

best of
stitch
BAGS TO SEW

from the
editors of
Stitch magazine
compiled by
**Tricia
Waddell**



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introduction

Somehow, we never seem to have enough bags. Every outfit, occasion, and season seems to call for its own carry-all. What could be more fun or satisfying than creating a one-of-a-kind custom bag that can't be found in any store, coordinated perfectly with your outfit?

If you share our bag obsession, we know that in the following pages you will find a bag project (or two or three) that will be the perfect accessory to a favorite outfit. We've chosen our favorite bag designs from the pages of *Stitch*, along with five brand-new, never-before-published designs to entice you to start sewing right away.

Pretty patchwork bags that are great for stashbusting, bags featuring creative embellishments from appliqué to embroidery, bags made with a variety of clever construction techniques—they're all here and every project has a unique design twist. You'll find a variety of sizes and shapes, including totes, messenger bags, clutches, coin purses, wallets, and more. No matter how much or how little time you have to sew, or your sewing skill level, you will find the perfect project.

To ensure your sewing success, check out the technique sidebars throughout the book, from tips for sewing leather to DIY felting, along with general bag construction tips and tricks and sewing basics. You'll also find all the full-size pattern pieces and templates on the full-size pattern insert pages bound into the book.

What are you waiting for? Let's sew!

Happy sewing,

The Editors of *Stitch*

.....making the most of your stash....



pretty in patchwork

If you love color, print, and pattern, and have the fabric stash to prove it, then patchwork is your best friend. There are so many ways to creatively approach fabric piecing. Showcase big bold blocks of color with the **1. Half-Moon Rising Hobo Bag** (page 8). Play with fabric strips and stitch accents in the quick-to-make **2. Odekake Tote** (page 14). Combine textures and curved piecing in the **3. Corduroy Patchwork Bag** (page 244) for the perfect fall purse. Take a trip back to the 1980s with an updated **4. Patchwork Bermuda Bag** (page 18) featuring simple graphic prints. Experiment with tone-on-tone colors and prints in the roomy **5. Checkerboard Bag** (page 28). Let the fabric be your guide, and you can never go wrong!



half-moon rising hobo bag

A tiled-floor design inspired the patchwork for this generously sized hobo bag. Improvisational piecing joins half-moon fabric shapes in a fearless mix of colors, patterns, and prints. To achieve the signature, slouchy style of a hobo, the exterior and lining are gathered along the top of the bag, and a short strip of wide webbing creates the strap. The result is a practical, roomy bag that is bursting with color. *by Malka Dubrawsky*

FABRIC

- Sixteen assorted 6" × 6" (15 cm × 15 cm) warm-colored cotton fabric pieces (*shown*: red and orange)
- Sixteen assorted 6" × 6" (15 cm × 15 cm) cool-colored cotton fabric pieces (*shown*: blue and green)
- $\frac{3}{8}$ yd (34.5 cm) each of two 45" (114.5 cm) wide neutral cotton solids for block background (*shown*: dark gray and light gray)
- $\frac{3}{8}$ yd (34.5 cm) of 45" (114.5 cm) wide coordinating cotton fabric for side and bottom panels
- $1\frac{3}{8}$ yd (125.5 cm) of 45" (114.5 cm) wide cotton fabric for lining
- $1\frac{3}{8}$ yd (125.5 cm) of 45" (114.5 cm) wide muslin

OTHER SUPPLIES

- Cardboard or template plastic
- Coordinating cotton sewing thread
- 1¼ yd (114.5 cm) of ½" (1.3 cm) wide double-fold bias tape
- 20" (51 cm) of 1½" (3.8 cm) wide cotton webbing for handle
- 1¼" (3.2 cm) wide button
- Rotary cutter, rigid acrylic ruler, and self-healing mat
- Handsewing needle
- Templates on pattern insert ([Download the pattern insert files here.](#))
- *Optional:* Quilt basting pins

FINISHED SIZE

— 20" × 20" × 3" (51 × 51 × 7.5 cm), excluding strap

NOTES

- All seam allowances are $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6 mm) unless otherwise noted.
- Press seams to one side, alternating sides where seams intersect.

CUT THE FABRIC

1 Cut the following pieces as directed. To make templates, trace Pattern A and Pattern B (see pattern insert) onto cardboard or template plastic; cut out.

