

Topic Page: [Velvet](#)

Definition: **velvet** from *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Fabric of silk, cotton, nylon, or other textile, with a short, thick pile. Utrecht in the Netherlands and Genoa, Italy, are traditional centres of manufacture. It is woven on a double loom, then cut between the centre pile to form velvet nap.

Summary Article: **velvet**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

fabric having a soft, thick, short pile, usually of silk, and a plain twill or satin weave ground. The pile surface is formed by weaving an extra set of warp threads that are looped over wires as in Wilton carpet, the rods being withdrawn after the weft thread is placed, leaving a row of loops or tufts across the breadth. The loops may remain uncut, forming terry velvet, or be cut, automatically in machine weaving or by a special tool in handloom. The fabric may also be woven double, face to face, then cut apart. Velvet is supposedly one of the silk weaves developed on the ancient shuttle looms of China. The most beautiful weaves, such as brocades, are still done by hand. India has produced velvet from remote times, often richly embroidered, for the furniture and trappings of royalty. Many fine velvets were made in Turkey, and Persia was famous for its beautiful designs and colors. Magnificent velvets were used in Europe in 12th- and 13th-century religious and court ceremonials. Lucca and Genoa apparently were the first cities to make fine velvets and excelled through the 16th and 17th cent. Genoese velvet was notable for designs formed by contrasts of cut and uncut pile. Venetian and Florentine fabrics were sumptuous brocades, floral designs on contrasting grounds or on cloth of gold. Utrecht made a rich, heavy velvet used for wall and furniture coverings. Modern velvets are of many types and grades. Lyons velvet has a stiff ground and erect pile. Transparent velvet has a sheer foundation. Panne velvet is a long-napped weave, pressed. Plush and velveteen resemble velvet and are sometimes used as substitutes; the weft loops, rather than the warp loops, form the pile on these substitutes.

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