

Linsey-woolsey (less often, **woolsey-linsey** or in Scottish English, **wincey**) is a coarse twill or plain-woven fabric woven with a linen warp and a woolen weft. Similar fabrics woven with a cotton warp and woolen weft in Colonial America were also called linsey-woolsey or wincey. The name derives from a combination of *linen* and *woolen*. This textile has been known since ancient times; known as Shatnez in Hebrew, the Torah and hence Jewish religious law explicitly forbid wearing it.

Linsey-woolsey was an important fabric in the Colonial America due to the relative scarcity of wool in the colonies. Many sources say it was used for whole-cloth quilts, and when parts of the quilt wore out the remains would be cut up and pieced into patchwork quilts. Some sources dispute this and say that the material was too rough and would have been used instead for clothing and occasionally for light blankets. It was also used as a ground fabric for needlepoint.

Linsey-woolsey was valued for its warmth, durability, and cheapness, but not for its looks. In her autobiography *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* Harriet Jacobs writes, "I have a vivid recollection of the linsey-woolsey dress given to me every winter by Mrs. Flint. How I hated it! It was one of the badges of slavery."

Linsey-woolsey is also sometimes used to refer to 18th century woven coverlets or bed coverings made with a linen warp and woolen weft. The term is sometimes incorrectly applied to glazed textiles.

Linsey-woolsey continues to be woven today in small quantities for historical recreation and Colonial period decorating uses.