**Georgia 4-H Cotton Boll & Consumer Judging 2017**

**Bathrobes**

The bathrobe has been around as long as the public baths that were popular in ancient cultures like Rome, Turkey and China. Depending on what you’re looking for, buying a bathrobe can be very simple or extremely complicated. After all, all bathrobes are not created equal; they vary in quality, are available in a variety of different materials and offer many options from which to choose. The following are some key points to consider when selecting a bathrobe:

**Choosing the Fabric:**
Fabric is the most important feature of a bathrobe. The fabric defines the touch and feel, absorbency, and the overall weight of the robe. Fabric types can range widely from traditional cotton and classic satin to warm cashmere and plush microfibers. Your intended use for the robe will dictate what fabric is best for you. Most robes are used straight out of the shower and/or for lounging around the house.

Here are the pros and cons of each type of robe fabric:

[Microfiber Robes](https://www.plushnecessities.com/robes/plush-microfiber-robes.html)

Microfiber is developed using a technological manufacturing process that produces fibers that are 1/16 of the size of a human hair. Therefore, microfibers are finer than silk, and more lightweight and breathable than other natural and synthetic fibers. Microfiber can be woven and brushed into a suede finished fabric for a luxurious, soft feel similar to that of satin and silk, or it can be placed into a "splitting" process to create millions of micro-loops giving it excellent water absorbency to enhance its soft and lightweight characteristics. A microfiber robe is good for lounging and is ideal for year-round use. Microfiber robes are relatively new to the market and are increasingly popular, not only at retail shops, but also at upscale spas and resorts.

Pros: Good water absorption, ultra-light weight, soft feel.

Cons: Luxury microfiber robes can be more costly than traditional terry robes.

Cotton Waffle Robes
Waffle weaved cotton is designated by its distinct squared or diamond checker pattern. Waffle cotton robes are commonly used in the hotel and spa industry. Most waffle cotton robes are reasonably priced and ideal for hotels and spas that regularly purchase robes in high volume. The 100% cotton characteristic naturally makes the material absorbent. But with 100% cotton, shrinkage can be an issue. Pre-shrunk treatments to these robes are a must.

Pros: Inexpensive. Ideal for bulk purchasing for hotels and spas. Make good gifts.

Cons: Not as soft as other robes. Potential for shrinking.

Cotton Terry Robes
Turkish and Egyptian cotton have been around for decades and are commonly used in towels and classic bathrobes. They have good water absorption, especially if the fabric density/weight is high. Therefore, high-end cotton terry robes are good for use out of the shower but tend to be thick and heavy, especially when absorbed with water. Again, due to the 100% cotton characteristic of the fabric, cotton terry robes can shrink. Pre-shrunk treatments are highly recommended. Organic terry cotton robes can also be purchased. These robes are not bleached or dyed.

Pros: Good water absorption. Commonly found in typical spas and hotel rooms.

Cons: Cotton terry robes can be heavy and bulky. The robes are prone to shrinkage if not pre-shrunk.

Cotton Velour Robes
Cotton velour is a soft pile fabric. Velour feels similar to velvet, in that it is a pile fabric. Soft and thick, velour can be a good fabric for robes. Just be sure the velour robe you choose has a high cotton content - no lower than 80% cotton.

Pros: Soft to the touch. Warm and insulating.
Cons: Bulky and heavy. More expensive than other cotton robes.

Satin and Silk Robes
All silk and satin robes are known to have a smooth feel. They are great as lounge wear and are ideal for the summer. Silk or satin robes do not have good water absorbency compared to cotton or looped microfiber robes. But unlike cotton robes, they are extremely light weight and fluid for movements.

Pros: Silky feel. Light weight.
Cons: Not ideal for spa use due to delicate care and low water absorption ability.

Cashmere Robes
These robes are very expensive due to the high cost of the cashmere fabric. There are many varieties of cashmere. Shoppers should be aware of the quality they are getting before purchasing. The specialty animal hair fibers of cashmere are collected during molting seasons when the animals naturally shed their hairs. Cashmere robes are mostly used as lounge wear and are ideal for the winter season. They have wonderful insulating properties and are lightweight. Unfortunately, cashmere robes do not absorb water.

Pros: Warm and soft. Light weight.
Cons: Very expensive for high quality cashmere. Lack of water absorbency. Must be dry cleaned.

