



Map of Raw Cotton Producing Countries, 1934

Fact Sheet

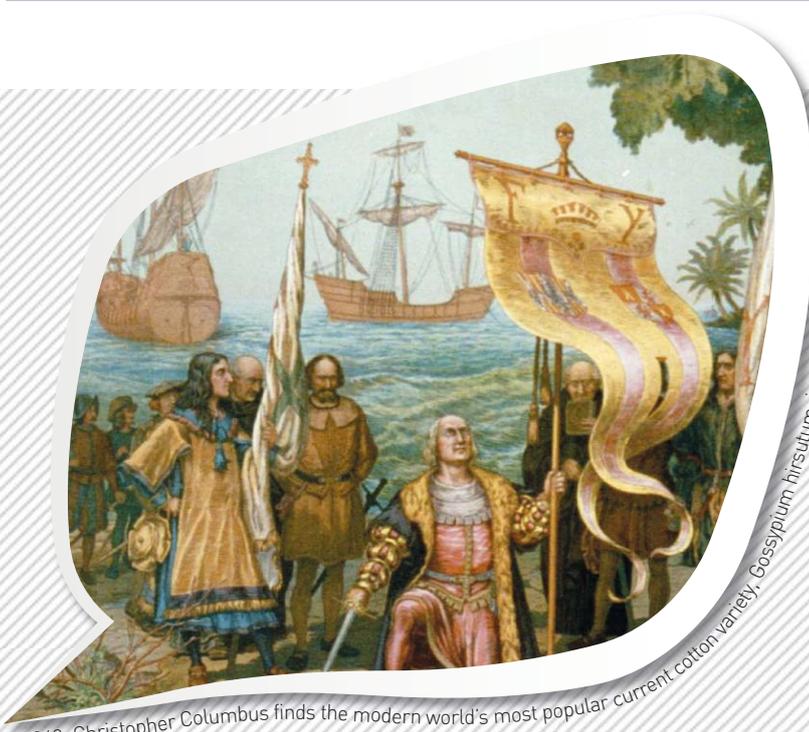
World Cotton History

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5000 B.C.	Cotton fibre and cloth fragments found in Mexico date from this period
3000 B.C.	Cotton first cultivated as a fabric in the Indus River Valley (present-day Pakistan)
2500 B.C.	Chinese, Egyptian and South American civilisations begin weaving cotton fabrics
2500 B.C.	Early farming societies in South and North America domesticate and breed two local species of cotton: <i>Gossypium hirsutum</i> and <i>Gossypium barbadense</i>
300 B.C.	Alexander the Great's army brings cotton goods into Europe following conquest of the Persian Empire. However, cotton cloth remains expensive and its use is limited
100 A.D.	Arab traders bring two cotton fabrics, muslin and calico, to Italy and Spain
800s	The Moors introduce cotton cultivation to Spain
1492	Christopher Columbus finds the modern world's most popular current cotton variety, <i>Gossypium hirsutum</i> , in the Bahamas
1500s	Denim fabric is initially produced in Nimes, France. Denim derives its name from 'serge de Nimes' ('fabric of Nimes')
1500s	Sailors from Italian port city, Genoa, begin to wear denim trousers. The word 'jeans' is derived from 'Genes', the French name for Genoa
1530s	Naturally coloured cotton fabrics are among the first items collected from the Americas and more technically sophisticated than fabric woven by European looms at the time
1600s	The East India Company brings rare cotton fabrics to Europe from India
1621	Cotton first produced in parts of present-day USA
1641	First cotton spinning factory opens in Manchester, UK, marking the true beginning of Europe's cotton industry
1700s	The world cotton industry develops dramatically as Britain acquires colonies suitable for cotton growing whilst at the same time textile machinery improvements allow stronger yarn to be spun
1700s	Cotton replaces flax and wool as Europeans most popular fabric

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1760s	Britain overtakes India as world's largest cotton processor as a result of the Industrial Revolution
1764-67	The spinning jenny (1764) and Arkwright's spinning frame (1767) are invented, enabling cheap mass production of cotton cloth
1793	American Eli Whitney patents the cotton gin, separating cotton 50 times faster than traditional hand methods. As a result of this and the advent of cheaper industrial dyes, <i>Gossypium hirsutum</i> , a white cotton species, replaces coloured varieties as the most popular cotton variety
Early 1800s	Southern US states become the world's largest exporter of cotton to thriving British textile mills
1920s	The USA accounts for more than half of the world's cotton fibre
1939-45	During WWII, naturally green and brown cottons are again produced commercially to counter the lack of dyes available
1940s	Denim's popularity becomes more widespread as its image shifts from durable clothing for blue-collar workers towards everyday apparel for the general public and youth in particular
1950/51	World cotton demand and production levels each reach seven million tonnes
Early 1980s	China overtakes the USA as the world's largest cotton producer
1980s	Most native, coloured cotton varieties grown in Africa, Asia, Central and South America are replaced by all-white, commercial varieties
1996	Transgenic cotton varieties are first introduced. They will be widely adopted by the world cotton industry before the end of the 20th century
2003	The first transgenic cotton varieties to have two independently acting Bt genes are successfully introduced in Australia and the USA
2004/05	World cotton demand and production reach record highs of 23 and 26 million tonnes respectively
2006/07	World cotton average yields reach a record 747 kilograms per hectare, due in large part to increased use of biotechnology
2008	Structure of world in trade changing due to financial stress of Global Financial Crisis, volatility in the futures market and reduced demand
2009/10	30 million hectares of cotton planted
2011	World cotton prices peaked at their highest recorded levels ever. The Bremen CFI Index, one of the three most important price indices for cotton trade, stood at 246.15 cents/lb on 8th March.



1492: Christopher Columbus finds the modern world's most popular current cotton variety, *Gossypium hirsutum*, in the Bahamas



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