

BLANKET IN A BAG

by Nicole Smith



For a quilt that not only keeps you warm or holds your place at the park but also helps tote your goodies to the game or picnic, try this great project. If you don't want to take the time to create a quilt, you can also use a large piece of fleece as your blanket, or stitch the tote onto a pre-existing quilt.

MATERIALS

- $\frac{2}{3}$ yard each of 6 different coordinated cotton prints for the quilt top
- $\frac{2}{3}$ yard of fabric for the bag
- $2\frac{5}{8}$ yards 60"-wide cotton fabric for the quilt back and bag lining
- 2 yards of 60"-wide low-loft cotton batting
- $6\frac{1}{4}$ yards of double-fold quilt binding
- Yarn
- Hand-sewing needle



STEPS

Step One

Make the Side of the Bag

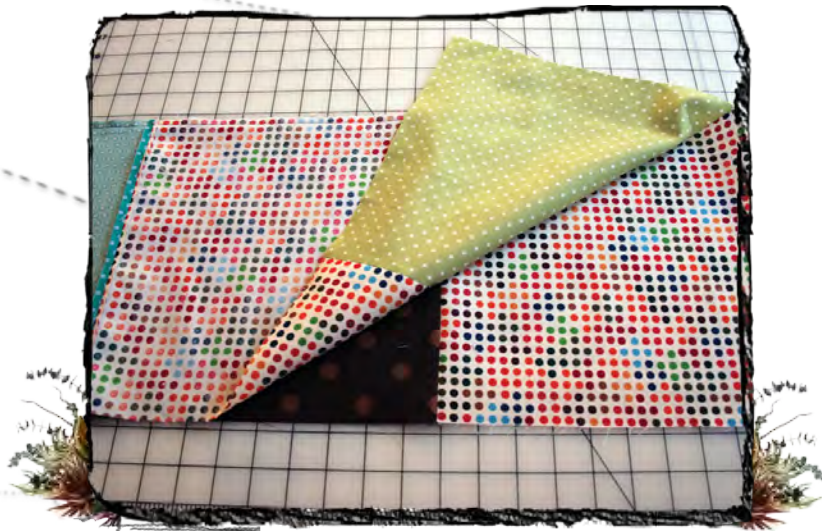
Cut thirty 10½" x 10½" squares from the coordinating cotton fabric prints. You can alternate prints and colors to create any look you like. To join the pieces, pin two pieces right sides together and sew along one edge with a ¼"-wide seam allowance. Repeat to join six pieces together. Repeat to make five rows of six squares each.



Step Two

Assemble Quilt Top

Lay two pieced rows right sides together with the seamlines aligned. Sew them together along one long edge. Repeat to join all five rows to assemble the quilt top.



Step Three

Pin Batting to Quilt Back

Cut a rectangle 60" wide and 70" long for the quilt back. If your fabric is not long enough, piece two 35"-wide and 60"-long strips together. Cut a piece of batting the same size as the quilt back. Lay the quilt back on your work surface or a clean floor, face down. Lay the batting on top, smoothing out any wrinkles and bumps. Lay the quilt top on top, face up. Smooth out the fabric again. Pin all of the layers together, using pins every 5" or so.



STEPS

Trim the batting and quilt back to match the quilt top.



Step Four

Sew Binding to Quilt Edges

Cut two 55"-long and two 65"-long pieces of double-fold quilt binding. Open up one strip and pin it along one quilt edge with the raw edges aligned. Turn under the short raw edges. Sew the binding to the quilt along the first fold line as shown in the photo. Then wrap the binding around the quilt's edge and pin it in place. Edgestitch the binding's other side in place by stitching in the ditch along the previous seam.

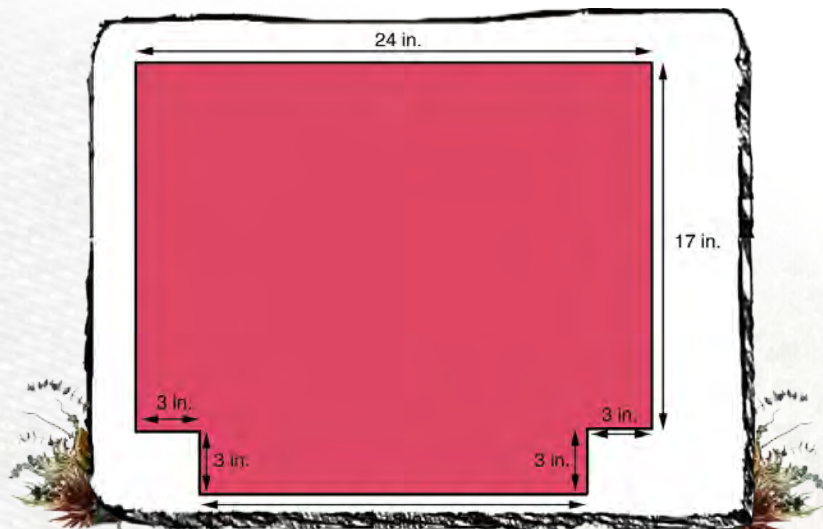


Step Five

Create Bag Pattern

Follow the diagram to create the bag pattern. Cut one piece from a print and a second piece in the same fabric as the quilt back.

See last page of instructions for a larger version of the Bag Pattern.



STEPS

Step Six

Sew Bag

Pin the two bag pieces right sides together. Sew around all the edges with a $\frac{1}{4}$ "-wide seam allowance, leaving an opening about 2" wide at the bottom edge. Clip the corners. Turn the bag right side out through the opening and press it.



Step Seven

Sew Bag Corners

Before you attach the bag to the blanket, you need to sew its corners. To do this, fold the bag to bring the two 3" sides of each corner together, aligning the edges.



Sew the corner edges together in a straight line using a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance.



STEPS

Step Eight

Assemble the Straps

Cut two 4½" x 31" fabric strips. Fold one in half lengthwise with right sides together and long edges aligned. Sew around the edges, leaving one short end unsewn. Clip the corners and turn the strap right-side out. Press the strap, turning ¼" of fabric to the inside at the open end. Repeat for the second strap.



Step Nine

Pin and Sew Straps to Bag

Pin one strap to the top of the bag with its ends spaced about 7" inches apart and the strap ends extending 2" past the bag's top edge. Sew the strap ends in place as shown, sewing around the straps edges where they overlap the bag. Then sew diagonally across as shown.



Step Ten

Attach the Bag to the Blanket

Center the bag along one blanket edge with the bag's bottom edge aligned with the blanket's edge. Pin the sides to the blanket, making sure they are even with the blanket's edge and parallel to each other. Sew the bag to the blanket along its side and bottom edges using a ¼" seam allowance.



STEPS

Fold back the bag's top edge and position the second strap on the blanket opposite the strap on the bag. Sew the second strap's ends to the blanket in the same way you sewed the strap to the bag, with your stitches forming a sewn square with criss-crossed stitch lines.



Step Eleven

Optional: Secure Blanket with Yarn

If you want to, secure the blanket layers together at each square intersection with a knotted piece of yarn. To do so, cut a 10" piece of yarn and thread it into a hand needle. Push the needle through all layers of the quilts at one of the seam intersections, then bring it back up through all layers. Knot the yarn and trim the ends to your taste.



Step Twelve

Fold the Blanket into the Bag

Lay the blanket out, face up, with the bag on the edge closest to you. Fold the right-hand edge over, aligning the fold with the bag's edge.



STEPS

Then fold the left-hand edge in to match.



Next, turn the bag right-side out, encasing the blanket's edge.



To finish, fold the blanket down into the bag.



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