



NORTHCOTT
Cottons that feel like silk

American Vintage

by Deborah Edwards



FREE PATTERN • **The Everyday Tote** • Appox. size: 13" x 15" x 5" • By Elaine Theriault of Northcott

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Everyday Tote Bag

Finished Size: 5" W by 15" L by 13" H

WOF = width of fabric

Fabric requirements	Yards	Cutting Instructions
Tossed Patches (#21336-11) Outer bag	½ yard	• Outer bag: Cut TWO pieces 13 ½" (height) x 21" (width)
Red star print (#21338-24) Or Blue mottled print (#21341-49) Handles, bag trim	½ yard	• Bag trim: Cut FOUR pieces 3 ½" by 21" • Handles: Cut ONE piece 5 ½" by WOF"
Stripe (#21337-11) Lining, pockets, bag bottom cover	1 yard	• Lining: Cut TWO pieces 13 ½" by 21" • Two pockets: Cut TWO pieces 9" by 21" • Bag bottom cover: Cut TWO pieces 5 1/4" by 18"
Fusible fleece	1 yard	• For outer bag: Cut TWO pieces 17" by 21"
Décor Bond or Craft Fuse (stiff fusible interfacing)	1 yard (the width of this product varies from 20" to 45" so you may want to purchase a bit more if the width is only 20")	• For lining: Cut TWO pieces 17" by 21" (if your product is only 20" wide, then cut 17" by 20") • For pockets: Cut TWO pieces 9" by 10 ½" • For handles: Cut TWO pieces 5" by 20"

Use ¼" Seam Allowance unless otherwise stated

Prepping the Outer bag and lining pieces:

- Stitch one piece of bag trim fabric to the top of each of the two outer bag pieces and the two lining pieces. All four pieces should be approximately 16 ½" by 21".
- Fuse the fusible fleece to the wrong side of the outer bag pieces. Use a hot iron with steam. Depending on the fusible fleece, this step can take a bit of time. Make sure the edges are well fused. Give it a good press from both sides.
- Fuse the Décor Bond to the wrong side of the lining. Again, steam and a hot iron will help.
- If you would like to add some quilting or decorative stitching to the outer bag, now is the time.
- Trim all four bag pieces to the same size (I did them one at a time)
- **TIPS ON TRIMMING:** The fusible fleece and fusible interfacing will extend over the edges of the fabric pieces for a variety of reasons. I like to trim my outer bag and lining pieces so that all four pieces are identical in size. The final size isn't critical so if you need to trim everything down to 16" x 20" or 15 ½" x 19" - that's OK. The important thing is that all four pieces are the same size. Make sure when you trim the four pieces that the seam (where the trim fabric meets the outer bag fabric) is in the same position on both the front and the back of the outer pieces so they will match up when sewn together.

Making the pockets

- Feel free to change the size of the pockets, make one pocket, or omit the pockets altogether. I made two pockets for my tote.
- Fuse the interfacing to the wrong side of one half of the pocket fabric.
- Fold the pocket in half right sides together and stitch around three sides. Leave an opening so you can turn the pocket right side out. Alternatively you could use two separate pieces of fabric to make the pocket.
- Trim the corners of the seam allowance to reduce bulk when the pocket is turned right side out. Turn the pocket right side out. I like to (carefully) use a point turner to get a nice sharp point at the corners. Press well, tucking in the seam allowance in the opening. The pocket should measure approximately 10" wide by 8 ½" deep.
- Now it's time to close the opening. This can be hand stitched, but that takes time. You could leave it unstitched since you're going to top stitch the pocket to the bag lining, but I like to fuse the opening shut. I use fusible web that comes in ¼" wide format or you could cut a ¼" strip off a piece of fusible web and use that. Cut it to the length needed, insert in the opening and fuse shut.
- Place the pocket on the lining at least 3 inches from the bottom. Top stitch around the sides and bottom edges of the pocket. Reinforce the top corners of the pocket so they don't easily rip from the lining.

