

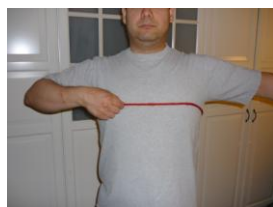
Norse Men's Clothing

Tunics:

Styles:

There are two main styles of tunic used in Norse reenactment, the Birka style and the Viborg style both of which will require approximately three meters of fabric to construct. Both styles of tunic have long sleeves that taper towards tight wrist holes. The sleeves are cut longer than in a modern shirt, to about finger tip length rather than wrist length, the tightness of the wrist holes causes the extra length of fabric to bunch on the lower arms which mimics the look seen in period art work. Both styles in tunic are mid-thigh to knee length. It is speculated that a longer tunic displays wealth because it uses more fabric. Men's tunics were fairly closely fitting in the torso in period, in the viborg shirt this is very important or the skirt panels and waist seam will not hang properly and tend to look a little funny if the tunic is too baggy. If you prefer a looser shirt the birka style can be made looser fitting and still look good. To look really spiffy and period you can wear two layers of tunic, an under tunic with a tighter fitting neck hole and an outer tunic with a larger neck hole so as to make the under tunic visible. Some believe that the under tunic would typically be made of an undyed linen fabric and the over tunic of brightly dyed linen or wool. In one find both under and over tunic have elaborate brocaded trim that is made visible by the difference in neck hole sizes. To make your shirt fancier you can finish the edge in trim. In period the trim would have been brocaded tablet weaving or silk sammite, in modern times a contrasting colour of plain fabric, fancy twill fabric, or geometric Asian brocaded fabric that is folded and ironed to create a trim band work very well. The trim serves to make the garment fancier and it also helps strengthen the neck hole and protect it from the fabric wearing out. Trim can also be applied at the wrists but is less likely to have been applied at the hem. Embroidery is another way of fancying up your garb whether it be in the form of fancy geometrics or gripping beasts or something as simple as finishing the hems in a contrasting colour of thread makes the garment look like more effort has been put into the construction. Another popular technique was to appliqué on bands of naalbinding created out of a metal wrapped silk thread (like the stuff used for modern gold work embroidery). This thread is modernly very expensive and attractive results can also be achieved using thick threads.

Measurements required:



Length around the
Widest part of torso



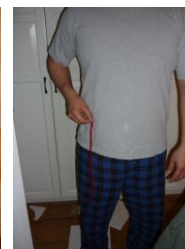
Length of arm from
shoulder point to
finger tip and width
of the widest point
around the upper arm



Desired length
of tunic from
shoulder to hem



Length from
shoulder to belt



Length from belt
to hem

Construction:

Birka



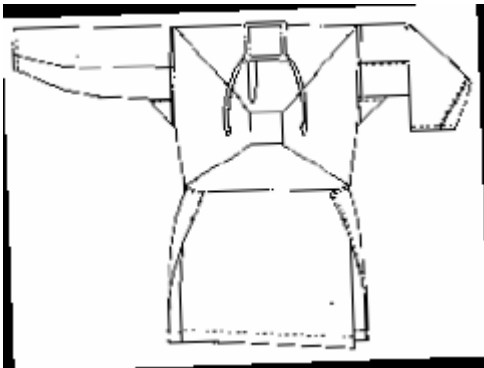
This tunic consists of a torso that is mid-thigh to knee length, this can either be two separate panels with a shoulder seam or a single panel that is double the length, however the shoulder seam gives it a nicer look and makes cutting the neck hole easier. You also need two sleeves that are shoulder tip to finger tip is length and a few inches wider than the width of the upper arm to allow for movement and two square arm pit gores. Two pairs of right angled triangular gores that extend from belt height to hem. Some people also insert gores into the front and back of the skirt but I believe that the period imagery suggests that the garment was flat to the body back and front but flared out sideways at the hips.



Viborg



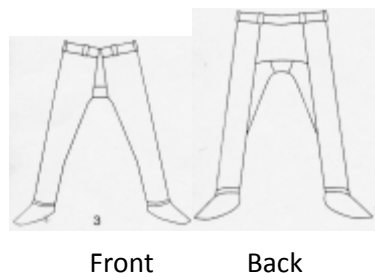
The fit of the viborg tunic differs from the birka tunic because instead of having flared hips from paired gores it has narrow hips from over lapping skirt panels. This tunic is the same as the birka style from shoulder to waist however the body panels are only cut to belt length, not the full length to the hem. The skirt is constructed of rectangular panels that overlap at the side seam of the torso. These panels need to be cut several inches wider than the torso panels to create the overlap. When sewing on the panels sew on the panel that wraps around the back first and the panel that wraps around the front, this is so that the back panel will overlap the front panel and have the vertical hems of the panel on the front of the garment.