From assorted warm-colored pieces:

- Sixteen half-moon shapes (piece A) using template A

From assorted cool-colored pieces:

- Sixteen half-moon shapes (piece A) using template A

From first neutral-colored solid:

- Sixteen backgrounds (piece B) using template B

From second neutral-colored solid:

- Sixteen backgrounds (piece B) using template B

From the fabric for the side and bottom panels:

- Four 2" \times 22" (5 \times 56 cm) side strips
- Two 2" \times 25" (5 \times 63.5 cm) bottom strips

From the lining fabric:

- Two 23" \times 22" (58.5 \times 56 cm) rectangles

From the muslin:

- Two 24" \times 24" (61 \times 61 cm) squares

MAKE THE PATCHWORK

2 Fold one half-moon piece (A) and one background piece (B) in half and crease (**figure 1**); unfold.

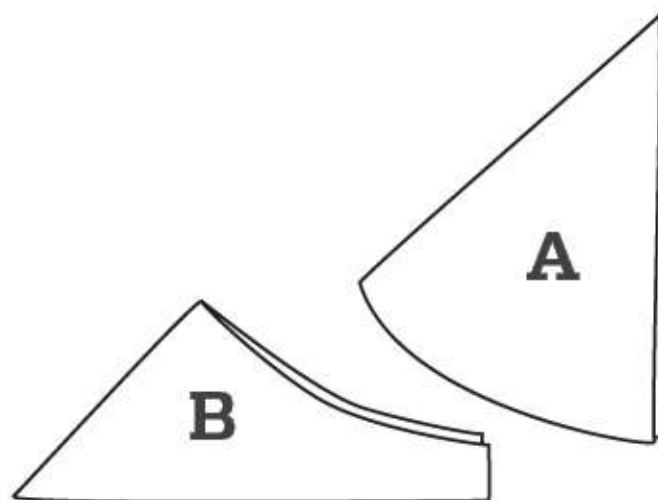


figure 1

3 With right sides facing, pin A to B along the curved edge, matching the creased centers and raw edges (**figure 2**). Sew together, easing the curved edges. Press seam to one side, clipping the seam allowance if necessary.

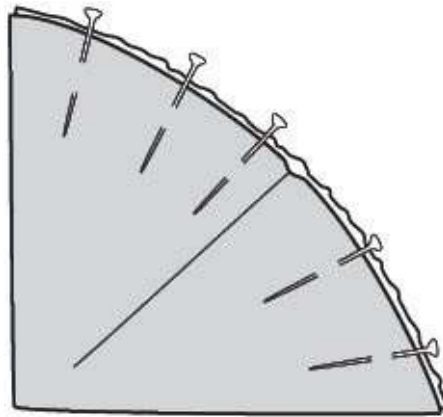


figure 2

4 Repeat Steps 2 and 3 to make a total of thirty-two patchwork squares. (*Note: Combine all warm-colored A pieces with one neutral solid and all cool-colored A pieces with the second neutral solid or mix as desired.*)

5 Pin two warm-colored patchwork squares, right sides together, to make a half-moon shape. Sew the squares together with a $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6 mm) seam allowance (**figure 3**). Press seam allowance to one side. Repeat to make a total of eight warm-colored block pairs.

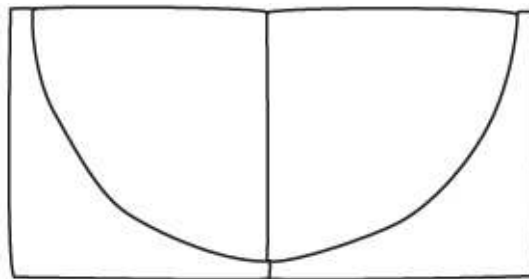


figure 3

6 With right sides together, pin and sew two pairs together so that the curved sides of half-moons meet in the center. Repeat to make a total of four warm-colored blocks (**figure 4**).

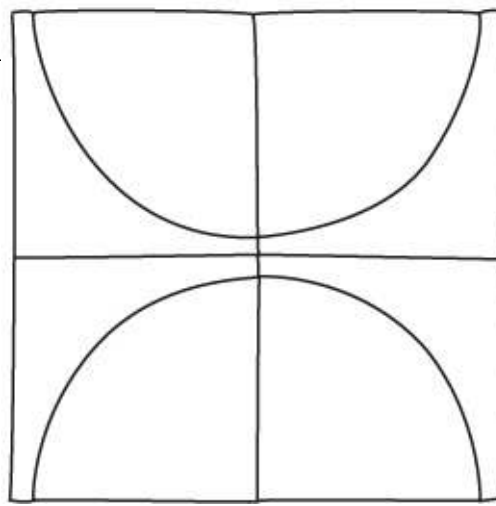


figure 4

7 Repeat Steps 5 and 6 with the cool-colored patchwork squares to create a total of four cool-colored blocks.

8 With right sides together, pin and sew one cool-colored block and one warm-colored block together with a $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6 mm) seam allowance (**figure 5**). Press seam open. Repeat to sew a second pair of blocks

