

Merenda Snack Pouch

A free tutorial by Sew Sofia Bag Patterns



The Merenda Snack Pouch is a quick and easy pattern for confident beginners in bag making, teaching you basic bag-making techniques as well as sewing with laminated cotton. The bag features a boxy base, a flap with hook and loop tab to close, a layer of insulated wadding to keep contents at an even temperature and can be made with wipe clean fabrics. The pouch can be packed flat when not in use, perfect for popping in a work bag, tote, backpack or changing bag!

“Merenda” means ‘snack’ in Italian - this pouch is for everyone who needs a snack or two in their day!

Finished measurements: 7.5" wide, 9" tall, 3" deep (19cm x 23cm x 8cm)

Skill level: confident beginner

Recommended fabrics

This pattern shows you how to sew with laminated cotton, which is a flexible, coated cotton, also known as 'slicker'. It is easy to sew, wipe clean, washable and food safe, making it ideal for this snack pouch. Although not essential, adding a layer of special insulated fleece will keep food items cooler (or warmer) for longer. The fleece will also provide extra padding for a soft, squishy structure.

You can also use other fabrics such as a medium weight quilting cotton, canvas, waterproof Oxford (as I have used in this tutorial), or PVC coated oilcloth (make sure it is lead-free). If you are using quilting cotton for your bag, I would suggest adding a layer of fusible medium weight interfacing to the fabric for added strength, as cotton is thinner than laminated cotton.

You can also make the lining waterproof, using laminated cotton, Procure™ (a food safe fabric) or a water resistant nylon. I would avoid stretchy fabrics like PUL or Ripstop for the outer fabric, which could give a floppy result.

A note about iron-on vinyl - if you're thinking about making your own waterproof fabric – I'm not a big fan of fusible laminates for bag making, especially with structured bags that require 'turning out' in the final assembly. After all the time and effort to fuse the vinyl and make up the components for the bag, you can never guarantee a perfect end result as the vinyl can sometimes separate or crease badly. My pattern testers had mixed results using iron-on vinyl when trying out this pattern and so it is not recommended.

Tips on working with laminated cotton

- ✂ When cutting laminated cotton, you can trace on the back of the fabric with a pencil, invisible pen or tailor's chalk.
- ✂ Pins will leave holes and can bend on laminate! Either pin in the seam allowance or use wonder clips or small bulldog clips.
- ✂ You can iron the back of laminated cotton on a low setting to remove any creases but always test a small corner first in case the backing is not cotton.
- ✂ Do not iron on the coated side! Finger press any seams before topstitching and use clips/pegs to keep the seams flat.
- ✂ A walking foot, roller foot or Teflon foot is recommended when topstitching laminated fabric to prevent the foot from dragging or sticking to the coated side of the fabric.
- ✂ If you don't have a special foot, try applying a small strip of Scotch tape on your machine's ordinary foot.
- ✂ A sharp size 14-16 denim needle is recommended.
- ✂ Sew using a longer stitch, e.g. 3.0 and go slow on the pedal!
- ✂ Backstitching is especially important when sewing with laminated cotton to ensure that the stitches do not unravel. This just means stitching in reverse over the same set of stitches at the start and finish of a stitching line to 'lock' the stitches in place.

Shopping List

Fabric quantities may vary according to the fabric print you choose (i.e. fussy cutting, directional fabrics) and it is also worth noting that with some laminated fabrics, the 'lamine' part may only start 1"-1.25" in from the selvedge. Please read through the entire pattern before starting!

Exterior: 20" x 20" (or 1 Fat Quarter 50cm x 56cm) laminated cotton

Lining: 20" x 20" (or 1 Fat Quarter 50cm x 56cm) laminated cotton/cotton

Interlining:

1/4 yd/0.25m insulated wadding (e.g. Pellon 975 Insul-Fleece, Insul Bright, or Bosal Therm-R-Foam which is fusible) OR a sew-in fleece (e.g. Thermolam Compressed Fleece Vilene 272).

Haberdashery:

Double sided tape or glue stick (optional)

4.5" strip of sew on hook and loop tape (e.g. Velcro™)

Seam allowance: Unless otherwise specified, the seam allowance (SA) is 0.5" throughout. Topstitching on laminated cotton is 0.25" (6mm).

Frequently used sewing terms

Backstitch	reverse stitches to 'lock' at the start and end of a line of stitching
Baste stitch	longest stitch (e.g. length #4) setting within the seam allowance to hold fabric layers
Seam allowance	the stitching line from the raw edge of the fabric
Top stitch	the row of stitching to give a professional finish to the exterior
Pivot	turning a corner or curve with the needle down and presser foot up
Taper	trimming a seam or piping edge close to the stitching to reduce bulk

Abbreviations

W	Wide
H	High
L	Length
SA	seam allowance
RS	right side of fabric
WS	wrong side of fabric
RST	right sides together
WST	wrong sides together
RSO	right side out
WSO	wrong side out

Cutting List

Note: Measurements are given as WIDTH x HEIGHT, which is especially important to remember if using a directional fabric.

