

# Basic Detail Report

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## Headrest

**Date**  
20th Century

**Primary Maker**  
Oromo

**Medium**  
Wood

### Description

Rather than being imbued with rich spiritual importance, the headrests of many eastern African countries were instead utilitarian. The conical wooden headrests of the Oromo of Ethiopia were used to elevate one's head when sleeping, thus protecting one's hairstyle which was a symbol of status. This type of headrest was used by men. As the introduction of headrests in Ethiopia some 300 years ago, it was the furthest south country in Africa to use the wood lathe, and the distinctive rivets of its manufacturing process can be seen here. Interestingly, a number of Ethiopian headrest designs share similarities with headrests made by Egyptians up to 4500 years ago.

### Dimensions

7 × 6 5/8 × 4 11/16 in. (17.8 × 16.8 × 11.9 cm)