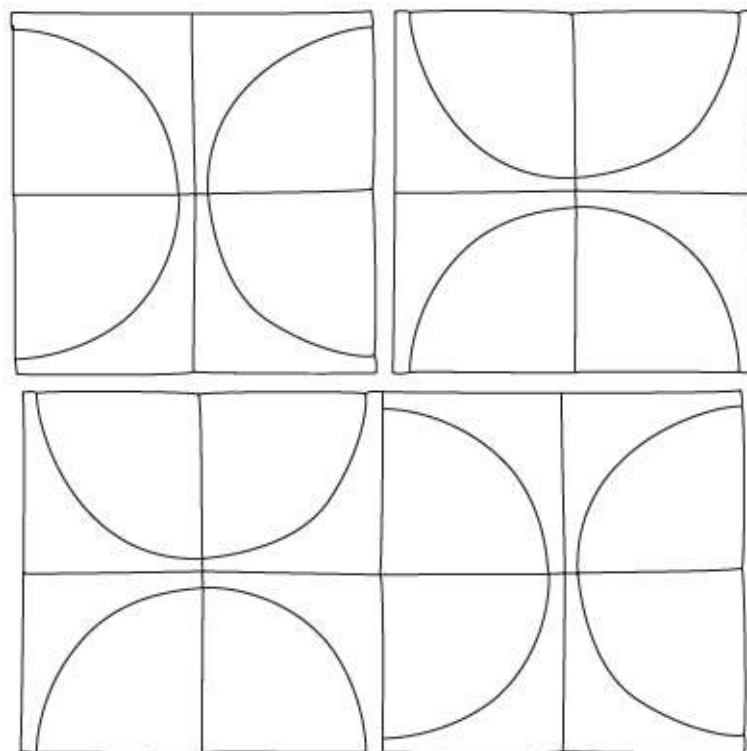


figure 5

9 With right sides together, pin and sew these pairs together to complete bag side; press seam open.

10 Repeat Steps 8 and 9 to complete the second bag side.

11 Working on a flat surface, place one bag side, patchwork side up, on top of one muslin square; pin or baste the layers together. Free-motion quilt the patchwork side and then trim to finish first patchwork panel. Repeat to complete the second patchwork panel.



ASSEMBLE THE BAG

12 Pin one 2" × 22" (5 × 56 cm) strip to the side of one patchwork panel, right sides together (**figure 6**). Sew the pieces together with $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6 mm) seam. Sew the second 2" × 22" (5 × 56 cm) strip to the opposite side. Press seams open; trim strips if necessary.

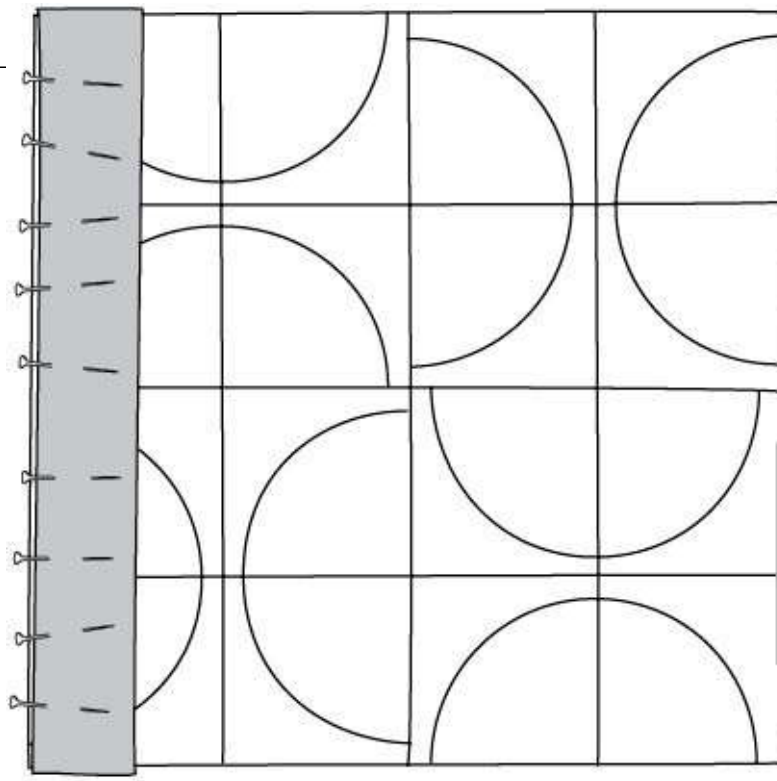


figure 6

13 With right sides together, pin and sew one 2" × 25" (5 × 63.5 cm) strip to the bottom of the patchwork panel. Press the seam open; trim strip if necessary.

