

## Navajo-Churro Wool is Unusual

*Navajo-Churro sheep grow a double-coated fleece: a long, straight outer coat that looks like hair, and a fine, downy undercoat. Unlike fleece of more modern breeds, the wool fibers are straight, long, and found in a variety of diameters from the most coarse to the most fine. This results in a yarn that is dense, strong and not very stretchy. Perfect for textiles that will be used as outer garments and carpets in a rough-hewn environment. There are a great many natural colors in the Navajo-Churro. Also, the two coats may be different colors within a fleece and will produce heathered yarns that would be impossible to reproduce using white wool and dye.*

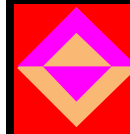


Navajo-Churro sheep come in many colors, and often have four horns.

### RT Davis Shepherd and Handweaver

36 Private Drive 1342  
Espanola, New Mexico  
87532  
In San Pedro

Phone: 505-753-3020  
Cel: 505-310-3099  
Email: [rtdavis@newmexico.com](mailto:rtdavis@newmexico.com)  
On the web at [riograndeweaving.com](http://riograndeweaving.com)



Handspun Navajo-  
Churro Wool

## Rio Grande Blankets



### RT Davis Shepherd and Handweaver

505-753-3020.....Cel: 505-310-3099

# Hand Made

All the wool used in my blankets comes from my own flock of Navajo-Churro sheep. The process begins by feeding and caring for the sheep so that their wool grows long and lustrous, and in a way that keeps hay and other materials out of the fleece.



Natural and dyed yarn

A sheep is shorn (I use electric shears) when her fleece is about eight inches long, but before it gets damaged by the sun or begins to felt. Once the fleece is off the animal, it will be picked and clouded by hand and then washed and allowed to dry. Then it is carded (I use a drum carder) and spun into yarn on my spinning wheel. Yarn must then go into the dye pot for colors other than the white, black, browns, tans, and grays my sheep produce. It is after all of this has been accomplished that weaving can begin. My loom was made in the mid-1800's in South-central Minnesota. The shuttles I use to throw the weft through the shed are ones I've made myself. When the weaving is done, it must be cut from the loom and finished. The warp ends are braided and tucked back into the web to make a strong end-selvage, and then the blanket is steamed flat.

## The Designs

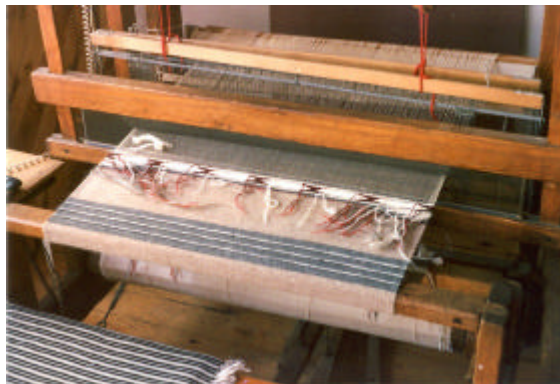
All designs are my own. I think of Rio Grande Blankets as landscapes, and I often name them after locations here in New Mexico. I tend to keep them fairly simple in design so that they more accurately reflect the feelings I get from the local landscapes.

## Get Your Own Rio Grande Blanket

Most of the blankets I make are designed and woven especially for their owners. It works like this: I find out what the customer's tastes are in weavings and other things, and then I will propose a few possible design schemes in the form of sketches. After this I will produce a final design with yarn samples. Once accepted, I begin working the wool into yarn for the blanket. I keep between 50 and 70 raw fleeces on hand, but occasionally I will need to wait for wool to grow on a sheep or two before I can begin.

## The Guarantee:

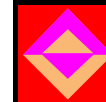
If for any reason you do not like the blanket I've made for you, I will take it back and make you a new one. So far, no one has taken me up on this.



A Rio Grande blanket in progress



This blanket was woven using natural colors from the artist's flock of Navajo-Churro sheep.



**RT Davis Shepherd  
and Handweaver**

36 Private Drive 1342  
Española, New Mexico  
87532  
In San Pedro

Phone: 505-753-3020  
Cel: 505-310-3099  
Email: [rtdavis@newmexico.com](mailto:rtdavis@newmexico.com)  
On the web at [riograndeweaving.com](http://riograndeweaving.com)