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Free "Pink October" Tote Bag Pattern and Instructions - Printable Page

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Even a very simple pattern with only three pieces can be turned into a beautiful tote like this one quick & easy!

Instructions for Your "Pink October" Tote Bag

This is a very easy, quick project pattern around that turns out a beautiful totebag you can embellish in hundreds of ways. Use your imagination to make unique gifts and to use your scrap fabrics and trims to create a new bag for every mood!

COPYRIGHT: While this tote is not difficult to make, I did put in a good deal of time and energy in creating it and developing a pattern with the fewest pieces and simple to follow instructions for constructing a precision product that can be personalized in infinite ways. I used to claim copyright on it, but have decided it's such a simple design, that I think everyone should enjoy using it. To that end my design and instructions are free to use and share, use in a sewing class, or to create gifts, or if you are "sew" inclined, go for it... make and sell your own designs with my blessings... there's plenty to go around! I do ask though, that where copyright is expressed, here or anywhere, please respect and support copyright law, as well as the small arts and crafts profession. To turn my designs or free patterns into finished products for sale now your prerogative, however the instructions are copyrighted and should not be recreated for commercial gain. Mama's Pocketbook finished designs, one of a kind originals, and written instructions are the intellectual property of Dianne Hadaway. Please contact dianne@mamaspocketbook.com with any questions or requests.

- **STEP 1.- GATHER YOUR MATERIALS & SUPPLIES** - Here's what you will need (Click image to see a larger version)



- Fabric & Interfacing - 1/2 yard each of two coordinating fabrics for body and a piece of fabric large enough to cut two straps measuring at least 25' x 4" for straps, and a coordinate large enough to cut two pockets measuring 8" x 9.5", 1 yard fusible interfacing (choose medium weight or appropriate weight interfacing depending on your fabric weight).
- Notions & Supplies - Scissors for cutting fabric and for cutting paper, ruler, thread, pins, chalk to mark seam lines and dots, velcro closure or magnet closures (optional), brown kraft paper or other paper to cut pattern pieces from (you can even use a grocery sack!)



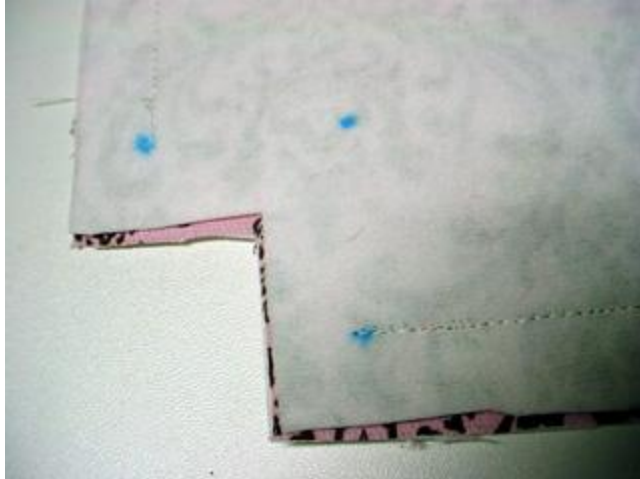
- **STEP 2.- CREATE THE PATTERN PIECES** - Make tote body pattern from paper: measure and cut out a 12" tall by 15" wide rectangle and notch a 1 & 1/2" square out of each of the bottom corners as shown above. Mark the pattern piece as I have in the photo with dots at the corners where the **5/8" seam allowances cross**. Make sure to lay the pattern so that the grain of the fabric runs lengthwise. Mark your pattern with the grainline.
- ALL SEAMS ARE 5/8, but if you prefer 1/2 seams that will work too, just be consistent with all seam allowances.
- To make the tote strap pattern piece from paper, measure and cut out a 25" to 28" long by 4" wide pattern piece.
- To make the pocket pattern piece, measure an 8" wide by 9.5" tall rectangle. Mark 1.5" foldmark at top of pocket pattern piece and mark 5/8 inch stitching lines on all pattern pieces.
- If you wish to make lined pockets, cut your two pocket pieces measuring 8 wide by 8 tall.