Exterior fabric

Body – two squares: 10" W x 10" H (25cm x 25cm)

Flap – one rectangle: 7" W x 8" H (18cm x 20cm)

Lining fabric

Body – two squares: 10" W x 10" H (25cm x 25cm)

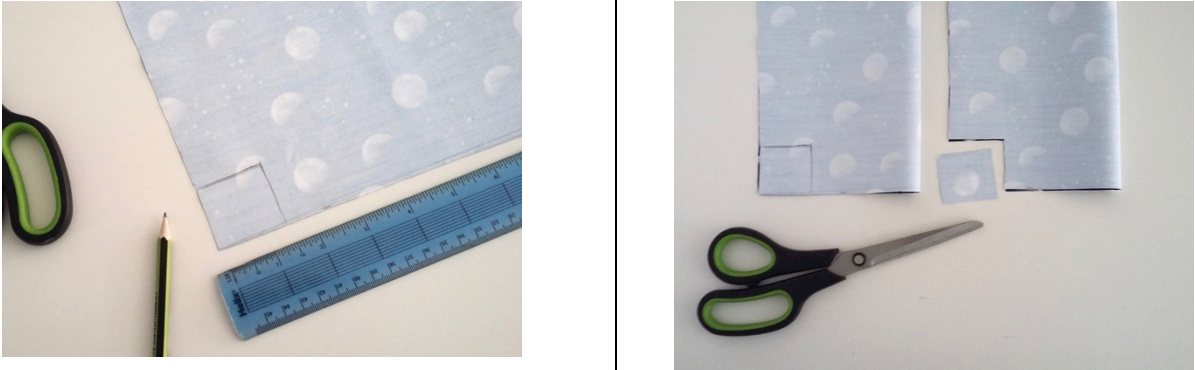
Flap – one rectangle: 7" W x 8" H (18cm x 20cm)

Sew in Fleece/Insulated Wadding

Body – two squares: 10" W x 10" H (25cm x 25cm)

Flap – one rectangle: 7" W x 8" H (18cm x 20cm)

Hook and Loop tape: 4.5" strip

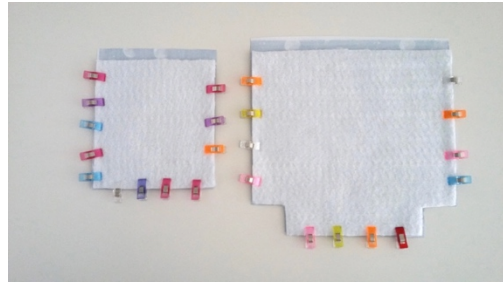
<i>Preparing the pieces</i>	
<p>1. On the wrong side (WS) of the body pieces, draw a 1.5" square on a bottom corner. Fold the piece in half and cut out the square. Repeat with the other body piece, lining and fleece pieces.</p>	
<p>2. Trim 0.5" off the top edge of the two fleece body pieces (this will reduce bulky seams at the end). Trim 0.5" from one shorter (7") edge of the flap fleece.</p>	

3. Pin the fleece to the WS of the exterior body pieces matching the side and bottom edges. If using insulated wadding, place the shiniest side right side up. Make sure the fabric is pinned/clipped to the fleece as smooth as possible to prevent shifting.

Set your machine to its longest stitch and baste around the side and bottom edges only at 0.25" SA.

Repeat with the outer flap piece and flap fleece.

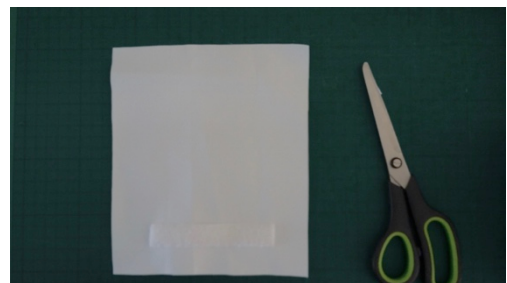
Tips: If using pins, pin as close as possible to the edge to avoid pinholes showing in the fabrics. It may be easier to baste stitch from the fleece side.



Prepare the flap

4. With the flap lining RSU, place the softer 'loop' side of the hook and loop tape piece 1" up from a shorter (7") edge and centred (1.25" in from the sides).

I use a narrow strip of double sided tape to hold it in place, or you could use a glue stick or a couple of pins. Stitch a rectangle around the tape, backstitching at each corner to secure it in place.





5. With the main flap piece and flap lining RST, matching all edges, pin and stitch the sides and bottom only. Snip corners at a diagonal, being careful not to cut into your stitching. Turn RSO, poke out the corners with the end of a pencil or paintbrush. Finger press the seams and clip to hold flat.

