

HOW TO

Make a boro inspired tote by Jessica Marquez

MATERIALS NEEDED

Ruler
Mark-making tool
Sashiko thread (Olympus #2 off-white)
Scissors
Sashiko needle
Sewing pins
Sewing machine and matching sewing thread
Rotary cutter

Fabric needed

Tote - Large medium to heavy fabric scraps or 45 cm (1/2 yard) fabric
Pocket - 20x23cm (8 x 9-inch) piece medium-weight fabric
Straps - Two 9x60cm strips of fabric (3 1/2 x 24inch), or 2m (2 yards) of 2.5cm (1-inch) cotton webbing
Lining - 45 cm (1/2 yard) fabric

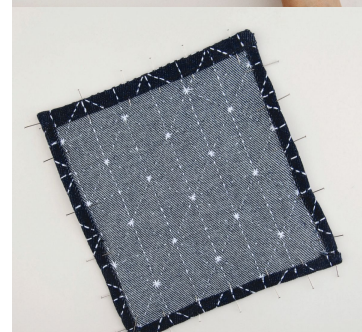
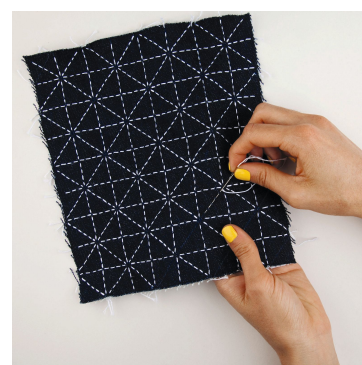
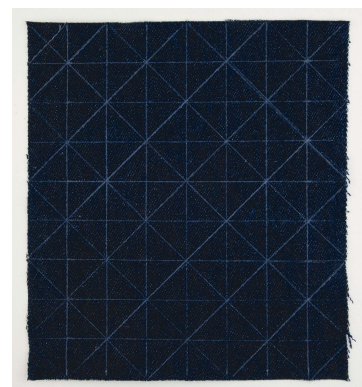
Besides being a functional carry all, this tote can help reduce the number of plastic bags you use. It's wide enough and deep enough to be used as a reusable grocery bag. Most purchases and everyday items can go right into your tote bag – books, sundries, groceries. In the United States about one hundred billion plastic bags are used every year (about one trillion globally!). Plastic bags don't biodegrade; they break down slowly into toxic bits of plastic contaminating soil, water and our oceans. Feel great about reducing your environmental impact with this beautiful, reusable tote.

01. Draw pattern grid and transfer pattern lines on pocket. Draw a 2.5-cm (1-inch) grid on the 20 x 23-cm (8 x 9-inch) piece of fabric, then transfer the Square and Diamond pattern lines onto the pocket (see template at end of the project).

02. Sashiko-stitch. Cut lengths of thread that will stitch across the full length of the pocket. Stitch the pocket, |tying knots to start and end lengths of thread.

03. Machine-sew pocket. With the pocket laying face down, press under 5 mm (1/4-inch) to the wrong side along the sides and bottom of the pocket. Fold again, tucking any loose threads under, press and pin. Press under 1cm (1/2-inch) along the top. Fold again and pin. Machine-sew around all sides.

04. Create front and back tote panels. Lay out scrap pieces on a cutting mat, creating a rectangle measuring over 40.5 x 44.5 cm (16 x 17 1/2 inches). The scrap pieces should overlap about 2.5 cm (1 inch) on all sides to allow for a 1-cm (1/2-inch) sewn seam allowance. Square the scraps with a rotary cutter and ruler (it's okay if they are not square). Pin the scrap pieces with right sides facing and machine-sew, using a 1-cm (1/2-inch) seam allowance. Continue sewing piece by piece to create a panel measuring 40.5 x 44.5 cm (16 x 17 1/2 inches). Trim to size if needed. Repeat for the back panel.



Alternatively, cut out two 40.5 x 44.5cm (16 x 17 1/2-inch) pieces of fabric.



05. Sashiko-stitch. Add improvisational sashiko stitching throughout. I used the Horizontal Rows pattern (page 145) along the seams to secure a small raw-edged patch, and some Ten Cross Stitch pattern (page 145) and stitched crosshatching to add texture.

06. Sew pocket to front piece. Measure the front of the tote to find the centre. Line up the centre of the pocket with the centre of the front tote piece, pin in place, and machine-sew around the sides and bottom 3 mm (1/8 inch) from the edge.

07. Sew front and back pieces together. With right sides facing, pin the front and back pieces together and machine-sew along the sides and bottom edge with a 1-cm (1/2-inch) seam allowance.

