

American Traditional Tattoos NYC

American traditional tattoos have played a foundational role in the ever-evolving sphere of tattoo styles and techniques. New school tattoos have since emerged that will take elements of American traditional tattoos, and then mix and develop these elements with other styles or totally unique designs.

No longer are the days when you would need to stick to a strict color palette and have thick dark outlines on every image. But you can still incorporate these elements into any tattoo to give it that iconic American traditional feel that is so prevalent when you look at the style in its pure form.



History of American Traditional Tattoos

American traditional tattoos stem from one of the most iconic historical tattoo cultures: sailors. Sailors traveling the world in the 18th century popularized tattoos during their travels, getting designs inked to represent their journeys while far away from home. In particular, many of these sailor tattoos emerged from Japan, China, and many of the Pacific Islands.

Fast forward to the first half of the 20th century when there were not one, but two world wars. Young men around the world were being sent to battle, some of them not returning. This caused a tremendous rise in tattoos, especially amongst American men who were using tattoos to signify the battles they fought in and other tribulations along the way.

What Are American Traditional Tattoos?

Artists began to pop up in America and develop their own styles. At the forefront of this was a former Navy man named Norman Collins, affectionately called Sailor Jerry. Sailor Jerry was heavily tattooed, learned his craft from Japanese tattoo masters, and with the United States being thrust into war against the Japanese after Pearl Harbor, promised to "beat them at their own game" employing their techniques alongside his own creativity and American patriotism.



Future of the Style

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American Traditional FAQs

What is the color palette of American traditional?

American traditional tattoos in their original form stick to a strict color palette. The colors seen include reds, greens, yellows, and a lot of black.

What images make the best American traditional tattoos?

There are a series of iconic centerpieces for American traditional tattoos.

Who invented American traditional tattoos?

No single person invented American traditional tattoos, but there are some iconic artists in the United States who contributed to the style.

Do American traditional tattoos age well?

Yes! American traditional tattoos, with their thick, bold outlines and deep saturation, will age better than many other tattoo styles.

Can you mix American traditional tattoos with other styles?

Yes! This is how styles continue to evolve. You can absolutely combine elements and imagery of American traditional tattoos with modern styles. Work with your artist for the best results.



American Traditional Cover-Ups

American traditional tattoos make for very good cover-up tattoos. The deep saturation of colors like reds and blacks alongside the flexibility in size makes for a great cover-up tattoo. However, covering up American traditional tattoos can be difficult for these same reasons. The bold outlines are hard to cover effectively.

Contact Us

Ask us a question or inquire about booking a time for your American Traditional Tattoo!

