

Timeless pashmina

Ever imagined a fabric so fine that wrapping it around you feels warm and soft, weightless and comforting, all at the same time? Appropriately named the "soft gold of high Asia" and "diamond fabric", pashmina shawls have a similar effect when they touch the skin and instantly make one feel luxurious and classy.

Their famous durability is evident as the royal families handed them down for generations. However, today, one does not need to be regal to own a pashmina shawl, or even visit the high altitudes of Indian Kashmir, Pakistan and Nepal. They are available at most renowned retailers of fashion clothing across the globe.

WEAVING PASHMINA

The wool comes from the Changthangi goats of the Himalayas, who shed their warm coats each spring, after the passing of the harsh winter in the high mountains. Six times finer than any animal hair, it is so fine the wool has to be hand-spun by a skilled crafter, not by machines, which makes it rare and costly. It is almost as if this fine wool is the gift of the Himalayan goats to humans. And what a gift it is!

WHY PEOPLE CONFUSE IT

Pashmina and cashmere shawls are very

often confused by people; the difference among these two fibres is very little - a few millimetres to be exact. The cashmere fibres are wider in diameter, which make the shawls heavier than the pashmina shawls, which are lighter and ideal for people who travel or wear scarves. Being conned by fake pashmina fabrics is another dilemma for tourists visiting the Himalayan countries for the first time.

HOW TO DISTINGUISH THE REAL DEAL

To be honest, distinguishing genuine pashmina fabric can be tough if one has not felt it beforehand. It is safe to buy shawls from well-known shops. There is also a test provided by some shop owners to distinguish between real and fake pashmina by burning a small portion of the fabric.

When burnt, an original pashmina gives off the odour of burnt hair, whereas the fake ones smell like burnt plastic. If genuine, an entire pashmina shawl can be pulled through something as tiny as a ring, without getting any wrinkles on it. Now, how amazing is that!

MAINTENANCE

With proper care, the diamond fabric can

last an entire lifetime or more and care is the only thing it demands from its owner. Pashmina shawls can be gently hand-washed occasionally with a woollen fabric detergent but dry-cleaning is preferable.

Twisting it dry or compressing it must be avoided at all times; simply lay it on a flat surface after washing it and let it dry. As Pashmina fabrics never wrinkle, ironing is not necessary. But if a crisp look is desired, it can be smoothed by a warm, not too overheated, iron when it is absolutely dry.

Before packing it away in your closet, make sure the shawl is clean and dry. Packing it in an airtight pack is preferable

