

The Blanket Capote

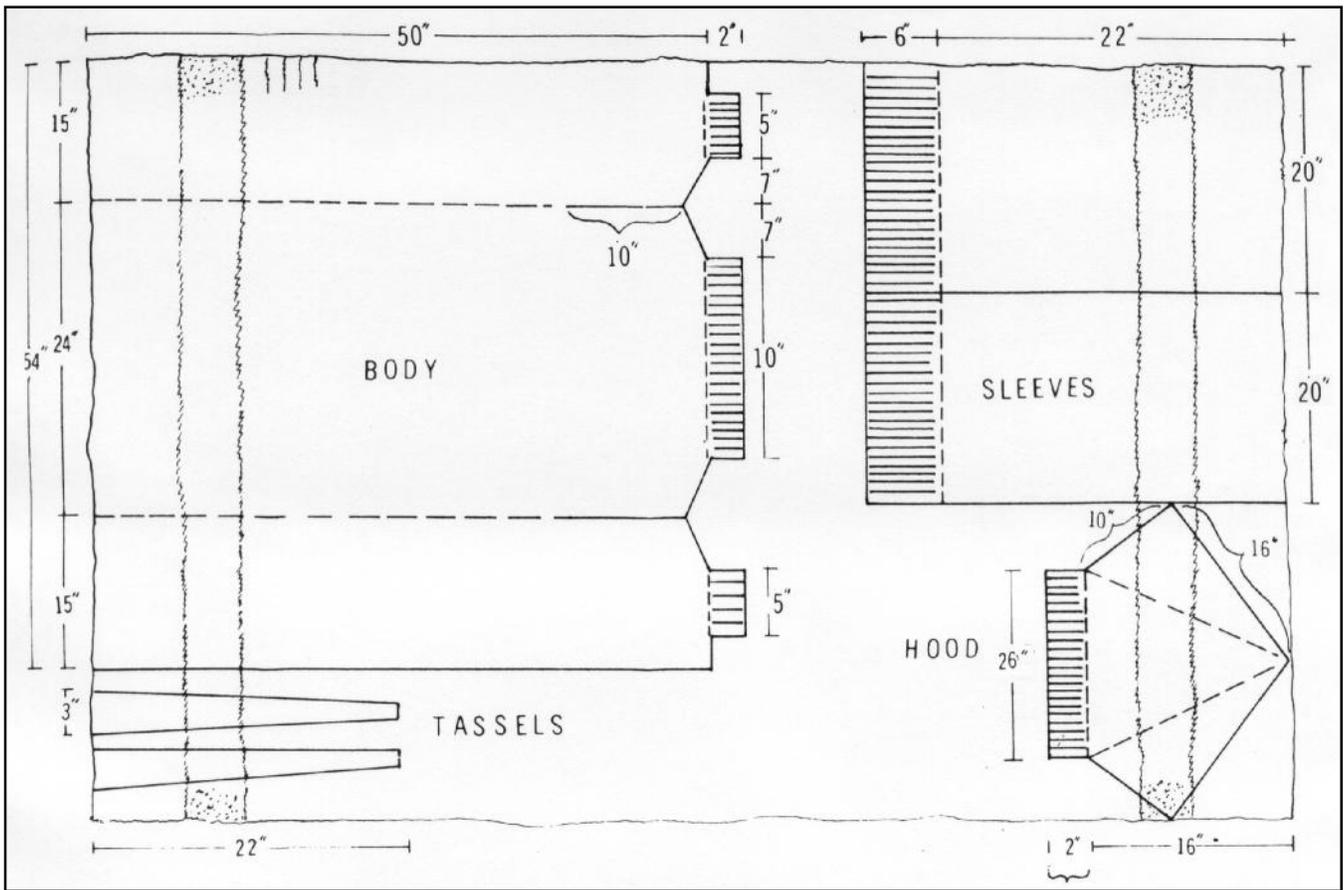


The capote is a long coat with a hood as worn by the tribes of the Northern Plains, Rocky Mountains and Columbia Plateau. It is one of the most useful articles of Indian clothing that can be made easily and, if desired, inexpensively. The most commonly used type is the Hudson Bay Company point blanket, but any solid-colored blanket or one that is banded at the ends can be used. The "candy stripe" design on white background is popular. The top figure on the facing page shows a way to lay out the parts on a 72" X 90" four-point blanket so that the stripes come out in the right place. This layout will fit an average sized man. If the wearer is larger or smaller than average, then adjust the layout with that in mind.

After the blanket is cut out, sew up the shoulder seams. Next, sew up the seams in the arms, then attach the arms to the body of the capote. The next step is to sew up the seam in the hood, then attach the hood to the neck opening of the capote's body. Do not cut fringe until the capote is completely assembled. The final step is to cover the seams with binding. The binding is usually made from grosgrain ribbon or thin strips of contrasting wool sewn over the seams.

After completion, the capote can be decorated many ways. Hood and tassels can be decorated with beads or brass shoe buttons and often a Northern-style medallion is centered on the hood's front.

A wool belt is used to tie the capote in front, but if the capote is used as an integral part of the dance clothes, a leather conch or studded belt looks better. Be careful not to load down your capote with too much decoration. The capote's real beauty is in its simple lines.



Note: Cross-hatched lines denote fringe, which may be added or sized according to personal taste.

Hudson's Bay blankets – The most famous items traded to trappers and Indians were the popular "point blankets" which they began marketing about 1780. Black lines, or points, were woven into the edge of the blanket. Each point was symbolic of one "made beaver." Thus four points meant the blanket was traded for four beaver pelts. The earliest blankets were white with a single black stripe. In 1880 the company began trading their most popular white, multi-color blanket with black, yellow, red, and green stripes. Later the Hudson's Bay Company would also trade red, green, and blue blankets.

