



Silk weaving in Cambodia has a long history. The practice dates to as early as the first century, and textiles were used in trade during **Angkorian** times. Even modern textile production evidences these historic antecedents: motifs found on silk today often echo clothing details on ancient stone sculptures.

There are two main types of Cambodian weaving. The **ikat** technique (Khmer: *chong kiet*), which produces patterned fabric, is quite complex. To create patterns, weavers tie and dye portions of

weft

yarn before weaving begins. Patterns are diverse and vary by region; common motifs include lattice, stars, and spots.

The second weaving technique, unique to Cambodia, is called "uneven **twill**". It yields single or two-color fabrics, which are produced by weaving three threads so that the "color of one thread dominates on one side of the fabric, while the two others determine the colour on the reverse side." Traditionally, Cambodian textiles have employed natural dyes. Red dye comes from

lac

insect nests, blue dye from

indigo

, yellow and green dye from

prohut

bark, and black dye from ebony bark.



Cambodia's modern silk-weaving centers are **Takeo**, **Battambang**, **Beanteay Meanchey**, **Siem Reap**

and

Kampot

provinces. Silk-weaving has seen a major revival recently, with production doubling over the past ten years. This has provided employment for many rural women. Cambodian silk is generally sold domestically, where it is used in

sampot

(wrap skirts), furnishings, and

pidan

(pictorial tapestries), but interest in international trade is increasing.

Cotton textiles have also played a significant role in Cambodian culture. Though today Cambodia imports most of its cotton, traditionally woven cotton remains popular. Rural women often weave homemade cotton fabric, which is used in garments and for household purposes.

Krama

, the traditional check scarves worn almost universally by Cambodians, are made of cotton.