



Washing Guidelines

General Information

I recommend washing your fabrics before use. Wash at no hotter than 40C. Some of these fabrics are dressmaking fabrics and will shrink slightly. If you are going to mix your African fabrics with others, try out some test pieces first to check that they will wash OK when they are pieced together.

Notes about specific fabrics

Indigo

Indigo dyed fabric often has a lot of excess dye in it. Indigo does not bleed, but it will 'rub-off' onto you and your sewing machine! Therefore, wash before use. Soak for at least 15 minutes in cold water. Then wash at 40C and rinse in cold water. Repeat until the water runs clear.

Kola nut and Indigo

Kola nut is a natural dye. The Indigo will react as above. I've found that a small amount of colour loss occurs in the fabric, especially with the Kola nut (brown). Wash at 30-40C – no hotter.

Indigo Dyed Shwe-Shwe from Da Gama Textiles

When you buy this fabric it's very stiff. It's just starch and will wash out, leaving a soft fabric. This fabric does shrink slightly.

Mud Cloth (also called Bogolan)

Hand-spun and woven in Mali, this fabric is dyed with natural dyes that are made from mud and plants. This fabric can be washed in 30C (cold) water without colour loss. However, as the dyes are natural and may wash out over time, dry cleaning may be preferable.

A simple test

A good way to test any fabric for colourfastness is to dampen a piece of white fabric, lay it on top of the 'suspect' fabric and iron them both until dry. If there is any rogue colour it will bleed out onto the white fabric.

All fabrics are 100% cotton unless otherwise stated.