- **STEP 3.- CUT OUT YOUR TOTE & INTERFACINGS** - Cut 2 body pattern pieces from each of two coordinating fabric pieces. Two for the outer shell and two for the inner shell (lining). Cut two strap pattern pieces and two pocket pattern pieces from desired coordinating fabrics.
- Cut 2 body pieces and 2 pockets from interfacing. You may choose to use interfacing on the straps depending on the weight of your fabric. If the fabric is heavy enough, it will hold its shape after the folding and sewing on the straps is complete without interfacing.



- **STEP 4.-PREPARE YOUR PIECES** -
- Fuse interfacing to back side of outer shell body pieces and pocket pieces with a steam iron according to fusible interfacing directions.
- Mark circles with chalk or a marking pencil on body pieces at the notched corners and at the top edges where you want to place the straps
- Turn under 1/4 inch on top edge of pockets and press, then turn under and additional 1.25" to form pocket facing. Press. turn in on sides and bottom of pockets 5/8" and press.



- For unlined pockets, turn under 1/4 inch on top edge of pockets and press, then turn under an additional 1.25" to form pocket facing. Press. Turn in on sides and bottom of pockets 5/8" and press.
- To make lined pockets, place pocket pieces with right sides facing and stitch each of three sides of the square together. On the 4th side, stitch 2 inches along the sides from each corner, leaving a 4-inch opening along that side. Reinforce stitching on corners, turn pocket right side out through the opening left on one side, push each corner out and press your pocket to make it a nice flat square. You can choose to handstitch the opening close, but I just stitch it down when I sew the pocket on to the tote.



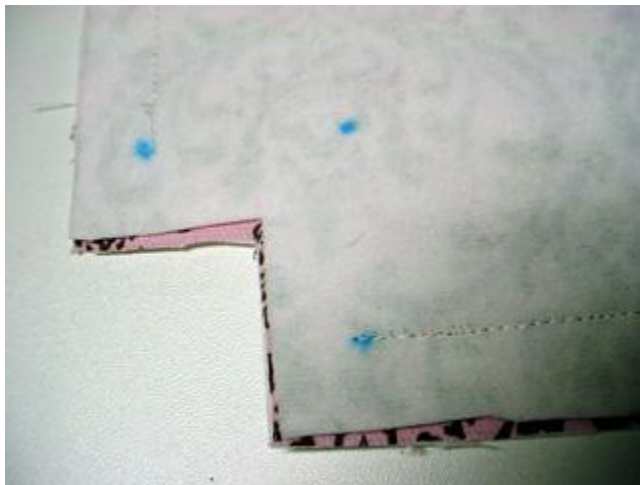
- **STEP 5.- OPTIONS** - Before beginning to sew pieces, if you plan to use velcro or magnetic closures you will want to sew or attach those to the lining pieces, being careful to center them and placing them about 1.5" from top edges. Also if you plan to add any trim that needs to be sewn to the top edge so that the seam allowance covers the seam allowance of the trim you will want to add those embellishments before sewing the main pieces together.
- **STEP 6.- SEWING!!** - I know prep is tedious, but it does make for a professional result... but now the fun part - SEWING IT UP! (Click image to see a larger version)

