



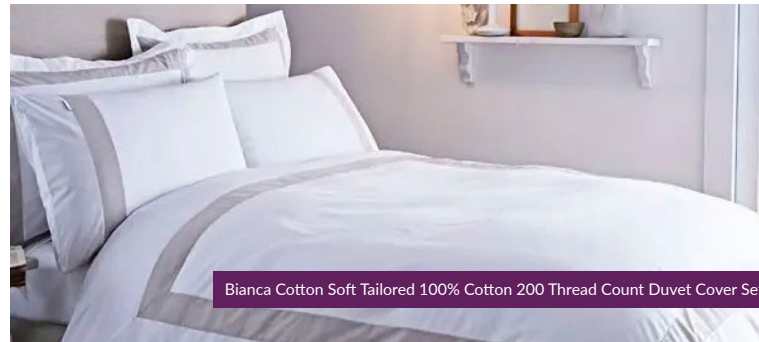
The materials used in bed linens define their qualities, so it is important to know what each does. Researching these options might sway your decision between spending more and saving in the long-term, or buying that fancy design, perfect for your home. The materials and processes behind making bedding can have impacts on our quality of sleep, skin health and finances.

For each of the following linens, we will give some information on their history, properties, expense and how to take care of them.

### COTTON

As one of the most common and popular bedding materials, cotton is a safe bet for many reasons. It is durable, affordable and easy to care for, making it a great choice for those who want to sleep well, but don't want to spend a lot of money or a long time doing research.

- Soft and comfortable
- A middle-ground in terms of affordability
- Good hot and cold temperature regulation
- Absorbent
- Naturally hypoallergenic
- Longer lifespan than man-made alternatives
- Easy to care for



### The History of Cotton

Although it is a staple in most households, cotton bedding has not been around forever. The applications of the cotton plant were discovered in the 19th century, and it revolutionised the linens industry. New machinery in the form of spinning wheels were created on a large scale to accommodate for the large demand for the new, affordable material. The UK's cotton industry was among the biggest in Europe during Victorian times, and the manufacturing methods have become safer and more efficient since.

### The Qualities of Cotton Bedding

Cotton remains very popular due to its heat-regulatory properties. When purchasing cotton bedding you will not have to worry about getting too hot or too cold. Compared to alternatives, it is very breathable and versatile, meaning that, in most cases, your body heat will keep you just the right temperature under the covers. Cotton bedding can reduce the chances of you waking up in the night, resulting in a comfortable and restful sleep.

### Affordability of Cotton Bedding

While not the most expensive option, cotton sheets with a high thread count (TC) can be pricey. The benefits to the higher spend, however, is that the linens will last much longer. The fine hairs that are found on the cotton plant are spun on looms to create threads, and the more that are woven in, the stronger the material. Cotton is also special due to the fact that the higher TC products are just as soft, if not more so, than lower ones.

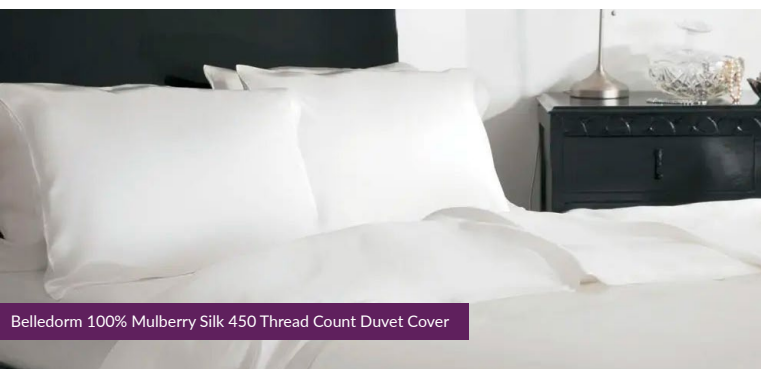
For affordable options, 150TC is considered standard quality, and 180TC is good. Cotton bedding with higher than 200TC is generally high quality, and this can go up to 1,000TC. The higher the TC, the higher the cost.