Making the handles

- Fuse the interfacing to the wrong side of the handle fabric. Line up one long edge of the interfacing to a long edge of the handle fabric. The interfacing is ½" narrower than the handle fabric. If using two shorter pieces of interfacing, butt the short edges up to each other in the middle of the handle fabric.
- Fold over the long edge of the handle fabric that's not covered by the interfacing and press.
- Fold the handle in thirds lengthwise, keeping the folded edge on top and the long raw edge of the handle inside.
- Secure with binding clips. Using a matching or decorative thread, top stitch the folded edge in place through all layers. Stitch a matching line of stitching on the opposite edge of the handle. Add additional lines of stitching if you wish.
- Once the top stitching is complete, trim off the selvages from both ends and cut the long handle strip into two equal pieces that measure about 21 inches each. This is the perfect length for myself, but you should try and find a bag with handles that you like and use that measurement. Be mindful of the HEIGHT of the bag. You don't want your bag to be dragging on the ground if the handles are too long.
- Space the handles evenly on the right side of the outer bag. My handles were placed 6" in from either side of the bag. I extend the ends of my handles about ½" beyond the top of the bag as I want to make sure those handles are securely fastened into the seams and this little bit of extension ensures that. Pin the handle with TWO pins to keep the handles straight and baste the handles to the top of the outer bag.

Final bag assembly

- Mark a 2 ½" square using a pen and a ruler on the bottom two corners of each piece of lining and outer bag. Using SCISSORS - cut out the corner notch on the bottom of all four bag pieces.
- Matching the top of one lining to the top of one outer bag piece, stitch the lining to the outer bag. Take care to keep the handles straight as you stitch over them.
- With rights sides together, position the two pieces on top of each other with the two linings on top of each and the two outer bag pieces on top of each other.
- Stitch along the two long sides (matching seams), across the bottom of the outer bag part and the lining. Leave an opening in the bottom of the lining so you can turn the bag right side out.
- NOTE: DO NOT stitch in the corner notches.
- In one of the notched corners, bring the two seams together and stitch across the opening to make the corner seam. Repeat on the remaining three corners.
- Turn the bag right side out - this can be tricky with the stiff interfacing.
- Stitch the opening closed in the lining or use the fusible web. Stuff the lining inside the bag.
- Press the top edge well and top stitch the upper edge of the bag about ¼" from the top.

Making the bag bottom insert

- I like to put a bottom insert in my tote bags. It gives the bottom a firm support and looks more professional. I use plasticore. (see note about plasticore below)
- Stitch the two pieces of the insert cover together leaving one narrow end open. If you want, you can hem this narrow opening. Turn right side out, insert a piece of plasticore into the insert cover, tuck in the open end and place the insert into the bag.

Note about plasticore: I've seen all kinds of material used for the bottom of bags. However the best solution I've come up with is plasticore. It's lightweight and it's strong (no saggy bottoms). The only downfall is that it can be costly. So I've been known to recycle election signs and real estate signs which are often made from plasticore. Use a craft knife and a metal ruler to cut the plasticore. Once the tote bag is complete, use a ruler to measure the bottom - the bottom of this bag should be approximately 5" by 15". I would cut the plasticore 4 ½" by 14 ½", leaving a bit of space so it is easy to get the bottom insert into the bottom of the bag. Round the corners of the plasticore with scissors to remove the sharp edges and cover all edges with some kind of tape like painter's tape to prevent the plastic from cutting through your bag insert. Put the plasticore inside the bag insert and put into your bag.

NOTE: It is best to NOT prewash preprinted fabrics such as panels and border prints. Fabrics go through many manufacturing processes and there may be some size variations. If you are using a border print or a panel and are unable to cut the strips to the size mentioned above, cut the pieces to a size that works for your fabrics and adjust any other measurements accordingly.