

Meet the Maker

Ato Dunk'u

Author: Sue Malvern Photography: © Sue Malvern

All over Ethiopia men and women wear the shamma, a thin cotton shawl, handwoven and left plain or with a decorative border called a tibeh. There are weavers everywhere, working on the sides of roads, in towns and villages. Weaving is done by men, while women prepare the cotton and wind the bobbins. One typical weaver is Ato Dunk'u who has set up his pit-loom by the side of the road in Lalibela near a cafe. He weaves fine cotton shawls on a two-shaft loom with his feet operating the treadles in the pit. He has a temple, an adjustable stretcher to help keep the warp ends parallel, and he tensions his warp on a post at the foot of his loom, while the end of the warp is tied to a post by his right hand so he can simply reach out when he wants to wind the cloth forward. Exquisite fine cloth is produced with an extremely simple loom, and a very skilled weaver.

A film about cotton weaving:
<https://vimeo.com/129475454>