### The Lifespan of Cotton Bedding

Good quality cotton has a much longer lifespan than man-made alternatives, such as polyester, having the potential to last up to twice as long. While you may spend more initially when buying high quality cotton products, you may save in the long run.

### Caring for Cotton Bedding

Caring for cotton is simple, which is another reason why it is popular. You can use any detergent, and it should be washed in warm water. After, it can be dried on a line or in a dryer on a medium or low heat. When finished, remove quickly to avoid any wrinkling. It is important to know that, over many washes, cotton has a tendency to shrink, especially if it has a lower TC, so ensure your washes are not too hot.



### SILK

For luxury, silk is the obvious choice, being soft and sleek. Many people buy silk for aesthetic reasons as for its comfort, but it is expensive, so you may want to buy a specific product - such as a pillowcase for the silk's hypoallergenic and skincare properties, or you may want to splash out for the bedding make-over. If you are looking to make your bedrooms exude style, silk is your best bet.

- Soft to the touch
- Stylish but expensive
- Good temperature regulation
- Good for the skin due to natural proteins
- Long lifetime
- Difficult to look after

## The History of Silk

The discovery of silk is theorised to have originated in China sometime around 2300 BC, and it moved around the globe as different cultures gained access to its source: silkworms. The Crusades brought silk to Europe in the Middle Ages, and it became a very popular luxury during the European Renaissance. It has always been considered a wealthy material as its production relies on the tiny insects that create it. The methods of spinning it into clothing, decorations and bedding have changed over history as technology has improved, but it is still very impressive today.

After the introduction of the more affordable cotton, silk became less common. France even lost their production at one point in history due to an epidemic within silkworm populations. However, the material is considered a luxury once again.

## The Qualities of Silk Bedding

As well as being soft to the touch, silk can make a positive difference to your skin health due to its natural proteins that do not absorb creams, and prevent hair from drying out, reducing chances of matting.

## Affordability of Silk Bedding

Silk is not measured in TC, but in mommes. However, the logic is the same: the higher the momme, the better the quality. A common quality of silk is 19 mommes. As the momme increases, so does the amount of silk per square inch and the price. For instance, 22 momme silk has 20% more silk than 19 does.

Silk is more expensive than cotton, and is often the most expensive bedding option, but this does not mean it suits everyone's needs. Don't assume it is better to buy silk just because of its price.

## The Lifespan of Silk Bedding

While it is better to purchase higher momme silk, it can be very expensive to do so, and the comfort and aesthetic differences are not massive. The real reason to purchase higher quality silk is due to its lifetime. Silk has natural bonding properties, meaning it can last years with proper care.

## Caring for Silk Bedding

Proper care can be difficult. If done incorrectly, very expensive silk products can become damaged. Silk bedding should be hand washed in cold water with very gentle detergent for the best results. Alternatively, silk can be machine washed on a cold, delicate cycle in a silk-only load. If you have a laundry bag to wash it in, you should use it.

## FLANNEL

Warm, cosy and soft; flannel bedding is perfect for those living in cold areas, or wanting to enhance their winter comfort. Flannel bedding, much like flannel clothing, is fluffy and protective, able to trap body heat effectively. It is fluffy and soft to the touch, resulting in a very cosy sleep.

- Warm, cosy and soft
- Medium cost
- Not suitable for hot weather, better for the cold
- Can cause allergic reactions
- Medium lifespan, but gets comfier with time
- Careful washing process



## The History of Flannel

Originally created in Wales for farmers, flannel has been used since the 17th century due to its ability to protect against the elements. Being used for bedding came slightly later, but it was an inevitable natural progression. The 'lumberjack chic' style was popularised due to films depicting countrymen and women donning the iconic plaid patterns that are worn by everyone from hikers to rock musicians.