14 Repeat Steps 12 and 13 add strips to the second patchwork panel.

15 With right sides together, pin and sew the side and bottom edges of the patchwork panels together. Press seams open.

16 To create a flat base for bag bottom, match right sides and center seams of side and bottom; fold out a triangle with a height of 1½" (3.8 cm). Sew along base (**figure 7**). Repeat for the opposite edge of bag bottom.

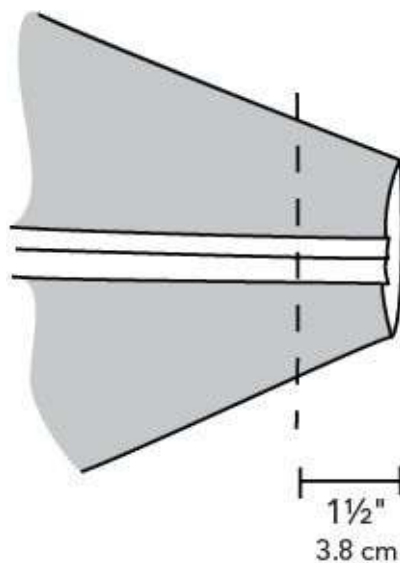


figure 7





17 Pin the 23" × 22" (58.5 × 56 cm) lining fabric rectangles with right sides together; sew along sides and bottom. Press the seams open.

18 Repeat Step 16 to create a flat base for lining bottom.

19 With wrong sides together, insert the lining inside patchwork bag. Pin the patchwork bag exterior and lining along the top edge, matching the side seams. Run a basting stitch through both layers $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6 mm) from top raw edge.

20 Gather the top edge of the bag so that the opening measures approximately 16½" (42 cm). Machine baste the gathering in place with a $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6 mm) seam.

21 Cut a 6" (15 cm) length of double-fold bias tape for the button loop. Sew two rows of topstitching $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3 mm) from both long folded edges.

22 Pin the short raw ends of the button loop to the raw gathered edge of the bag opening at the center of one side, making sure the button loop points toward the bag interior. Machine baste the button loop $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6 mm) from the edge. *Note:* This point now indicates back of bag.

23 Pin the raw edges of the webbing strap to the lining, centering one end on each lining side seam along the top edge; machine baste in place (**figure 8**).