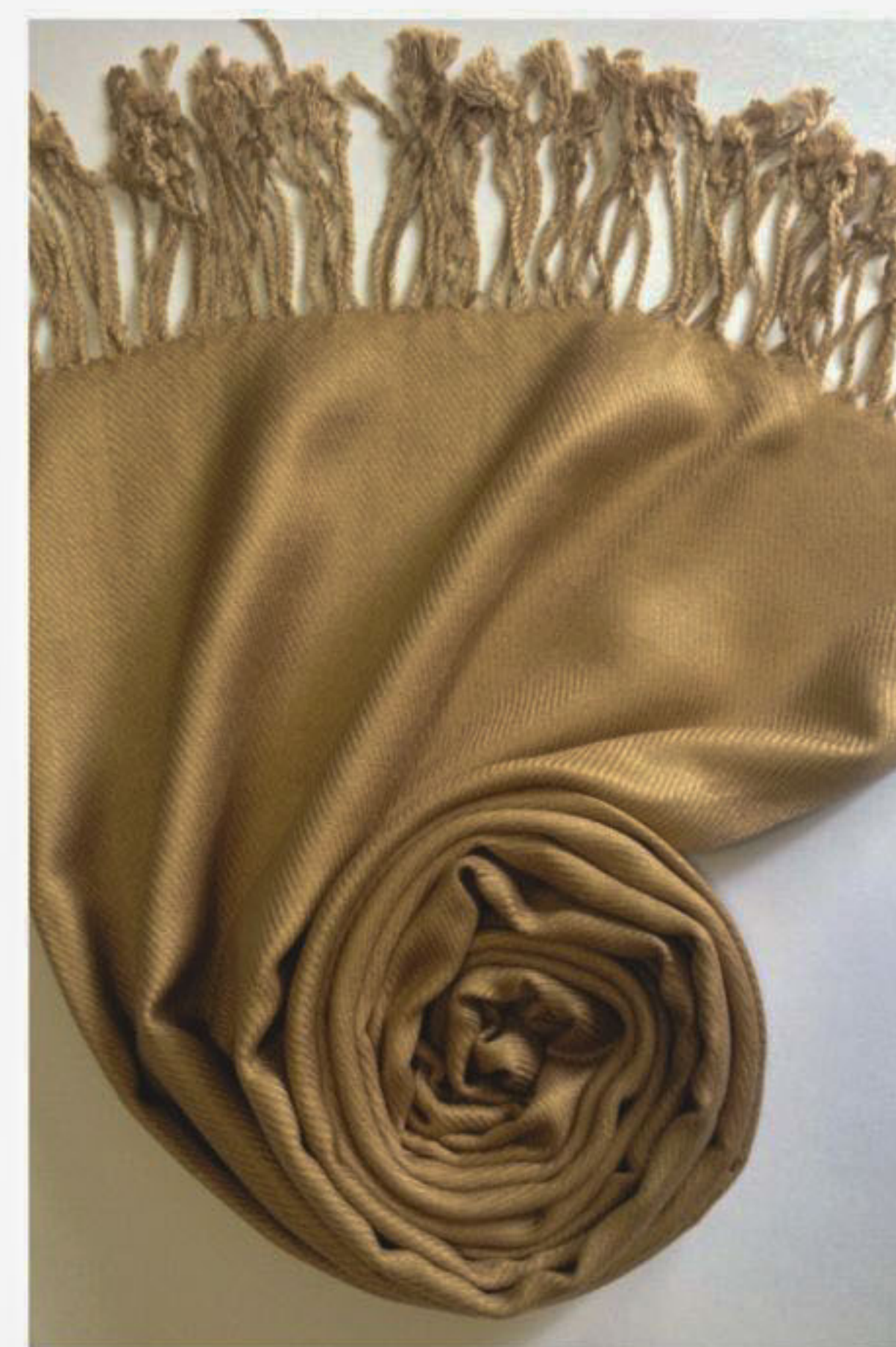
but not a must. Protection from insects is necessary.

The history of pashmina dates back to the 13th century, but it first came into fashion

among the Europeans in the eighteenth century when Napoleon gifted his wife a pashmina shawl. She was so pleased with its fine texture she told her husband to buy some more so she could share it with her friends.

Two centuries later, Princess Dianna brought pashmina shawls into the limelight by wearing them. The soft gold of high Asia thus remains an essential part of a fashionable wardrobe and popular coming-of-age gifts for girls, attesting to their durability and classic beauty.

By Dania Manal
Photo: Collected



Take care of your winter clothes

Now that winter is here, you are definitely taking winter clothes out of storage. Because of this, we have searched far and wide to find you the things you can do to make your stored wrinkled clothes ready to be worn this winter!

Inspect: You can start with a basic inspection. Be on the lookout for moth holes; especially in wool and cashmeres. Some holes you find will probably be non reversible but you can patch up the rest of the holes using your local dry-

cleaner. If you'd rather do it yourself, you can buy a wool filling kit online and you are set to go.

Puff it back: For those coats that might have lost their natural puff since last winter, you can hang them in the bathroom during a really hot shower and let them reinflate. A few steamy baths later, they'll be as good as new.

Get rid of the smells: The easiest and quickest way to get rid of musty smells is by visiting the drycleaner. Another

unique way to get rid of smell is to add cleaning alcohol with water and scrub whatever smells. The alcohol will help kill a lot of that odor.

Do a shoe check: Take a look at all your winter shoes! Insept the leather of your boots, the black cops on your heels and the taps of your shoes and switch them out or take them to a store if they need to be repaired. Rubber soles are a great way to add more grip and extend the lifespan of your shoes.

Reorganise: Since you are taking time out to clean your winter wear, this might provide a great opportunity to reorganise. Put everything back in order and colour coordinate your winter wardrobe. It goes without saying that furs will be away from light at the back of your closet.

You are now set for winter wear this season!

By: Naveed Naushad