## The Qualities of Flannel Bedding

Flannel is made from a type of wool (or later, cotton), which is combed to create a fluffy, layered texture that has increased insulative properties. Flannel made from wool can cause issues for people with allergies, but its cotton counterparts are more affordable and safer.

## Affordability of Flannel Bedding

Flannel is measured in grams per square metre (gsm), which is not a measurement of its quality, but its heaviness. Lighter flannel sheets (below 170 gsm) are less durable but more breathable. Heavier options (170+) are warmer and more durable. Flannel sheets are not ideal for warmer climates as even lighter variants are still very warm compared to alternative bedding linens.

Flannel can be expensive due to its production as a thicker material, but more affordable versions are available.

## The Lifespan of Flannel Bedding

Bed sheets made from flannel usually last between two and three years, or up to four if they are looked after properly. The material decreases in integrity over time, but it actually becomes warmer and softer with use, as the fibres become more fluffy and disconnected.

## Caring for Flannel Bedding

When washing, use cold water on a gentle cycle to avoid creating friction that causes pilling - the bobbling of fabric.



## POLYESTER

The affordable choice, polyester bedding is cheap and easy to get hold of, and is popular among families needing to purchase lots of bedding. However, its low price comes at a cost to comfort, as polyester bedding can be itchy and irritative to the skin as it attracts static-electricity. Due to its moisture-trapping properties, it can be good for cold weather, but it has the tendency to lead to hot, sweaty nights. It is often blended with other linens to avoid this itchiness.

- Uncomfortable and irritative tendencies
- Very affordable
- Good insulation but poor heat regulation
- Good for blending with other materials
- Low lifespan
- Easy to care for

## The History of Polyester

Patented in 1928 by the British International General Electric Company, polyester is created from petroleum and is a very modern fabric compared to other options. It was first sold as a material that wouldn't wrinkle, but it became unpopular in the 70s due to its cheapness and uncomfot, especially in the heat. Today, it is often blended with cotton to reduce its negative traits while retaining cost-effectiveness. For a good night's sleep, it is not recommended to buy pure polyester bedding.

## The Qualities of Polyester Bedding

Polyester has a lot of negative traits, the most obvious being its scratchiness, low lifespan and poor temperature regulation.

## Affordability of Polyester Bedding

Polyester linen can be produced with a TC as high as 1000TC, but this doesn't make it more comfortable. Instead, buyers should look for TCs between 200 and 800 for bedding. Pure polyester bedding is one of the cheapest bedding options available, but its disadvantages offset the benefits of its cost effectiveness. Blends are slightly more expensive, but are generally better quality.

## The Lifespan of Polyester Bedding

Despite lasting up to five years, polyester bedding decreases rapidly in quality over time, meaning you may want to purchase new linens before then. While having an initial cost benefit, you will have to purchase more of it than you would using alternatives, creating more waste and spending over time.

## Caring for Polyester Bedding

The material is easy to wash and it dries quickly. Wash polyester bedding in warm water using mild detergent. It is wrinkle and stain resistant, but this means removing wrinkles and stains from it is also difficult.

## BAMBOO/RAYON

A less popular option in western countries, bamboo linen is very similar to cotton: surprisingly silky, soft and durable for its cost. However, many 'bamboo' bedding products may actually be created using rayon - a much cheaper and less environmentally friendly option. When purchasing bamboo products, make sure you research this to check that you are getting the genuine product.

- Comfortable and soft
- Can be expensive, but there are cheaper options
- Sustainable and eco-friendly
- Make sure it is 100% bamboo, or a good blend; avoid Rayon at all costs
- Potential to last a very long time
- Needs attentive care



## The History of Bamboo and Rayon

The eastern-originating linen was a staple in countries such as China, India, and Indonesia for thousands of years and, due to its sustainability, has stimulated production in western culture. Created from a bamboo pulp, the plant material is fast-growing and does not require pesticides, fertiliser or irrigation, making it very easy to source.

