

How to Identify Your China Pattern

Tea Notes from Porcelain Passport

Ever stumbled upon a beautiful plate at a flea market and wondered where it came from? Or opened your grandmother's cabinet and wished you knew the name of the pattern gracing those delicate rims? You're not alone -and the good news is, with a little patience and attention to detail, you can identify most vintage china patterns.

Here's how to start your own little investigation:

1. Flip It Over -The Maker's Mark Is Everything

Almost all fine china has a maker's mark or backstamp on the bottom of the plate, bowl, or cup. It might be a full logo, a wordmark, a symbol, or even a handwritten stamp.

Look for:

- Brand name (e.g., Noritake, Lenox, Royal Doulton)
- Pattern name or number (sometimes it's just a number like "Y5000")
- Country of origin ("Made in England" or "Japan")
- Any registered marks (®) or hallmarks

Write it down exactly -even odd abbreviations or stylized fonts can help identify the piece.



2. Use Trusted Pattern Databases

Once you've got the mark, start your search using these resources:

- Replacements.com -the best for pattern identification with photo matching
- The China Cabinet -another good visual reference
- eBay's sold listings -type in what you know and compare patterns visually
- Pinterest and collector forums -full of labeled images and friendly help

Pro tip: Replacements lets you search by shape + motif if you don't have the pattern name.



3. Pay Attention to Style & Details

Can't find a mark? Look closely at:

- Rim style (scalloped? gold-trimmed? platinum?)
- Colors and motifs (roses, bluebells, ivy, holly)
- Era clues (art deco styling, mid-century pastels, Victorian florals)
- Texture -some pieces are embossed, fluted, or have raised detailing

Even if you can't name it, describing the details can help you track down lookalikes.



4. Ask the Community

If all else fails, post a photo to:

- Reddit's r/whatsthisworth
- Facebook groups for china collectors
- Replacements.com's ID request service

Include photos of the front and back, measurements, and any info you have.

Final Thoughts

There's something deeply satisfying about putting a name to a piece -it connects you to its past and helps preserve its story. Whether you're building a collection or honoring a family set, identifying your pattern is the first step to truly appreciating what you have.

And if you ever need help... we're just a message away.

– The Porcelain Passport Team