

Ikat 101: Everything to Know About Its History, Production, and Use Today

Whimsical and colorful, imparting a jolt of energy into interiors, ikat fabric is handmade using the ancient Indonesian technique of resist-dyeing yarns prior to weaving them to create a distinct, dynamic effect. While original, authentic ikat dates back 5,000 years, today the term “ikat” often is used to describe the pattern that’s created via the ikat process—a blurred effect that’s employed in textiles such as upholstery, bed and table linens, and [window treatments](#), as well as in lampshades and wall coverings.

But what exactly is ikat? Why is it special? And what are the best applications for ikat in 2024? Read on to find out the intricacies of this unique dyeing technique; its interesting history dating back to prehistoric times; the cultural evolution of ikat from Central Asia, Northern Africa, South America, and Europe before finally being brought to Western civilizations; and how ikat patterns are translated today.

Obvious applications for ikat patterns are in pillows, upholstery, and window treatments, but these colorful designs work equally as well in lampshades, table linens, or even wall coverings.

“Ikat lends itself to relaxed residential styles, but the look of its soft, blurred edges also translates into a refined and stylish wall covering for commercial environments,” explains Marybeth Shaw, chief creative officer, design and marketing at wall covering manufacturer [Wolf-Gordon](#). “Wolf-Gordon’s pattern, Purr by Dorothy Coronas, part of our Clair PVC-free wall covering collection, features leopard spots elegantly adapted into a subtle ikat overlay with textile embossing.”