Chenille Robes
Chenille robes have become more popular in the last few years - especially ones made with micro-chenille. Micro-chenille robes are made with 100% polyester and are excellent for insulation. Buyers should beware of the quality of the chenille. In the market, there are excellent micro-chenille robes and there are ones of very low quality. High-end chenille robes are very soft and lightweight, but low-end ones can look exactly the same. Be sure to touch and feel them before you buy.

Pros: Warm and soft. Light weight.
Cons: Can lose shape after washing. Quality of chenille varies drastically. Low water absorption.

**Style:**Bathrobes are available in many styles and lengths.

Full length bathrobes:
These bathrobes are usually made up to 59" and must come all the way to your ankles. These are called 'floor-length' or 'ankle length' bathrobes. First, measure your height and then check the 'length' column on the size chart of the bathrobe.  Unfortunately, some of the bathrobes in the market are 'OSFM" (One Size Fits Most) or 'OSFA' (One Size Fits All). Both sizing’s are expected to fit everyone. It doesn't matter if you are too tall or petite, curvy or skinny. It's better to choose a bathrobe that comes in multiple sizes.

Mid-calf length:
These bathrobes come between your knees and your ankles.

Short:
These come to your knees and can be used in warm climate. They are ideal as summer bathrobes. These are also perfect for traveling or using in the hospital or poolside.

Hooded:
A hooded bathrobe is generally used after your shower for drying wet hair. This type of robe is ideal for those with longer hair who want to dry their hair faster after they shower. These are ideal for the pool as well.

Kimono style:
These bathrobes are usually mid-calf length or short. They do not have hoods and they are light in weight. These are also perfect for traveling.

Light-weight:
If you need a bathrobe for hot summer days and do not want a thick-heavy bathrobe, light weight ones are perfect for you. These styles are also chosen by spas and hotels due to low price and ease of use in multiple washings.

Kids:
Kids robes are often styled just like adult robes. However, fabrics and patterns may vary. Robes for children may offer special flame- resistant or flame-retardant finishes.

**Selecting the Robe Size:**

No matter where you buy a robe, you should be aware of one size fits all robes. If you are lucky, you can spend many hours a day in your comfortable cozy robe. So why would you purchase something that wasn’t sized to fit you well? And if you are buying a robe for a friend or a loved one, you want to give them an option to exchange it for a different size if it doesn't fit well.

[Why are there so many one size fits all or one size fits most robes?](https://www.plushnecessities.com/robes/plush-microfiber-robes.html)

Manufacturers introduced one size fits all apparel to minimize the amount of inventory they have to carry. For example, the hospitality industry buys a huge volume of robes to accommodate millions of guests in hotel rooms, day spas, and resorts. One size fits all was an inexpensive way for hospitality providers to furnish their rooms without having to deal with an assortment of sizes and at the same time simplify their house-keeping operations. However, if you are an individual customer, get the most for your money by purchasing a robe that fits you.

In general, no matter where you purchase your robe from, make sure the retailer offers several size options. It doesn't make sense to spend money on a robe that does not fit.

**Bathrobe Color:**
After choosing your size and style, the last thing to do is to choose your favorite color. Be careful to read the fabric care and washing instructions when buying a colored bathrobe as the color may fade after multiple washings.

**Features and Other Considerations:**

Other important features to consider when purchasing a robe are:

-The construction of the robe. Even if the fabric is the same, not all robes are constructed equally.

-Features such as shawl collars, cuffs, generously sized pockets, and inside ties add extra cost to the robe but enhance the look and functionality. A shawl collar adds a classic elegant look to the robe. In a bathrobe, it can also be used to help dry the neck and face.

-Another feature that is especially useful is inside robe ties. A robe tends to come undone when you are moving in it. Inside ties can provide added support and security.

-Pockets are a wonderful feature for any bathrobe.

-Zippers and button closures add warmth and extra security.

-Check the price tag. Bathrobes come in a range of prices, ranging from well under $20 to several hundred dollars. Purchase a quality robe that meets all your needs.

A bathrobe is a luxurious and comfy wardrobe staple. Whether you love to snuggle up in a robe after a long bath or shower or a robe is your go-to garment to throw on during your morning routine, a good bathrobe is a comfort essential. Quality bathrobes can last for years, so it's important to find the right one that you know you will like before you invest.

Sources: Ebay; Plush Living.

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