

Creating Wrapped Turbans



This article first appeared as part of a series of articles on European Turbans for the on-line costume magazine ["Your Wardrobe Unlock'd"](#). It was the second in the series.

Many of the European turbans pictured in last month's article could be recreated as turbans have been for centuries by wrapping fabric around ones head with no sewing involved. In this month's article I will show you how to wrap three turbans one in the 1795-1800's style and two in the 1800-1815's style. As discussed last month the turbans from these time periods lend themselves to recreation via simple wrapped turbans unlike many of the turbans from the earlier and later time periods.

The first turban is made from a simple shear white silk scarp 14" by 60", a bandeau and two long ostrich plumes. In the late 18th Century this style of turban could have been wrapped silk but shear cottons and nets where also popular choices. The early 19th Century ones are wrapped from long pieces of fabric and both create a two color turban but in very different manners. I used a combination of both fabric and a sari. The sari I used on the third turban is only a partial sari it was what was left after the fancier trim edge was cut away for use as trim on another costume. As with the earlier period many of the turbans in the early 19th Century where wrap with fine cottons from the Orient.

I found it very helpful to view some of the many videos the YouTube site has on subject of wrapping turbans. There are many ways, seeing the different ways is a real help and you can pick and choose what will work best for you.

I photographed the turbans below from the back with a mirror in the photograph so that you can see what goes on in each step.

Late 18th Century Crownless Turban with a Bandeau and Ostrich plumes



#1 Before putting your long curly wig on pin the upper curls out of the way. That is of course if you were not born with a full set of long curls.



#2 Adjust your wig. Notice on the table to the right is the bandeau. The bandeau is just a band of buckram that is wired on both sides that is covered with a long fabric tube that opens in the center front. There is a twisted wire "W" that is attached to the band. One arm of the "W" is attached to the edge of the Bandeau and the other two will support the plumes.



#3 Place the bandeau making sure that your pinned curls are above the bandeau in the back and the support for the plumes is in the center front.



#4 Pin the center of the silk scarf to the bandeau with a corsage pin. Unpin the bottom row of curls.



#5 Wrap first one then the other end of the scarf around the bandeau. In the center front let the bandeau show. Tuck the free ends of the scarf into the

#6 Place your ostrich plumes on the millinery wire supports. Note: The plumes are each made from two large strait ostrich feathers. They have been sewn

other layers of the turban. Make sure you bring the scarf in front of the wire “W”. Unpin the rest of your curls.

together in twos with a modified blanket stitch. Before being sewn together extra material is cut away from the base of the stems. A groove is cut in the front of the back feather and a groove is cut in the back of the front feather so that when they are sewn together there is a hole up the middle. This can be fitted onto the wire. For more on how to join and shape ostrich plumes see <http://lynnmcmasters.com/shapingcurling.html>



#7 Add a decorative pin in the center front of the bandeau and you are done. No windy days!!

A Two Color Early 19th Century Turban



#8 Full widths of modern fabric do not make the best turbans narrower widths around 20 inches work well. Because this turban was made from fabric that comes 54” wide I cut it into bias strips about 16” wide and sewed these together with French seams. I also added



#9 Just past the straight seam of the fringe edge drape the fabric over your head. Let the fringe end hang down. You might want to pin (as shown in foreground) or tie a knot here to keep it from slipping as you begin to wrap the rest of the fabric (in Laurie’s

a short strip that was on the straight of grain so that I could unravel the edge to create a fringe for the start end. For the final end I sewed a bias strip of the same width of another color fabric. For an illustration [click here](#). Fold the length of the fabric long ends to the center from both sides and then fold that in half along the full length of the fabric, much like double fold bias tape. This is not really necessary if you have someone to help you wrap the turban they can tuck any raw edges of the fabric under as you wrap the turban. If you are wrapping it by yourself this works best. From the second color end fold the folded fabric to form a bundle about 12 to 14" long leaving about 1 yard un-folded on the fringed edge.

left hand) around your head. See the bundled fabric lying on the table in front of Laurie.



#10 You should continue to wrap the fabric around your head in a level manner. In this picture Laurie has wrapped the fabric around twice and you can see the bundle in her right hand.

#11 In the next few rounds wrap it at an angle. In other words go low on the side then bring it high in the front continue high on the side until you are in the front again and then bring it low down the other side. If you do this for at least two passes it will create that inverted "V" that you see in the front of the turban. When you reach the alternate colored end of the fabric open up the folds a little to help cover the major part of one side of the turban. When you reach the end tuck it in and bury the end of the fabric. Adjust the fringe end, it can be pulled thru folds so that it comes out of the turban higher and does not rest on your neck.



#12 Add a turban jewel.



#13 This is the finished turban, this time. Every time I have wrapped this turban it has come out very differently. It has turned out where one side is all blue and there is very little blue on the other. If you start twisting the fabric after one side of the head is covered with the blue then you only get a small twist of blue on the other. Just a note, no matter how it is wrapped it looks great there is no wrong way.

A Very Different Two Color Early 19th Century Turban



#14 I used a length of sari fabric that was about 2 yards long and a length of gold tissue metallic fabric about 1.5 yards. I broomsticked the gold fabric, in other words I twisted it from one corner tightly to the other bias corner and left it twisted for a day. This creates wrinkles in the fabric that do not come out. The gold fabric from corner to corner was about the same length as the sari fabric. Before twisting the two fabrics together I tied the corner of the gold fabric around the sari fabric about 12" from it's edge. This will be the last part of the turban to be wrapped. Un-like the turban above the fringe of this turban comes at the end and not the start. As shown in the picture twist the two different fabrics together then



#15 Drape the end of the gold fabric so that it covers most of the top of your head and pin or tie the corner of the gold fabric near the start of you twisted fabric. You can see the twist hanging in the mirror. After you anchor the end you can adjust the fabric to cover more of the top of your head.

secured the end of the sari fabric. This will come before the end of the gold fabric. You could do this in a couple ways I just used the gold fabric to tie a knot around the sari fabric but with a different type of fabric this might take a couple stitches.



#16 Wrap the twist around your head it should go around twice. Tuck it in when you come to the end of the gold fabric. Pull it thru some of the twist so that the sari end hangs down. Adjust the wraps.



#17 Spiral a length of beads or pearls thru the twist and wraps of the turban and secure it in a hidden spot with a safety pin. The length of beads used here was about a yard and a half long with a gold safety pin at both ends. Add an aigrette or other turban jewel.

The really great thing is that you have choices, if you get a turban just the way you like it. You can pin it in several places carefully take it off and slip it on a Styrofoam head and tack it in several out of the way places and you have a fixed turban. Both of the early 19th Century turban above take two yards and more if you have limited fabric next month I will show you some ways to make fixed turbans that use much less fabric, are attached to a bandeau and can be worn much more like a hat.

Comments:lynnmcm@lynnmcmasters.com
Last Revision: 20 April 2009

[Back to Article Section](#)

Copyright Lynn McMasters, © 2007
Individuals have my permission to print single copies of the pictures or texts on this site for non-commercial uses, for any other use please contact me.