

Piña - Luzon Lingerie circa 1918 – 1920 - Pineapple Fiber & Silk Fabrics in Manila, Philippines

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Shows the making of Piña pineapple fiber textile garments in the Philippines. Silent.

Public domain film from the Library of Congress Prelinger Archive, slightly cropped to remove uneven edges, with the aspect ratio corrected, and mild video noise reduction applied.

The soundtrack was also processed with volume normalization, noise reduction, clipping reduction, and/or equalization (the resulting sound, though not perfect, is far less noisy than the original).

Piña is a fiber made from the leaves of a pineapple plant and is commonly used in the Philippines. It is sometimes combined with silk or polyester to create a textile fabric. Piña's name comes from the Spanish word piña which literally means pineapple...

Production methods

Since piña is from a leaf, the leaf has to be cut first from the plant. Then the fiber is pulled or split away from the leaf. Most leaf fibers are long and somewhat stiff. Each strand of the piña fiber is hand scraped and is knotted one by one to form a continuous filament to be handwoven and then made into a piña cloth.

Producers

Kalibo, Aklan is the main and the oldest manufacturer/weaver of piña cloth in the Philippines which are being exported to various parts of the world most particularly North America, and Europe. Piña weaving is an age-old tradition which was recently revived in the past 20 years. History records suggest that Kalibo's piña cloth was traded during the Pre-Hispanic times and reached as far as Greece and Egypt during its heyday, although the pineapple plant was brought to the Philippines by the Spaniards from the Americas. Kalibo is also known for other native products such as handbags made of buri leaves which is a favorite for Caucasian females visiting the town. Pineapple silk is considered the queen of Philippine fabrics and is considered the fabric of choice of the Philippine elite. During the 1996 meeting of APEC in the Philippines, world leaders donned a pineapple silk Barong Tagalog from Kalibo during the traditional group photo.

Producers include De La Cruz House of Piña, Malabon Pina Producers and Weavers Association, Reycon's Piña Cloth and Industry, and Rurungan sa Tubod Foundation.

Uses

A major use for piña fabric is in the creation of the Barong Tagalog and other formal wear in the Philippines. It is also used for other table linens, bags, mats and other clothing items, or anytime that a lightweight, but stiff and sheer fabric is needed...

Sources for more information

In the July/August 17 issue of the Textile Society of Hong Kong Newsletter, Anne Harte, went to the Philippines and experienced the making of piña first hand. "We were given a demonstration of fiber extracting by hand. The fiber is scraped from the pineapple leaf using a piece of broken plate or coconut shell- a fast scraper can extract fiber from over 500 leaves per day." She goes on to write, "The cloth is used to make the traditional Barong Tagalog wedding attire, for men and blouses for the women." In addition, Harte saw the raw beginnings of piña "Our next visit was to see the raw materials first hand, a trip to one of the families who supply washed bastos, the extracted pineapple fiber, for paper thread. After walking a mile or so through sodden fields we arrived at the home of the Diat family and were welcomed with traditional Filipino hospitality; soft drinks and home made banana fritters. We were then treated to a demonstration of washing extracted pina fiber - bastos - in the stream beside their house. An order was placed for washed bastos and ilniwan - the finer extracted fiber - to be sent to Tina at a later date. The supply of native pineapple fiber is limited so KP may have to cultivate their own supply or else use the less desirable Hawaiian pineapple fiber". Harte then concludes by saying, "On my return to Hong Kong, I remembered the warmth and hospitality of our hosts. Observing people working with the raw materials of their locality, to produce items of beauty and integrity with limited financial resources was inspiring."

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