

Piggy bank

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Piggy bank.

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Materials glass

Measurements 8 x 12 x 7 cm

Historical context

This glass piggy bank represents a pig, an animal that has become emblematic for decorating bedroom furniture and storing savings. The tradition of using a pig as a piggy bank originated in the European countryside, at a time when this nourishing animal, easy to raise and fatten, symbolized affluence and a safe investment. For the peasant, owning a pig meant being able to eat to his heart's content, since once slaughtered, the animal provided fresh meat, blood for black pudding, charcuterie and cured meats.

Another custom, originating in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region, has it that peasants frequently took advantage of pigs' voracious appetites to make them swallow small bags containing silver coins, which they recovered when the animal died.

In both traditions, the symbolism of the pig paying once it has been killed is well captured in the fact that piggy banks were made of ceramic or porcelain and had to be broken to return the savings that had been stored inside. Hence the expression "casser son cochon" ("to break one's pig"), still in use today, to express the act of fetching money from one's savings.

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