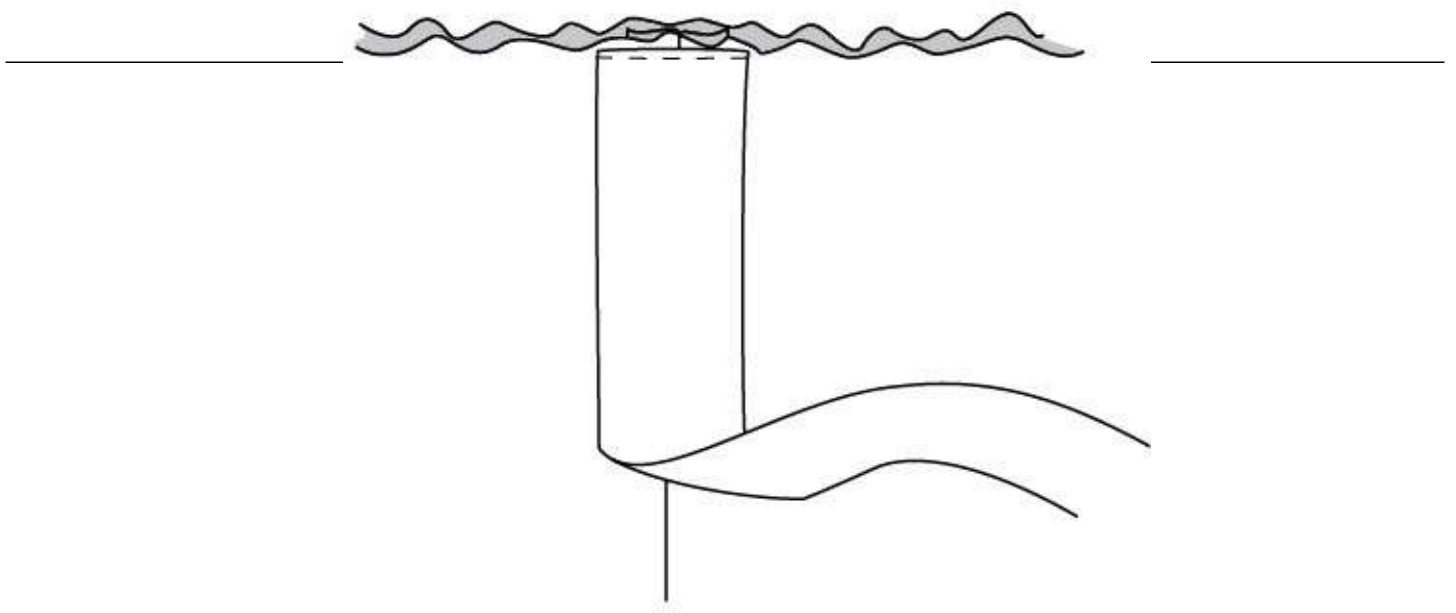


figure 8



24 Cut the double-fold bias tape $33\frac{1}{2}$ " (85 cm) long. Open up one fold and pin tape along the raw top edge with the right sides facing (**figure 9**). Fold the short edge of the bottom bias tape end under before sewing to finish edge. Stitch inside the crease of the tape to attach it to the bag, catching the button loop and strap ends in the stitching.

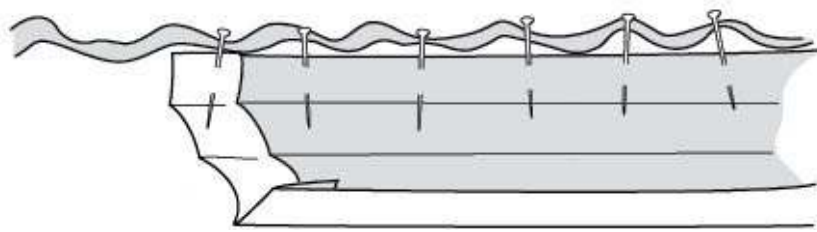


figure 9

25 Wrap the double-fold bias tape over the top of the raw edge of the bag and pin in place, flipping the button loop and the strap ends straight up. Using a zigzag stitch, stitch the tape in place, catching the strap ends and the button loop in the stitching (**figure 10**).

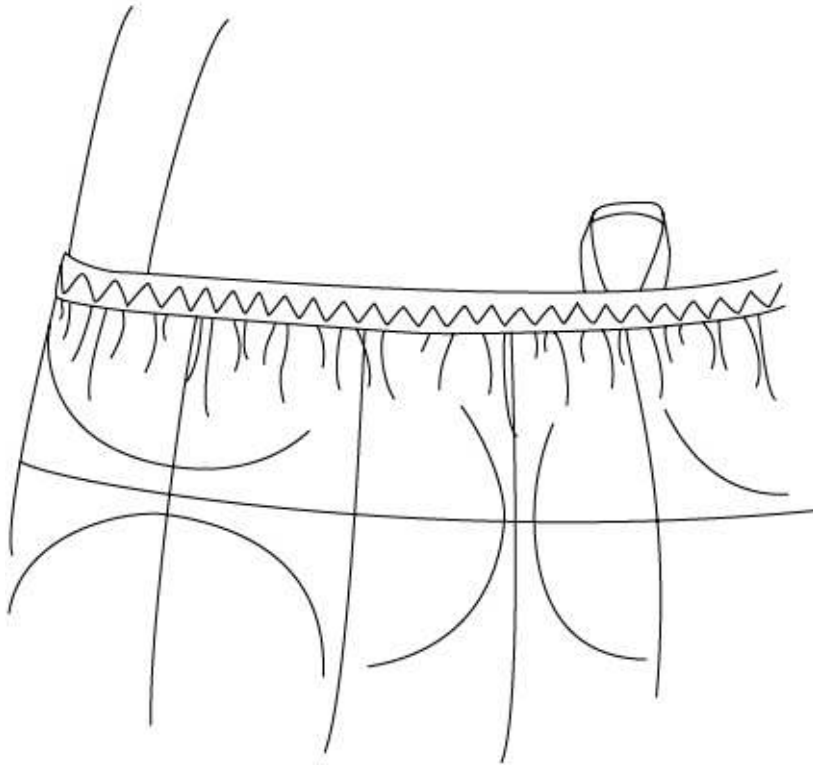


figure 10

26 Sew the button in place.

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