of the preeminent Oriental area rug retailers in the Chicago area.

We built our reputation by looking out for the needs of our customers, especially when it comes to sharing our knowledge to help them make wise decisions on their rug investments.

First of all, let's learn some of the basics behind Oriental Rugs. The more you understand their origins, lore, design and creation, the better you can make a proper choice for your home.



Room Design 101: Get Out Your Tape Measures

Properly done, a rug can anchor an entire room. If you take the time to look closely at all the design opportunities, you can create a room that not only captivates your guests, but delights your family as well.

But before we get to some design suggestions, let's start with learning how to take proper measurements.

Measuring Bedrooms: There are a couple of options for placing area rugs in your bedroom. You can either use a large size area rug or several smaller size rugs around the bed. Depending on which option you choose, the rug size should be large enough for you to take a step or two when getting out of bed.

Measuring Dining Rooms: Measure the length and width of your dining table and add 4 feet overall to allow enough space for chairs to be easily pulled in and out. Most dining room tables require a rug that is at least 8 feet wide.



Measuring Living Rooms & Family Rooms:

There are a couple of questions to consider when measuring your living or family room for an area rug because furniture can be centered on the rug or positioned off of the rug depending on the size of the room and the look that you are trying to create. Since these rooms can be very important to your family, make sure you take a little extra time and effort to make your choice the best it can be.



Here's what we recommend you bring along:

- Measurements of room
- Rug size desired
- Fabric swatch – seat cushion, drape fabric, arm chair cover
- Paint swatch
- Photos of entire room, showing whole layout if possible

The more ideas and information you bring along with you to Rita Rugs, the better chance we have to find the perfect area rug for your home. Here are some other questions to ask yourself before looking for a rug:



Do you want all of your furniture to be on the rug? If so, measure the perimeter of your furniture grouping and add six to twelve inches past each grouping, depending on the size of your room.

Do you only want the area rug to be placed under the coffee table as an accent?

If so, measure your coffee table and add enough to the length and width for it to be to scale within the furniture grouping.

How To Handle Entryways & Hallways

Consider purchasing a rug that can handle the high traffic that will occur in these areas. Popular rug choices for entryways and hallways are smaller size scatter rugs and runners. You can also add visual interest with different rug shapes like a round rug in these areas.

How To Handle Kitchens & Bathrooms. Most people prefer to place smaller size scatter rugs, accent rugs or runners in kitchens and bathrooms due to the size and function of this space in the home. Kitchens and bathrooms can handle more than one rug in smaller sizes depending on where the rugs will be placed. Scatter rugs are available in a variety of smaller sizes.



What makes an oriental rug?

An authentic Oriental rug is a handmade work of art representing an art form dating back to about 3000 B.C. The key word is “handmade”. Most are hand-knotted. Some, such as kilims and dhurries, are handwoven.

These exquisite treasures have been hallmarks of homes of distinction down through the ages. Interior designers often refer to them as “functional works of art for your floor.”

Such a rug will enrich and add character to any type decor...from ultra-modern to Victorian. Most become cherished family heirlooms, to be handed down to your children - and your children’s children.

With proper care, a fine Oriental rug has a life-span of up to 200 years!

What about machine-made rugs?

It is important to know that no machine-made rug is a genuine Oriental rug. Before shopping, it is wise to do a bit of “research”.

