

Louisiana PASS



Basket weaving- Photo courtesy of Susan D. Rose and the women and children of Cameroon

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Basket Weaving

Archaeologists believe that baskets are the world's oldest human tool. Although baskets are believed to have existed much earlier, our first real evidence of basket use comes from Egypt, about 10,000 to 12,000 years ago. Originally, baskets were used as containers for food, clothing, seeds, and many other things (this was before Tupperware was invented!). They were generally made of natural materials such as roots, tree bark, and certain grasses.

There are five main styles of baskets: coiling (from grasses), plaiting (from ribbon-like materials), twining (from bark), wicker, and splint (from ash and oak). These styles of basket weaving are found all over the world. This is because when explorers traveled to other countries, they traded goods that were contained in baskets. People in that country would study the baskets and apply the same technique to making their own baskets.

Although baskets are useful as tools, they are also considered an art form. Aside from the different types of weaving, basket weavers create beautiful and very complex designs, using different colors, to make baskets look unique. While so many other things nowadays are mass-produced by machine, basket weaving is always done by hand no matter where you go. No machines have ever been created that can weave baskets. That means that, just like fingerprints, no two baskets are ever exactly alike.