However, the introduction of viscose production methods led to a much cheaper version using rayon. This material is made using a chemical process, and is much worse for the environment. China is the leading producer of rayon bamboo linen, and has lax human rights and environmental laws. Rayon's semi-synthetic properties and chemical production have linked it with health problems, such as nausea, headaches and chest pain caused by its toxicity. In the long term, it has been linked to anorexia, paralysis and even Parkinson's disease.

Bamboo linen has fantastic potential for sustainable, high-quality bedding, but we would advise avoiding rayon at all costs.

## The Qualities of Bamboo Bedding

Despite being made of a tough, woody material, bamboo linens are very soft and are durable. They also have good heat regulatory properties, but if you are living in a cold climate, flannel might still be a better choice.

## Affordability of Bamboo Bedding

Genuine bamboo linen is usually more expensive than cotton, but less costly than silk.

When shopping for bamboo products, aim for 300TC or higher for the most comfort and, even though it is more expensive, try to purchase sheets made from 100% bamboo. Higher quality linen will be more expensive initially, but will last longer, saving you money in the long run.

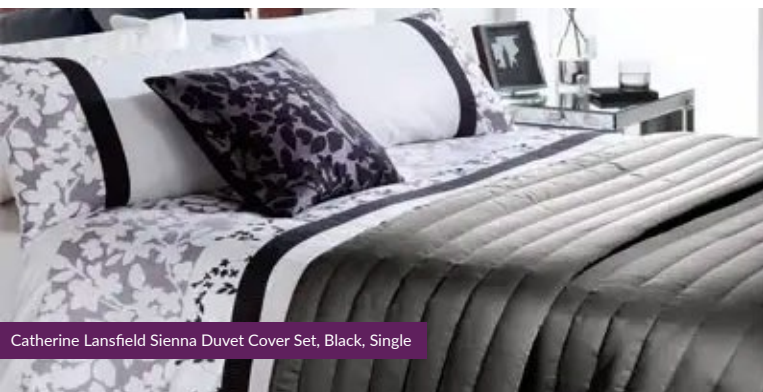
## The Lifespan of Bamboo Bedding

With care, bamboo linens typically last three to five years, but some have managed to sustain their quality for a maximum of 15, showing just how good the material is. Bamboo sheets hold dye well, meaning they are much less likely to fade quickly than alternatives. There are different types of bamboo weave, with percales and twill being the most durable. Rayon is much less durable and does not have high-elastic recovery, meaning it can be damaged easily.

## Caring for Bamboo Bedding

When washing bamboo sheets, wash in cold water and dry on a low heat. Rayon bamboo becomes weak when wet, meaning washes over time can cause significantly more damage than pure bamboo linens would suffer.

While more expensive, bamboo sheets will last you a much longer time than cheaper alternatives, and could even save you money if cared for properly.



Catherine Lansfield Sienna Duvet Cover Set, Black, Single

## BLENDS (POLYESTER COTTON)

Linen blends are a more modern creation, and are perfect for those looking for shared properties between materials where one offers something the other doesn't. A cotton and polyester blend will be more affordable than purchasing pure cotton and will be more comfortable than polyester; however, it is less comfortable than pure cotton. Blends are created to improve the properties of one material, but the other often suffers.

Cotton and polyester blends are the most popular solutions for affordable bedding, and are very popular for children's bedding.

- Takes the qualities of different materials and blends them
- Affordable, decent insulation and heat regulation, but not as good as natural alternatives
- Can last longer than cheap materials, but less time than expensive ones
- Caring methods vary depending on the blend

## Caring for Blended Bedding

The suggested methods for washing blends vary depending on the materials used, and are often a middle ground between the two. For example, cotton-polyester blends should be washed using mild detergent in lukewarm water on a gentle setting.

Blends are often unique, so it is advised that you research the specific one you are buying to determine exactly what you should do to properly look after it, and whether it has any allergenic properties.

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