

Show and Tell Tote

A free project from Vicki Welsh

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I designed this extra large tote to carry my quilts to my Guild meetings for Show and Tell. The tote is approximately 24" wide and 20" tall and easily holds 2 large quilts. Two sets of handles allows you to carry as a tote or shoulder bag.

Check the end of the tutorial for design ideas. The pattern does not include specific design ideas but you will want to do any surface design, appliqué or decorative stitching before starting to construct the tote.

Materials

- Tote exterior fabric – $\frac{3}{4}$ yard (if you want an interior pocket using the tote fabric you will need 1 yard). The tote uses the fabric sideways. If your fabric has a directional pattern you will need 42" in length.

For this tote I prefer a heavier weight fabric. If you are using quilter's weight cotton either interface the fabric with fusible interfacing (like Pellon) or back the fabric with another heavy fabric like denim, canvas or flannel. This is a good place to use something from your stash.

-Handle and trim fabric – $\frac{1}{2}$ yard

-Lining fabric – $\frac{3}{4}$ yard, I used a polyester garment lining fabric because I had it. Regular quilter's cotton will work great too.

- Interfacing for the handles - I use a stiff interfacing like Timtex or Stiffy because I want my handles to be sturdy. Use whatever you prefer.

-Thread - a heavier thread like King Tut or other 30 wt cotton will work great.

Step 1 – Cutting



A – Tote exterior: Cut 1 24" x 40 – 42" If the fabric patterning allows cut 24" across the width of the fabric. Trim off the selvedge edges. These edges will be the TOP of the tote, the folded edge is the bottom of the tote.

B-Tote lining: Cut 24" wide and the length is cut 1 ½" shorter than the tote exterior.

C-Handles: Cut 3 strips 3" wide (width of fabric). Cut one in half for the 2 shorter handles.

D-Trim: Cut 2 strips 1 ½" wide and trim to the width of the tote fabric (A)

E-Edge trim: Cut 2 strips 2 ½" wide

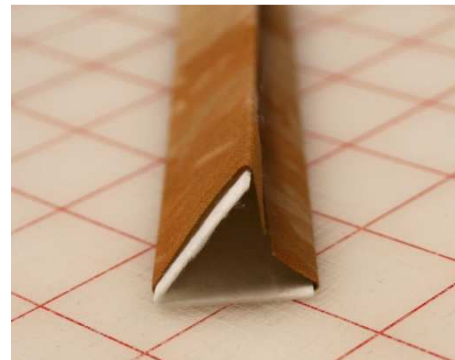
F-Interior pocket: Cut one 12" x 14"

G-Handle Interfacing: Cut 2 pieces 2" x 38" and 2 pieces 2" x 21"

Step 2 – Handles



Press each of the 4 handle piece (C) and each handle interfacing (G) in half lengthwise. Nestle the interfacing into the fold of the handle fabric.

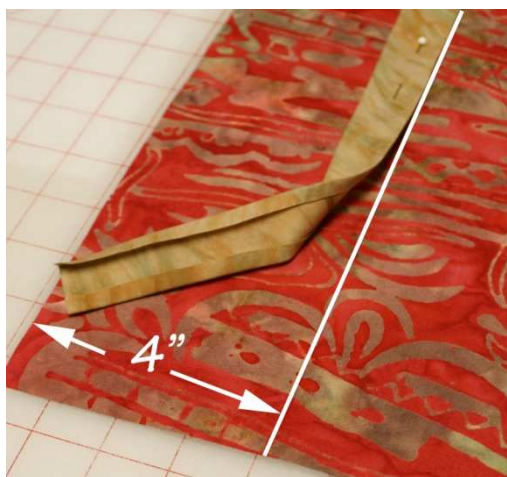


Press the raw edges to the inside. This takes a little manipulation. Just be patient and careful with your fingers.



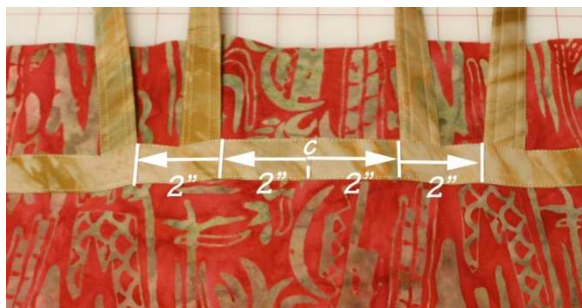
Topstitch each handle with 4 rows of stitching: one on each edge and one about ¼" in from each edge.

