

# The Muslim West | Settlements and Domestic Life

Domestic life: women as homemakers.

In the Muslim household women were responsible for the cooking and childcare. They would store water in large jugs, drawing from them as and when they needed. Oil and grain were also stored in such containers, and smaller ones were used for preserved fish, meat and fruit. They used milk to make dairy products, prepared meals using traditional recipes and cooked on charcoal stoves. Food was often served on tableware, especially at family parties, a chance for women to show off their culinary expertise.



**Name:**  
Distaffs (five examples)

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira end of 5th–first half of 6th century / AD end of 11th–first half of 12th century  
Almoravid

**Details:**  
Museum of Mértola  
Mértola, Beja, Portugal

**Justification:**  
Muslim women were responsible for the welfare of the family and spent much of the day in the kitchen. In the evening, by lamplight, they found time to spin, weave and sew.



**Name:**  
Cooking pot

**Dynasty:**  
Early Hegira 7th century / early AD 13th century Almohad

**Details:**  
Mértola Museum  
Mértola, Beja, Portugal

**Justification:**  
Muslim women were responsible for the welfare of the family and spent much of the day in the kitchen. In the evening, by lamplight, they found time to spin, weave and sew.



**Name:**  
Water pot

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira second half of 6th or early 7th century / AD second half of 12th or early 13th century Almohad

**Details:**  
Museum of Mértola  
Mértola, Beja, Portugal

**Justification:**  
Water pot, Mértola Museum, Portugal.



**Name:**  
Batta jug

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 13th century / AD 19th century Alawid

**Details:**

Batha Museum  
Fez, Morocco

**Justification:**

Muslim women were responsible for the welfare of the family and spent much of the day in the kitchen. In the evening, by lamplight, they found time to spin, weave and sew.



**Name:**  
Plate

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 361–543 / AD 972–1148 Zirid

**Details:**  
National Museum of Antiquities and Islamic Arts  
Algiers, Algeria

**Justification:**  
Plate, National Museum of Islamic Art and Antiquities, Algiers.



**Name:**  
Drinking vessel

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 7th / AD 13th century Almohad

**Details:**  
Museum of Archaeology  
Larache, Morocco

**Justification:**  
Drinking vessel, Museum of Archaeology, Larache, Morocco.



**Name:**  
Cup with inscription

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira second half of 5th or beginning of 6th century / AD  
second half 11th or beginning 12th century Taifa or Almoravid

**Details:**  
Mértola Museum  
Mértola, Beja, Portugal

**Justification:**  
Cup with inscription, Mértola Museum, Portugal.



**Name:**  
Oil lamp

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 405–547 / AD 1015–1152 Hammadid

**Details:**  
National Museum of Antiquities and Islamic Arts  
Algiers, Algeria

**Justification:**

Muslim women were responsible for the welfare of the family and spent much of the day in the kitchen. In the evening, by lamplight, they found time to spin, weave and sew.



**Name:**  
Lamp

**Dynasty:**  
Early hegira 7th century / Early AD 13th century Almohad period

**Details:**  
Mértola Museum  
Mértola, Beja, Portugal

**Justification:**  
Lamp, Mértola Museum, Portugal.

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**Name:**  
The Tavira Vase

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira end of 5th or beginning of 6th century / AD end of 11th or beginning of 12th century Almoravid

**Details:**  
Tavira Municipal Museum  
Tavira, Faro, Portugal

**Justification:**  
Muslim women were responsible for the welfare of the family and spent much of the day in the kitchen. In the evening, by lamplight, they found time to spin, weave and sew.

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