

AFRICAN RURAL HANDCRAFTED BASKET

The Weaving Process

1. Elephant grass and straw is collected from the tops of the stalk, then each piece is split in half vertically by biting through it.
2. Each half of the split straw is then twisted tightly by rolling it against a weaver's leg to give it strength.
3. The straw is put in bunches and dyed in boiling water with dye. For bright colors the straw is dyed yellow first, then the color.
4. The weaver carefully selects appropriate straw for the base, sides and handle. The selection of the proper grass for the proper parts of the basket is critical to good weaving.
5. Weaving starts at the base and works up to the rim. The rims are generally finished flat, or wrapped with straw to form a tube like edge.
6. There are a variety of different handles, but all are made with a sturdy wrapping technique around a grass core.
7. Remaining bits of straw that are sticking out of the basket are carefully trimmed off. The trimming is important because it determines how the basket feels to the touch.
8. Leather handles are skillfully applied by local leather workers.
9. A medium basket takes about 3 days to create.
10. The basket can be maintained by spraying water on its surface or running it through sink water and gently shaping it with hands.



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