

## History of Ribbon Skirts

When looking back at photos of Métis women and matriarchs through history we often see them in long floor-length skirts with bands of ribbon along the bottom. A skirt was a multipurpose item, as most families could not afford to have multiple outfits, a skirt with an apron worked well for taking care of the home and children and it also worked well for social events or Sunday church.

First Nations relatives would have made the skirts with leather and pelts, but the Métis had access to trade cloth and ribbon, so they adapted the design to use trade materials – merging the two cultures.

The Métis style of ribbon skirt quite often had a ruffle at the bottom, giving a similar look to a hide fringe. As well, the flared design allowed for more movement.

**North Island Métis (NIMA) publishes a monthly newsletter.**

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**NORTH ISLAND MÉTIS**

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**NORTH ISLAND  
MÉTIS**

Ribbon  
Skirts



## What they Represent

The ribbon skirt represents the circle of life – a ribbon skirt gives us an unbroken connection to Mother Earth. Like Mother Earth, women are Givers of Life and the skirts allow the wearer to remain close to her.

The skirt also represents the teepee – the protector of families. The matriarch of the family would earn the teepee by showing the Métis core values of Giver of Life. Babies were born and families grew inside the teepees. They were loved and supported. Both teepee and skirt are full of love as well.

### Wear your skirt proud

- *For strength and healing*
- *To help you feel grounded*
- *To connect with our medicines and Mother Earth*
- *To stay visible*
- *To remind us we are sacred beings*
- *Because life is a ceremony*

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## Southern Michif

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skirt – enn zheup

ribbon – la roobaan

sew – kaashkikwaata

sewing machine – aen moolayn a kood

earth – la tayr

ruffle – ann frill

thread – li fil



## Getting Started

- Sewing machine or needle for hand sewing
- Two meters of cotton fabric (washed)
- Two meters of each ribbon color
- Thread with matching bobbin
- Measuring tape
- 3/4" Elastic
- Straight pins
- Safety pin
- Sharp scissors
- Pen for marking
- Long ruler
- Iron