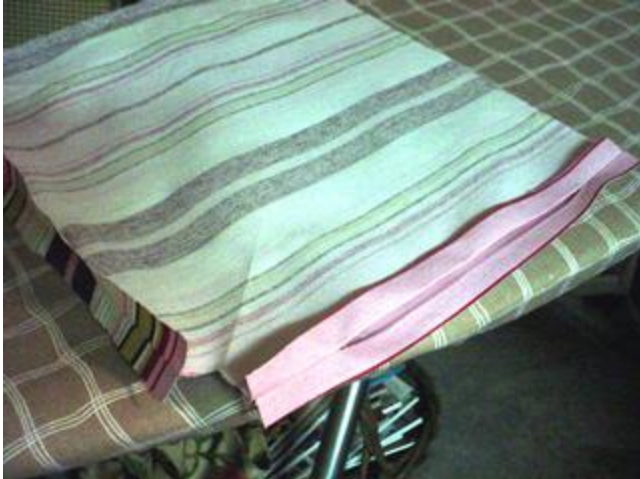


- Sew The Pockets - Believe it or not, the pockets can take the most time of the entire project!
- FOR UNLINED POCKETS: You will need to press down all your pocket edges, you may choose to finish your pocket edges with serging, pinking shears, or with fraycheck (a liquid glue that prevents fraying).
- Next, starting at the top edge of your pockets, stitch down the 1/4" hem on the pocket top. Then, making sure the side edges are pressed firmly inward, turn down the 1 & 1/4 fold at the top of the pocket to the inside of the pocket; topstitch the facing on the outside of the pocket catching in the turned in sides.
- Center pockets on body pieces and pin in place. If you want your bag to be reversible, be sure to position the pockets so that one is on the front of the outer shell, and one is on the back of the inner shell. You may also choose to add pockets to both front and back of the outer shell, and to both sides of the lining if you like a lot of pockets. Sew pockets to body pieces along each side and bottom edge, reinforce stitching at upper edges. TIP: I always slide the upper edge of my pockets in a scant 1/8" on each side so that the pocket is not tight against the body fabric. This creates a slight gap that makes it easier to use the pockets.
- FOR LINED POCKETS - Place pocket pieces with right sides facing and stitch each of three sides of the square together. On the 4th side stitch 2 inches along the sides from each corner, leaving a 4 inch opening along that side. Reinforce stitching on corners, turn pocket right side out through the opening left on one side, push each corner out and press your pocket to make it a nice flat square. you can choose to handstitch the opening close, but I just stitch it down when I sew the pocket on to the tote.
- Center the pockets on the appropriate tote fabric pieces (front outer piece and back inner piece), pin in place and edge stitch it in place, reinforce top corners with back stitching



- **STEP 8.**- Sew the Body - Sew the outer shell side seams to the markings at the notched corners, sew the bottom seam to the markings at the notched corners. as shown below.
- Sew the lining side and bottom seams, being sure to leave an opening in one side of the lining for turning the bag right side out later. (see 2nd picture down.)
- You may choose to finish the edges of your side and bottom seams now to prevent fraying





- Sew the bottom corners - fold the bottom corners by matching the centers of the side and bottom seams and creating a triangle as shown below. Stitch $\frac{5}{8}$ " across the corner edge
- Now it's time to press all your seams open. Turn outer shell right side out. Turn lining right side in. Make sure to press your bag pieces well now to create a nicely formed shape.



- **STEP 9.-** Prepare and Sew Straps - Press $\frac{5}{8}$ " in on each side of straps, then fold strap in half, being careful to match edges closely, Press well to create strap.
- Sew close ($\frac{1}{4}$ ") to folded in edges, then sew close to folded edge on each strap, top-stitch $\frac{1}{4}$ " in from outer edge stitching (this is the easy way, no difficult turning of long tubes necessary!)



- Press straps flat.
- It might be hard to tell from the photo below, but you pin the straps to the outside of the body of your tote (not the lining) and baste them in place $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the edge. I usually put them 2 to 3 inches in from the side seams.

- Baste stitch the straps in place securely along top edge of front and back of tote. Be sure straps are not twisted.
- What you see below is one strap pinned to the right side of the front of your tote and underneath the other strap is pinned to the right side of the back of your tote. I just folded the back strap up in the photo so you could see that they are matched up at the same positions on each side.



- **STEP 10.**- Finishing up! - Insert outer shell, right side out, into the lining (which is turned right side in), be sure the straps are down inside and in place. Pin side seams together and centers of each body piece. Stitch around the top of the bag, finish seam to prevent fraying.



- Turn bag by pulling outer shell through the opening in the side of the lining
- Press all edges well. If you plan to use your tote as a reversible one, you may choose to handstitch the opening in the lining closed. If you prefer you can stitch the opening closed by machine.
- Finish by topstitching 1/4" from the edge all around the top of your tote.



- Add trimmings, embellishments, flower pins, jewelry, buttons, or any other items you desire to personalize your tote ... AND VIOLA - You are done! ENJOY YOUR TOTE!



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