Step 3 – Sew the outside of the tote



Get the 2 trim pieces (D) and cut the length to the width of the tote. Press under $\frac{1}{4}$ " of the raw edge along each long edge.

Get your tote fabric. The short edges are the top edges of the tote. Mark a line 4" from each top edge and align one folded edge of the trim on that line. Sew the trim to the tote only along this edge (the bottom edge of the trim).



Find the center of the tote (approximately 12" in from the side) and make some reference marks at 2" and 4" on each side of center. These are the placement marks for the handles. The shortest handle is placed along the marks closest to the center. (Refer to the photo of the finished bag for clarification.) Note that the handle is positioned on the side of the line away from the center.

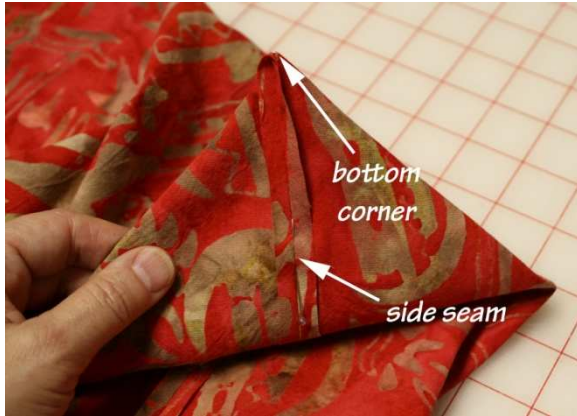
Push the handles all the way behind the trim to butt against the bottom stitching. Stitch across the top edge of the trim securing the handles in place.



For added strength, stitch an "X" over each handle.



Sew the sides of the tote with a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam. Make sure the trim pieces align at the seam. Press the seam open. Don't worry about pressing open at the bottom corner, you are about to cut that off.



Now we will create the bottom of the bag. First fold the bag flat and finger press a crease across the bottom of the tote.

Fold the bag so that you can align the side seam with the center bottom fold.



Here's the bottom with the fold marked and a pin shows how the side seam aligns with the bottom fold.



Measure up from the tip 3" and mark a line perpendicular to the seam. This line will be 6" long.



Sew along that line and, for added security, a second line $\frac{1}{4}$ " away. Cut off the corner.

Now do the other corner.

Turn the bag right side out and set aside while you prepare the lining.

Step 4 – Sew the Lining



Cut the edge trim pieces (E) to the width of the lining and sew them to the top edges of the

lining. Press the seam allowance toward the trim and topstitch in place.



You can make your pocket (or pockets) to any size you wish. This one is designed to hold a quilting book or notebook. Fold under the top edge $\frac{1}{4}$ " twice and top stitch. Fold about $\frac{1}{2}$ " of the raw edge of the sides and bottom to the back and press.



Center the pocket on the lining just below the edge trim. Sew in place along the sides and bottom. I recommend 2 rows of stitching for added strength.



Sew the side seams and create the bottom just like you did with the tote exterior EXCEPT leave about 6" open on one side.



To make the very last step easier, press the seam allowances back along the open edge.

Step 5 – Finish it up



With the tote bag turned right side out and the lining turned inside out, place the tote bag inside the lining. The right sides are together.



Align the side seams and top edge. Stitch around the top ½" away from the edge.



Turn the lining to the inside by pulling the tote through the opening in the side of the lining. At the top edge wrap the trim around to the back and smooth over the edge of the tote and to the back. Stitch in the ditch through all layers. This creates the nice edge trim at the top of the bag.



Close that hole in the lining. Align the folded edges and sew through all layers. Tuck the lining back in the tote. Fill the tote with your latest quilt creations and head off to Show and Tell.

Other Designs

Here are 2 other totes that I made.



In this version I used one of my gradients as the base fabric and added metallic paint stencil effects.



In this version I appliquéd flowers and added button details. All of the decorative work is done prior to any stitching. Just make sure that the appliqué details are at least 4" from the top edge and 3" from the center bottom.