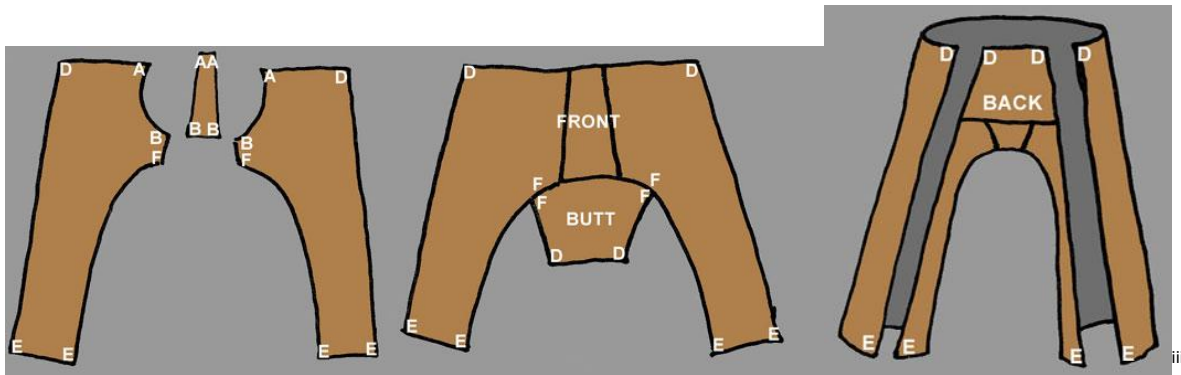
Pants:

There are two very different styles of Norse pants. The first style is represented by the thorsberg and damendorf finds. These styles of pants are tightly fitted in the legs and have a roomy crotch and butt which makes the pants very practicle for crouching and sitting cross legged. These pants are difficult to pattern so start with a cheap fabric until you have it figured out because the first pair likely won't fit quite right. They also both have a front panel in the crotch that can be made to open like the fly of modern pants.

Thorsberg



How to construct:



<http://www.historiclife.com/Essays/ThorsbergTrousers.htm>

The second type of pants is the balloon style that comes from the Rus (Vikings in Russia). These pants have very wide legs that are gathered at the waist band. It is unknown what the calf section of the pants looks like but a very nice reconstruction has it being a separate tight fitting piece. This makes more sense to me than having the wide legs gathered at the ankle because I would think that they would be very awkward to wear.



Wickelbänder:

These are leg wraps that cover from knee to ankle. Each leg wrap is a piece of cloth that is 4-5 inches wide and 3 meters long. These pieces of fabric are woven to width. The stretchiness of wool fabric and a herring bone weave help them to stay up and they will not work well made out of a stiff fabric without stretch such as linen. They are worn by wrapping them in a spiral from ankle to knee and either tucking in the ends or fastening them with metal hooks.



Cloak:

The Norse cloak is very simple to make, it is a rectangle of fabric that is wrapped around the shoulders length wise and pinned. The fabric can also be folded length wise to create a flap that can be pulled over the head like a hood.



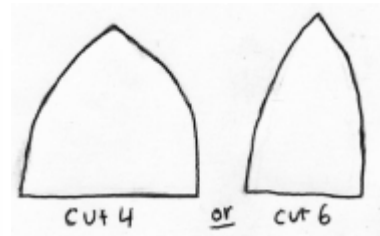
Coat:

There are two styles of Norse coat that are used by recreators. The first style is constructed the same way that the Birka tunic is constructed except that it is split all the way down the front and fastened with buttons or a pin.



The second style has no side gores and the front panels slant like a bathrobe. (The tunic can be cut like this picture or have the front panel slant all the way down to the hem).

Hats:



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Although hats were not typically worn by Norse woman, they are an essential part of the Norse men's outfit. There are two main types of hat found in Birka, a pointy tipped cap and a rounded topped hat. The rounded top hat is found decorated with a band of wire weaving appliquéd onto the hem of the hat. The pointed top hats are found with three different types of decoration; a cast metal cone on the tip, a band of wire weaving running from hem to point, or a tassel made out of wire weaving pendants. You can also adorn the hats with fur or tablet woven bands, a band of embroidery, embroidery over the seams, or if you do a lined hat, decorative quilting.

Accessories:



Common accessories to spiff up your outfit include several things. A brooch for closing the top of a keyhole neckline, which could be a pennanular, equal arms, or a disc brooch. A necklace with a hammer pendant and a few beads (but not typically a whole strand of beads) or wire weaving necklaces. A belt with a belt pouch, knife, wet stone, fire steel and other useful bit dangling from it.

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Information Links:

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<http://www.cs.vassar.edu/~capriest/mensgarb.html>
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http://users.bigpond.net.au/quarfwa/miklagard/Costume/Rus/Trader/Rus_description.htm

Shopping Links:

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