

MATS
"JAKI"



6. SLEEPING MAT



7. SLEEPING MAT

Mats are a traditional part of Marshallese life. They are used as floor mats, for sitting, sleeping, rain protection, and decoration.

Today mats are plaited (woven) out of pandanus leaves (“MĀAN”) by women using the same techniques used in the old outrigger canoe sails and the women’s traditional mat clothing, the “NIEDED” (page 6).

The mats range from coarsely woven floor mats to intricately woven sleeping mats. The common “TĪLAO”, a sitting mat, is not woven but constructed of whole pandanus leaves that are sewn together.

The “JEPKO”, a floor mat, is coarsely woven using ½” to ¾” pandanus leaves. It is used under the sleeping mats and can cover an entire room.

The “JANINI”, a sleeping mat, is double woven using ¼” prepared pandanus leaves and hibiscus fibers, “JAB”, for decoration. It has a fold down the center where the two halves are joined. When traveling on boats one can sleep between the two halves for warmth and protection from the elements. At home, in the morning, the mats are rolled up and stored.



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Detail of mat from Aelonlaplap (made before World War II) Alele Museum, Majuro. 72” L x 39” W. Pandanus with hibiscus stitching.



Woman weaving mat on Ailuk