

The Pileus Cap

Quick and Dirty Instructions for Aethelmearc 12th Night Saturnalia
Meisterin Felicitas Flußmüllnerin

What is a pileus?

The pileus (or pilos) was a Greek-style traveling hat given to Roman slaves upon receiving their freedom. It is associated with Castor and Pollux, representing the egg that they hatched from, just as the slave is becoming a new man in his freedom. During the Festival of Saturnalia, everyone was allowed to wear the pileus, including slaves, and there was a topsy-turvy role reversal for the duration of the festival.

		
Odysseus wearing the pilos. Ancient Greek red-figure situla from Apulia, ca. 360 BC, Museo Nazionale Archaeologico, Naples.	<u>Ancient Greek</u> red-figure plate from Apulia, third quarter of the 4th century BC, Louvre.	Ancient Greek terracotta statuette of a peasant wearing a pilos, 1st century BC.



Pair of Roman statuettes (3rd century AD) depicting the Dioscuri (Castor and Pollux) as horsemen, with their characteristic skullcaps (*Metropolitan Museum of Art*)

What is it made of?

Traditionally the pileus would be made of white wool to represent an egg shell, however, Saturnalia was a festival of color and celebration so feel free to use color and decorations, especially blue and gold (Saturnalia), red and white (Aethelmearc), and decorations of fertility and life: sun, moon, stars, herd animals, pinecones, nuts, and acorns.

How to create a pileus:

***I recommend felted wool or felt as the material.**

If made with a softer fabric, it will require a stiffener to stand tall.

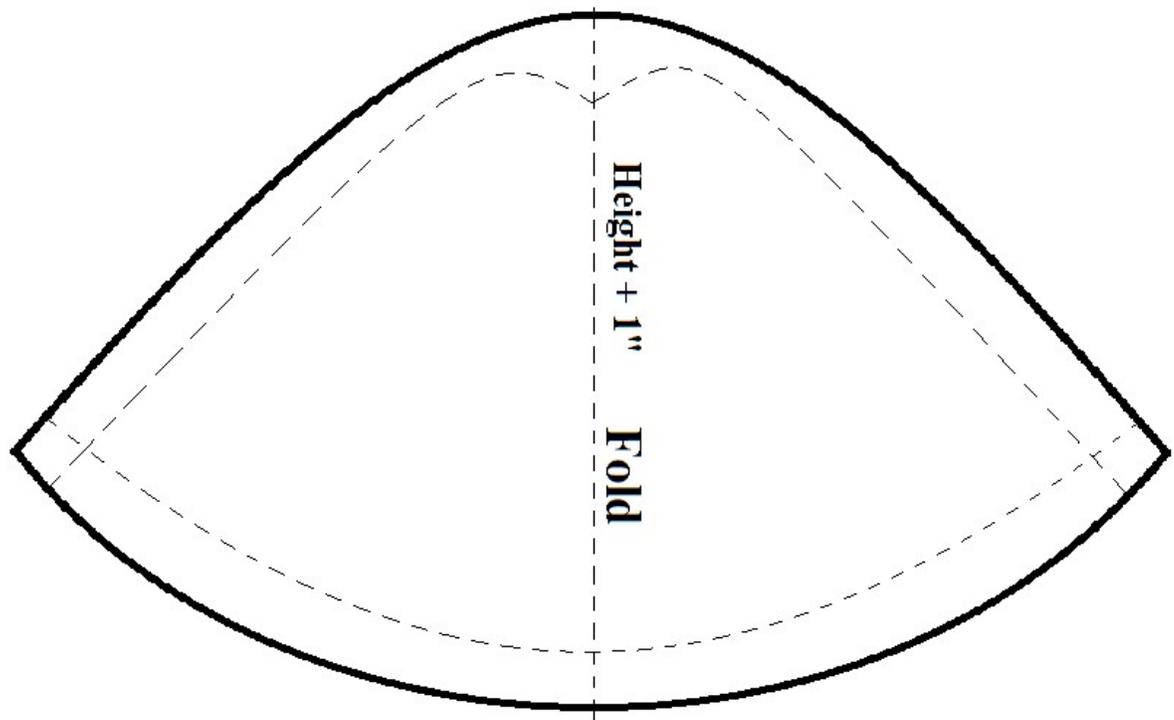
1. Measure your head circumference loosely.
2. Add 6".

Bottom Brim Curve: _____

3. Measure from the middle of your ear to the desired height of the cone. As seen in the examples above, there are many different acceptable heights, so personalize this your style.
4. Add 1".

Center Height: _____

5. Cut as below. Solid lines are cutting lines. Dotted lines are sewing lines, with the exception of the fold line used for seaming the cap together.



Head Circumference + 6" Bottom Brim Curve

6. Fold in half and seam the curve as drawn, clipping the excess to help the tip of the cone stand tall. I should not flop over like a Phrygian cap.
7. Stitch down the seam to secure and press. This is the back of the cap.
8. Turn up the bottom edge of the cap. If you turn toward the outside, you will get a rounded brim as shown in the peasant statue above. If you turn to the inside, you will get a clean edge.
9. Add decorations to personalize.