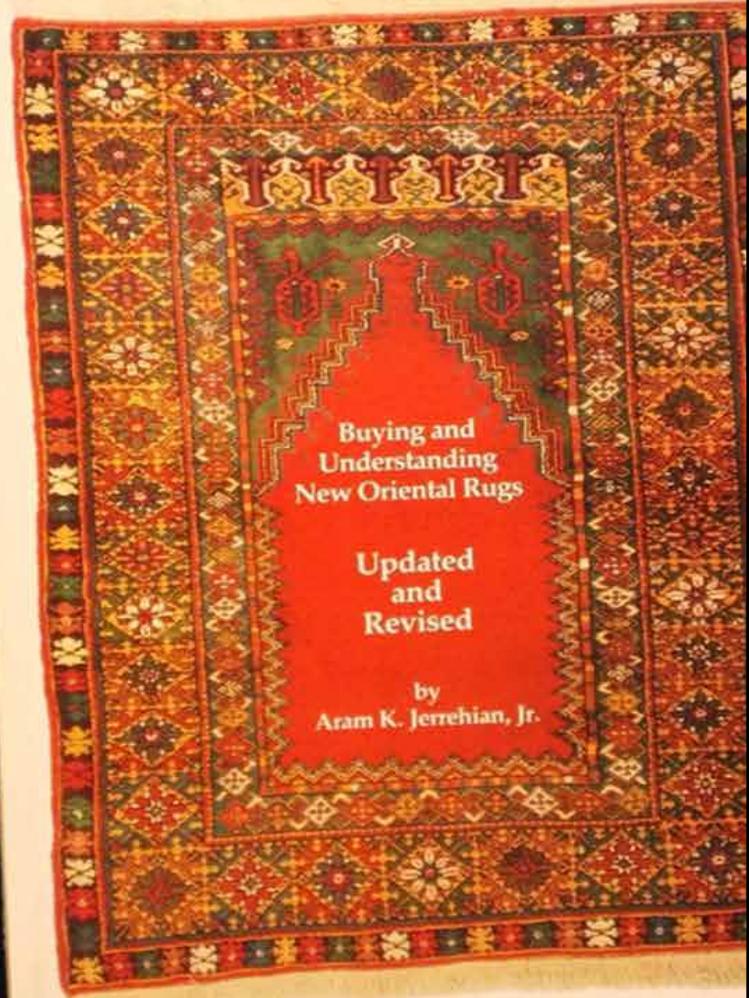
Unscrupulous dealers have been known to sell machine-made copies as genuine Orientals to the unwary.

While the information provided here can protect you from such a happening, your local library is a rich source of more detailed information. An excellent book on the subject of Oriental rugs is titled *Oriental Rug Primer*, by Aram K. Jerrehian, Jr.

Today in America, machine-made copies must by law, be labeled, “Oriental-design” or “Oriental-style”. This is something important to keep in mind when shopping for an Oriental Rug.



ORIENTAL RUG PRIMER



How do you identify an authentic Oriental rug?

When shopping for an Oriental rug look for these earmarks of authenticity:

- **Construction:** All genuine Oriental rugs are handwoven or hand-knotted through a strong cotton or linen backing. In hand-knotted rugs, separate the surface pile and look for the knot at the base of the yarn. A magnifying glass can be helpful here.
- **Surface Pile:** In a hand-knotted rug the pile is almost always wool and is clipped and sheared to form a dense, smooth, plush surface. Rugs with silk pile are rare and very costly and are usually used as wall hangings due to their delicacy.
- **Fringe:** One quick and easy way to tell a genuine Oriental rug from a machine-made copy is to carefully examine the fringe. It should be an integral part of the backing of a hand-knotted rug, an extension of the backing itself. The fringe in a machine-made rug is added on after the rug is manufactured.
- **Selvedges:** The selvedges or side edges of an authentic Oriental rug are overcast by hand. Copies are machine-bound or machine-serged.
- **Back design:** The design on the back of an Oriental rug is as well defined as it is on the front. The design on the back of machine-made rugs is less distinct. If the rug has a jute-backing which obscures the design, it is machine-made.



How do you judge the quality of an Oriental rug?

Not all genuine Oriental rugs are of equal quality.

In a hand-knotted rug, the knot-count can range from as low as 10 to 500 or more per square inch.

The higher the knot-count, the denser the pile and the finer the quality. Notice the fringe. Is it bulky or fine? A general rule of thumb is: The finer the fringe, the finer the rug.

Unlike most American rugs and carpets, thickness does not necessarily indicate quality in an Oriental rug - density does. For example, some of the finest Indian rugs have pile that is sheared very close.

These thin, dense, low-pile rugs have great durability and an amazingly velvety feel.

Run your hand over the surface pile of a hand-knotted rug. The wool should feel strong, smooth and elastic and the pile should be the same height from end to end. If it feels stiff or brittle, the wool is of an inferior grade. Undulations in the surface are the sign of poor shearing. In handwoven rugs notice the tightness of the weave. The finer the better.

When you find a rug you like, always have it laid out on the floor before you buy it. Does it lie flat without ridges, puckers or bubbles? It should. The sides should be relatively straight and parallel rather than crooked or uneven. The design should be clear all over - not blurred. Blurred designs often indicate that the dye is not colorfast and has run.



