

Turkish Cotton vs. Egyptian Cotton and Microfiber too.

Contributed by Jay
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Hi Ray & Jay,

Question: I am looking for a quality bathrobe, but I am really confused with the terms Egyptian cotton, Turkish cotton, Micro fiber...

Thanks, will be looking forward to your answer.

I wanted to do a bit of historical research on this one since I am very familiar with the various properties of natural fibers, but knew next to nothing about man-made fibers. I figured it would be a good refresher on cotton too, since it is so ubiquitous today.

Egyptian cotton has long been the standard of perfection by which all other cotton has been judged. Egyptian cotton is known for its long staple (fiber length) as well as absorbency and softness. Long staple fibers when spun into yarn are much stronger than the short staple fibers that are harvested in Asia (Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan), much smoother and more durable to boot. Funny thing about Egyptian Cotton is that both varieties that make it up are North American native varieties introduced in the 19th century. Egyptian cotton has since been hybridized with local varieties which accounts for its unique qualities. Egyptian cotton is used in textiles that require softness and the ability to wick moisture, making any terrycloth bathrobe made out of it a top choice for comfort in my book.

Turkish Cotton is a luxurious long-staple fiber with a sheen that cannot be matched without extensive processing. Known for its strength and natural shine, Turkish cotton is a worthy competitor to Egyptian cotton's title. Most of the cotton grown in Turkey is also processed and woven into fabric in-country, deleting the high transportation costs, middle-man fees, import and export tariffs, etc. Turkish cotton fabrics are famous for their durability and softness, in fact most high-fashion jean designers use Turkish denim exclusively. A little early absorbency is sacrificed for the long-term fiber integrity that Turkish cotton exhibits, however after several washings Turkish cotton matches absorbency profiles with Egyptian cotton while maintaining its resiliency. If you're looking for a fancy bathrobe you won't mind stepping outside the house in, you can bet you'll find it made from Turkish Cotton.

Microfiber is a creature all unto itself. A blend of polyester and polyamides, this entirely man-made fiber is being hailed as a revolutionary product with miraculous properties. A properly constructed microfiber cloth can hold up to seven times its weight in water, locking it away within the fiber, making it a far superior absorber than any natural fiber. Microfiber is now a preferred fiber in sportswear after proving itself an excellent wicker of moisture away from athletes bodies, something that cotton cannot claim to do. Microfiber locks away dirt from surfaces it comes in contact with, while releasing said dirt when laundered. The fibers actually open up when washed, releasing any residue held within. Microfiber does have its drawbacks, however. Made from petrochemicals, if burned it will release toxic gases and it is not biodegradable. Microfiber also cannot be bleached or ironed as the chemical oxidation will break down the fiber and heat will warp the individual fibers rendering them ineffective. Proper care of microfiber will enable a textile made from it to last indefinitely, so if never having to buy another bathrobe again appeals to you, go for it.

Hopefully I've given you the background you were looking for on these three fibers and cleared up any confusion. If you're looking to buy bathrobes made from these fibers, check out the wares at the Bathrobe Shop .