

Bamboo vs Cotton

Let's Compare Bamboo and Cotton:

As our world gets greener, bamboo is becoming more and more popular. Because it grows so quickly, bamboo is an easily renewable resource. It requires 1/3 the amount of water to grow that cotton uses and has no natural pests. This means that bamboo can be grown with little to no use of pesticides or herbicides whereas cotton often requires a large amount of pesticides to maintain growth. Bamboo plantations can quite easily be kept organic and replanted every year. Although organic cotton is readily available, there are still many pluses to using bamboo.

Bamboo fabric is very soft, often described as feeling like cashmere. This is because the bamboo fiber itself is naturally round and smooth without any chemical treatment. This means that there are no sharp spurs to irritate the skin. This means that bamboo can be worn directly next to skin, even with many people who are allergic to other natural fibers such as hemp or wool. Bamboo fibers are also quite long which means that there is less piling of the fabric than in the cheaper varieties of cotton. The softness and quality of the fabric itself seems to stand up to multiple washings. Many even describe the fabric as getting even softer with each washing!

Another unique quality with bamboo fiber is its antibacterial qualities. This unique antibacterial quality is due to an antimicrobial bio-agent called "bamboo kun" which is found naturally in the fiber. This kun makes bamboo a naturally antibacterial, antifungal and odor resistant fiber, through multiple washings. Cotton does not have anything like this. The bamboo kun helps to reduce bacteria that thrive on clothing and human skin. This means that the wearer and the fabric have less bacteria that causes unpleasant odors.

Bamboo also has excellent wicking properties. The textile resembles the plant in this aspect. The bamboo plant is highly water absorbent. It is able to take in up to three times its weight in water! The textile retains this ability to some extent, pulling the moisture away from the skin so that it can evaporate. Bamboo fabric also has some insulating properties. This means that the fabric will help the wearer stay warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer.

From a designer's perspective, bamboo is also an excellent fabric choice. It is a light, strong fabric that requires less dye than cotton. The color of bamboo fabric as opposed to cotton is also described as much more vivid. The fabric can be used in many ways from being woven to being knit. It drapes very smoothly and because of its greener properties, is a much desired alternative to cotton from a buyer's point of view.

In conclusion, bamboo textiles are swiftly coming to the market in many forms — from sheets to socks to just about anything you can think of. The pricing of bamboo may still be slightly higher than the better varieties of cotton, but demand will continue to bring the price down. There are also some concerns about the regulatory process of its development in China. However, green is the new black and China is definitely concerned about its economy, and the world pressure on the environment will keep their attention.. It is definitely becoming vogue to “go green”. And I think it's way past time for everyone to consider how their choices effect the environment around them. Even when the bamboo fabric is beyond usefulness, it is completely biodegradable in soil. And the decomposition process doesn't cause any pollution to the environment! Look for bamboo products when shopping the next time and see what you think.