

TWEED

RAW MATERIALS

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The story begins with pure virgin wools which are blended together to gain the advantages of their unique qualities and characteristics. Although the wool used to make Harris Tweed is principally taken from flocks reared on the mainland of Scotland, in the early summer the island communities join together to round up and shear the local sheep to add their locally reared wool to the mainland clip.

PROCESSING AND WARPING

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WEAVING

The warp is delivered, together with bobbins of yarn for the weft, to the homes of the weavers along with a pattern instruction card from the mill. All Harris Tweed must be, by law, handwoven on a treadle loom by the weaver at his own home. Once complete the bolts of raw tweed are collected from outside the croft gate and returned to the mill for finishing.

TWEED

FINISHING

The 'greasy' cloth from the oily looms is now thoroughly washed and conditioned removing any impurities. The lengths of clean cloth also pass through one more essential quality control activity where careful eyes and experienced hands ensure that there are no imperfections.

Finally, various finishes can then be applied to the tweed to meet the customer's specification before pressing and rolling. The finishing process, like all the other stages in the manufacture of Harris Tweed, must, in accordance with the 1993 Harris Tweed Act, take place in the Outer Hebrides.

STAMPING

After finishing the last and most vital stage of production can begin. The tweed is then presented to the Harris Tweed Authority's inspectors, and if all the necessary regulations have complied with it is stamped with the Certification Mark - or ORB MARK - as it is known throughout the world. The Orb stamp is the mark of authenticity and the woven label issued with the cloth to the customer confirms it.