What exactly do the different Oriental rug names mean?

Tabriz, Sarouk, Bokhara, Kerman...just a few of the magical names you've read in prestigious interior design books and magazines. But what do they mean? Most people aren't sure and with good reason. Oriental rug names can indicate many things: The style of weaving (kilims, dhurries), its general design (prayer rug, garden design), its size or use, how it was made, and many more. Today, however, in new Oriental rugs (as opposed to antique Oriental rugs), the name most often indicates the region where the rug's design originated, not necessarily where the rug itself was made. If you are interested in the study of Oriental rug names, your local library is sure to have books on the subject.



The Land of Origin

Where a particular rug comes from is not just an important part of its story, but has a powerful effect on the look, color, pattern, and weave of the rug. Here's a simple overview of what to expect from different countries of origin.

Afghanistan

Rugs from Afghanistan tend to be quite stylized with a limited number of colors. The Afghan guls and the Ersari are similar to the "Bokhara" in pattern and color and are the basis for most Afghanistan rugs. Another popular type is the Belouch, which are primarily made by nomadic tribesmen. The Belouch weavers are particularly fond of prayer rugs in dark colors and primarily utilize geometric patterns.

Some Afghan-style rugs go through a process called "gold washing" in which the original red color is chemically changed to shades of gold, coral and amber. The effect is quite pleasing and often adds to the value of the carpet. To determine if a rug has undergone this procedure, spread the pile to expose the knots, which will remain unbleached and red.

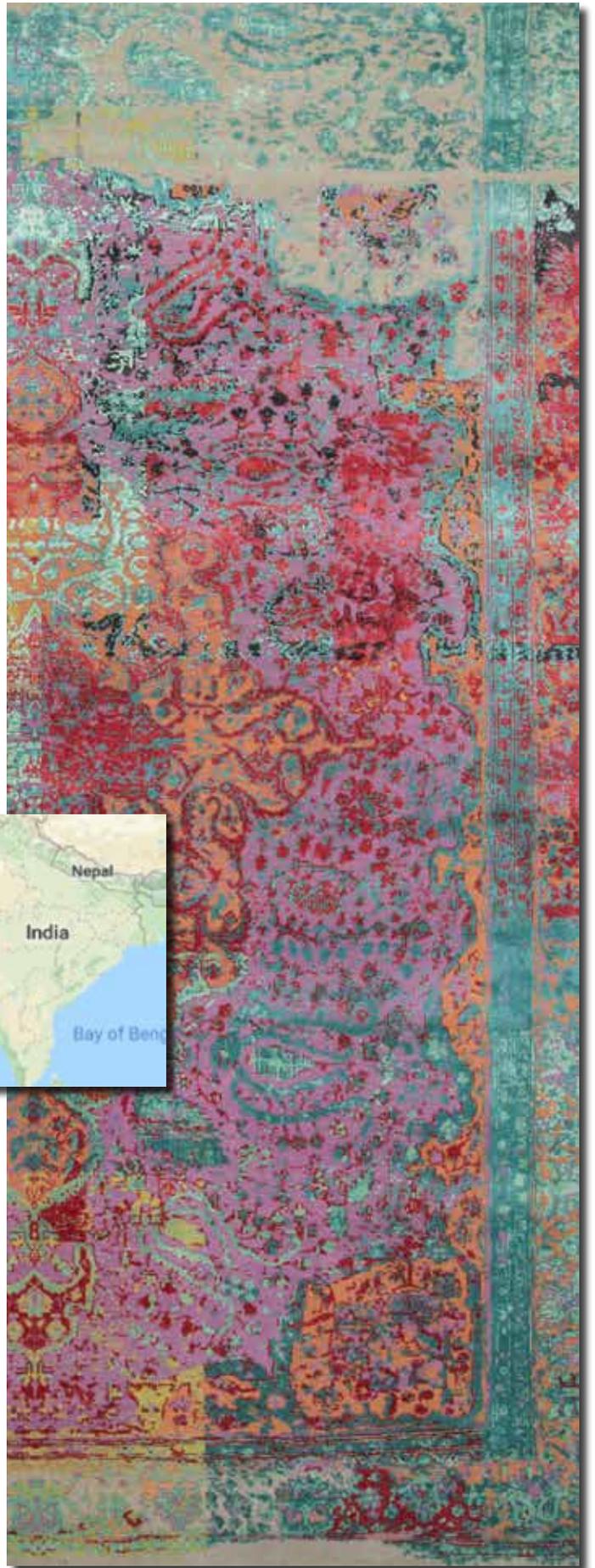


India

India, in recent years has become one of the leading centers of Oriental rug production due greatly to its large, primarily rural population. The rug industry has boosted the standard of living for many Indians while allowing them to remain in a rural setting instead of traveling to a city to find industrial employment.