08. Make boxed corners. Working from the bottom of the tote, lay one corner flat, seam up, creating a sharp point. Press. Mark a 10-cm (4-inch) line from side to side, across the seam, and pin. Sew along this line, with the seam pressed to one side (A). Repeat on the other corner, making sure the seam is pressed the same way and not twisted. Trim the excess corner fabric with a 1.2-cm (1/2-inch) seam allowance (B).



09. Make two straps. Press under 1 cm (1/2 inch) along each long side of the 9 x 60-cm (3 1/2 x 24-inch) strips of fabric. Fold and press again, so the two folded edges meet flush in the centre. Pin and sew along each side, 3 mm (1/8 inch) from the centre. Alternatively, cut two 60-cm (24-inch) lengths of 2.5-cm (1-inch) cotton webbing.

10. Sew in straps. With the tote inside out, fold and press a 2.5-cm (1-inch) hem to the wrong side of the fabric around the top of the bag. Place the end of one strap, seam face up, 10 cm (4 inches) from the tote's side seam. Let the end of the strap fall a bit under the tote's hem and pin. Pin the other end of the strap 4 inches from the other side seam. Make sure not to twist the strap. Repeat on the other side of the bag with the second strap. Sew all around the bottom edge of the 2.5-cm (1-inch) hem. Backstitch over the straps.

11. Make tote lining. Cut out two 40.5 x 44.5-cm (16 x 17 1/2-inch) pieces from your lining fabric. With right sides facing, pin and sew along the sides and bottom with a 1-cm (1/2-inch) seam allowance. Repeat step 8 to create boxed corners. Fold and press a 1-cm (1-inch) hem along the top to the wrong side of the fabric.

12. Add lining to tote. Turn the tote right side out. Place the lining inside, making sure to line up the side seams and top edge. Pin in place (A) and sew along the top edge (B). Backstitch over the straps.

13. Remove marks. If necessary, remove any remaining marks from your mark-making tool. For water-soluble pens and pencils, lightly spritz with water.

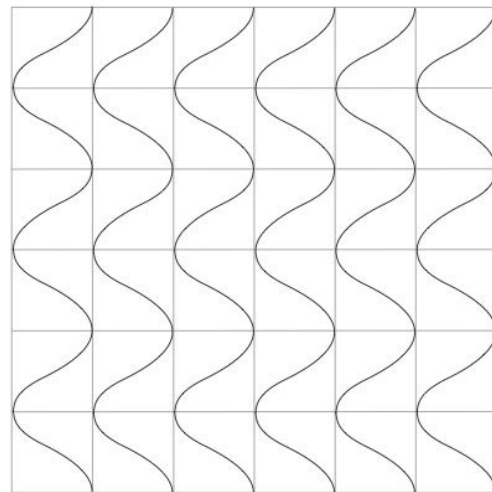


PATTERN TEMPLATE

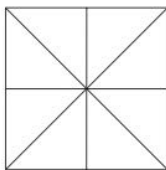
03. Rising Steam (Tatewaku)



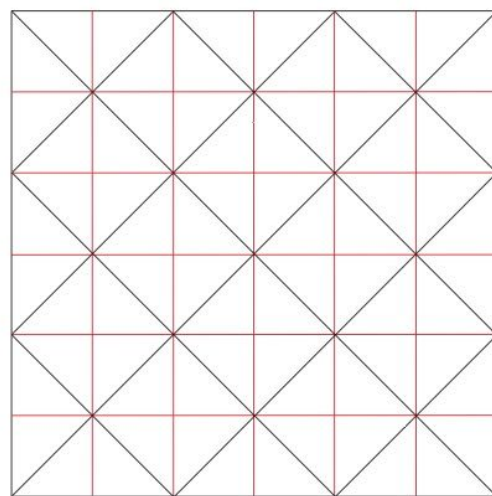
This is my take on the traditional Rising Steam sashiko pattern, in which the lines change orientation, creating symmetrical open circles. In my pattern, the curvy lines repeat in the same orientation for a fun, wavy, contemporary look that's easy to draw and stitch. To draw, first create a 2.5-cm (1-inch) grid. Then draw in curves from the top right corner to bottom left of the same grid square and repeat this pattern of curves corner to corner, using the grid as a guide.



04. Square and Diamond



This pattern covers a wide area of fabric easily. It may look complex, but it's actually quite easy to transfer and stitch. To draw, first create a 2.5-cm (1-inch) grid (red). Then, draw in the diagonal lines that form 5-cm (2-inch) diamond shapes (black). To stitch, first complete the horizontal and vertical lines. Then, stitch the diagonal lines. (See Note, page 133.)



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