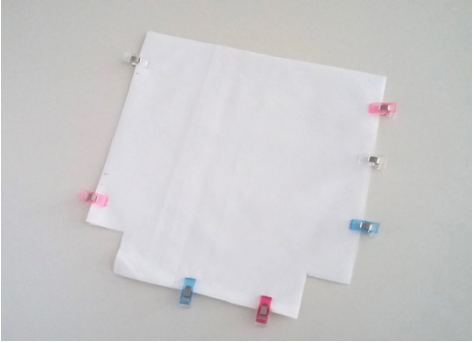

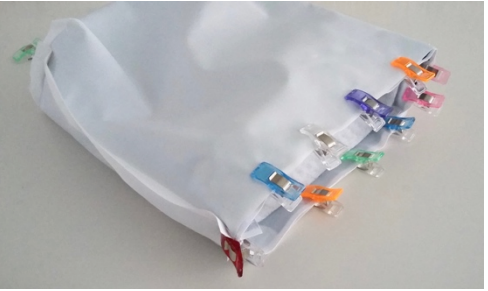

Topstitch the sides and bottom edge and baste stitch across the top raw edge to close the gap.




Tip: if working with shiny laminated cotton, it may help to topstitch on the lining side.



<p>Add hook and loop tape to front body piece</p>	
<p>6. On the RS of a body piece, mark a line 4.5" down from the top edge and centred (so 2.75" from the sides).</p> <p>Place the top edge of the rougher 'hook' side of the tape on this line and stitch in place.</p> <p>Tip: if it is hard to draw on the exterior fabric, simply mark the position for the tape with the point of a pencil to leave an indentation.</p>	
<p>Attach flap to back body piece</p>	
<p>7. On the RS of the other body piece, draw a line 1.5" down from the top edge and 1.75" in from the sides.</p> <p>With the flap lining facing up, place the raw top edge on the line making sure it is centred. Secure with pins or a narrow strip of double sided tape and stitch in place with a 0.25" SA.</p> <p>Flip the flap upwards and finger press the seam. Topstitch at 0.25" SA to encase the raw edge and backstitch a few times start and finish to secure the flap in place.</p> <p>Tip: Stitch super slow for this step, especially if your fabric has a shiny surface. A walking foot can help, or just keep the flap pressed down as best you can, but mind your fingers!</p>	

<p>Assemble the exterior bag body</p>	
<p>8. Place the two body pieces RST with flap upwards and matching all sides. Stitch the sides and bottom with a 0.5" SA.</p>	
<p>Create the boxy base</p>	
<p>9. To create the boxy base, reach inside the bag and bring the side and bottom seams together, making sure the seams meet at a cross.</p> <p>Finger press the seams open to reduce bulk when sewing and clip in place.</p> <p>Stitch at 0.25" SA to close the corner gaps.</p> <p>Turn RSO and push the corners out, checking that your side and bottom seams are neatly centred.</p> 	  

<p>Assemble the lining</p>	
<p>10. On the WS of a lining piece, make a mark 1" down and 6" down on one side. Repeat Step 8, but when you reach the marks that you made, backstitch and leave a gap to turn the bag out later.</p> <p><i>Tip: if you are using iron-on vinyl for your bag body, you may want to leave an even wider gap to prevent your laminated fabric from creasing when you turn it out.</i></p>	
<p>Final assembly</p>	
<p>11. With flap pushed down, place the bag exterior RSO into the lining WSO.</p> <p>Finger press the side seams open, match and pin lining seams to main seams, then pin every 1" or so around the top of the bag.</p> <p>If your machine has a detachable arm, remove it for this step. Starting at a side seam, stitch all around the top of the bag at 0.5" SA. Trim SA to 0.25".</p> <p><i>(Tip: it's not essential to catch the fleece in this stitching, this will happen in the final top stitch.)</i></p>	  

<p>12. Reach in through the gap in the lining to gently pull the bag through.</p> <p>Finger press the gap seams inwards on the lining by 0.5", pin and stitch to close with a 1/8" SA.</p>	
<p>13. Push the lining into the bag right into the corners. Finger press the top seam and use clips to keep the layers flat.</p> <p>Tip: you could use a few pins to keep the lining flat inside on the flap side of the bag, but just remember to remove them afterwards!</p>	
<p>14. Switch to a walking foot or Teflon coated foot if you have one. Set your machine to a longer length stitch. Starting at a side seam, slowly topstitch around the bag at a 0.25" SA. Take your time with this step to stitch as straight as possible.</p> <p>Congratulations! Your Merenda snack pouch is complete!</p> <p>Tip: if you are struggling to topstitch neatly over the laminate, you can also do this step lining side out with the flap tucked down inside.</p>	

Variation

- Swap the hook and loop closure for a magnetic snap. I would recommend basting the fleece to the back of the flap lining for added strength. Position the male part of the magnetic snap 1.5" up from the shorter 7" edge of the flap lining. Position the female part of the magnetic snap 3.5" down from the main body front piece. In this example, I also used a piece of webbing as a loop for the flap for added security.



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