More rugs are currently imported by the United States from India than from any other country. As most of the rugs produced are destined for export, Indian craftsmen are very conscious of market demands and rugs from India are available in a wide range of colors, sizes and designs.

Most of the patterns produced in India originated in other countries and practically popular carpet design is produced. Since the rugs are not representative of the area where they are produced, it's wise not to rely on the name of the rug for its place of origin. India is also a leader in producing the newly-popular dhurrie rug and there is a wide selection of charming flat-weave rugs from which to choose.



Iran

For many people, the term “Oriental” rug and “Persian” rug are mistakenly synonymous. The Persian empire was where rug-making reached its zenith during the 16th century and many of the traditional patterns and weaving techniques are still being practiced in Iran. In addition, there are other types of rug-weaving in Iran which range with simple pieces produced by nomadic people to highly sophisticated rugs produced in workshops which have preserved this historical Persian art.

Iranian rugs are usually named after the town, district or tribal area where they are produced and include the classic Kerman, Sarouk, Tabriz and Hirez. Each area has its traditional patterns and typical palette of colors. The design of Iranian rugs reflects the Persian passion for detail and displays an intricate interplay between geometric and floral patterns.

Because labor and production costs have risen rapidly in Iran and the amount of weaving has declined, rugs from that country are more costly than those of comparable quality from surrounding areas. The political situation has also contributed to making Iranian rugs more difficult to obtain. But despite the many problems besetting the country, “Persian” rugs continue to be much sought after and prized.



Iranian Rugs are named for the town where they are produced, and reflect traditional patterns



Pakistan

The surrounding countries have had a tremendous impact on Pakistan, and the result in the rug industry has been a blending of Persian, Caucasian and Turkish designs. When Pakistan was separated from India after World War II, the weaving industry went into a decline. Recent government support has resulted in a thriving industry for the country and Oriental rugs being produced there are increasingly more diverse and higher in quality.

One of the favorite patterns of Pakistan is the 'elephant foot' or 'gul' design of Bokharas.

In addition to the traditional red background, Pakistani Bokharas now are being woven in a wide spectrum of colors and in many different sizes. In recent years, Pakistani weavers have diversified into other designs and today are utilizing many of the traditional Persian floral patterns.



Pakistani Rugs are being handcrafted into more and more diverse designs for the global market.



Turkey

Turkey, once a center of rug weaving, suffered a decline during the past fifty years. The disruption of the first World War affected the industry for many years. It is only in recent years that it has begun to regain its standing in the marketplace. Because of this interruption in production, many of the available rugs from Turkey fall into the “semi-antique” (between 50 and 75 years old) and antique (over 100 years old) categories. These rugs are highly prized for their designs, colors and quality.

Today the Turkish government is encouraging rug weaving as a cottage industry. The rugs being produced are of high quality and faithfully follow the traditional designs. In response to the decorative needs in the United States, the traditional brilliant reds and blues are being softened and modified by Turkish weavers. While the number of relatively small, the rug weaving tradition is slowly growing and interesting rugs are again being produced in Turkey.



Turkish Rugs World War I interrupted the thriving Turkish rug making business, but it is making a comeback today with government help.



Other Origins Numerous other countries in Asia produce rugs, but they're often available in limited quantities, patterns and sizes. You can find high quality rugs from countries like Romania, Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria that have been produced in the traditional Persian patterns. Rugs from Tibet and Nepal usually follow traditional Chinese designs, but the colors tend to be brighter and the rugs smaller. Handwoven rugs are also exported from Spain, Egypt, Greece, Mexico, Morocco, Tunisia and Poland, but many are flat-woven rugs and the production is limited.



Nepalese Rugs are a good value these days, come in designs that are very contemporary and reflect worldwide color tastes well.

