

Easy Beaded Bags

Stash your smaller
stuff in style

Here's the perfect project for your favorite bold, patterned fabrics. Choose two fat quarters (18-inch by 22-inch rectangles of fabric), and you'll have the perfect amount to make one dimensional and one flat bag. Find a great print, preferably in a large scale to make a more dramatic statement, and then use quilting and beading techniques to play off the patterns in a creative way. I love to work with batik prints because their designs can lay the groundwork for the quilting and beading steps. Once you've chosen fabrics and carefully planned out the placement of the print, you can make a bag in just a couple of hours.

These bags are a super way to squeeze in some quilting when you don't have the time to commit to making a full-scale quilt. These bags also offer a great opportunity to practice zipper installation without too much investment. Plus, you can make the bags as simple or as elaborate as you like. The process is simple: first, cut, pin, and quilt the bag fabric. Next, install a zipper and sew the bag together. Then finally, hand-sew beads along the quilt lines. Before you know it, you'll have a set of bags for yourself—and a few gifts for friends. They're great for housing makeup, pencils, and other small treasures.

—DEBBIE CORSON

Supplies

- Batting, thin and lightweight, ½ yard
- Clear plastic ruler
- Beading needle (I prefer size 13)
- Iron
- Marking pen
- Point turner
- Quilting fabric, batik or other large-scale print, two fat quarters (18-by-22-inch rectangles)
- Seed beads (in 7 to 10 colors)
- Sewing machine
- Scissors or rotary cutter
- Thread, for sewing and beading
- Zipper, 7 inches long
- Zipper foot

tip

BEAUTY INSIDE AND OUT

Solid color fabric may be less expensive, but printed fabric linings can lend a fun, surprising quality to a bag. Consider both complementary and contrasting colors.

Quilt, bead, and sew

To make a medium-size bag (5½ inches by 7½ inches), first cut and layer the fabric, and then machine-quilt. Next, add a zipper and follow by sewing around the edges of the bag. Finally, make the bag dimensional, and then bead it. I like to add a bead at every other machine stitch.



{ 1 } LAYER, PIN, AND CUT YOUR FABRIC. On a flat surface, lay the lining fabric wrong-side up. Lay the batting over it, and then lay the outer fabric on top, right-side up. Copy the pattern on page 94, place it on top of the fabric, and use a rotary cutter or scissors to cut out the layered pieces. Repeat for the second side of the bag.



{ 2 } MACHINE-QUILT THE LAYERS. Pin through the layers at the corners. Free-motion-quilt each piece in a design that complements the outer fabric's print (see "Free-Motion Quilting Ideas" on page 21 for more ideas). Backstitch at the beginning and end of each line or shape. For patterns with tight turns, you may want to use a zipper foot.

tip

CONTRAST A COLOR

Machine-quilt with contrasting thread so you can see it when you're adding beads later.



Baste the front and the back of the bag together.

{3} PREP FOR THE ZIPPER. With right sides together, pin the quilted bag-front and bag-back pieces along the top edge, and machine-baste them together with $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch seam allowances. Next, press both layered pieces while they're still flat. Then, open the two layered pieces, fold open the seam allowance, and press. Finally, press the seam again from the right side.

Free-motion quilting ideas

To free-motion quilt, use a darning presser foot, drop the feed dogs, and free-motion stitch by pushing the fabric layers under the foot with your hands. You can use simple curves, lines, or shapes.



Pin the zipper in place; then sew.

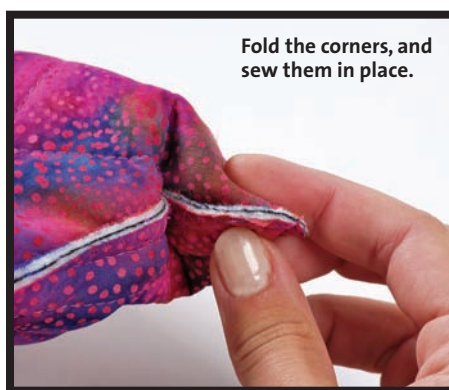
{4} ADD THE ZIPPER. Pin the zipper over the seam allowance on the wrong side. Make sure it is centered over the basting stitches. Hand-baste the zipper, and remove the pins. Install a zipper foot on your machine, and align it with the outer edge of the zipper tape. Then stitch evenly along each side.



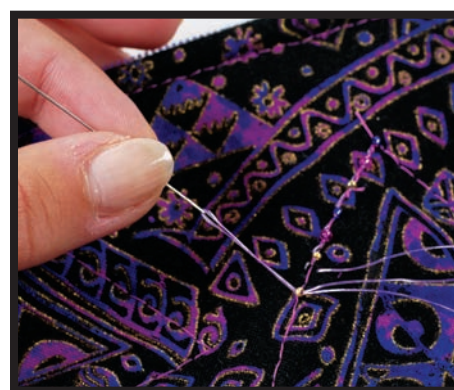
{5} PRESS, AND THEN REMOVE THE MACHINE BASTING. Press near the zipper on the right side. Use a seam ripper to remove the basting threads over the zipper.



Sew the edges of the bag.



Fold the corners, and sew them in place.



{8} BEAD THE BAG. Thread a beading needle, and knot the thread end. Pull the thread through from the inside of the bag. Stitch beads onto the outside, following the path of the quilting stitches. You don't need to stitch through the bag after the first stitch; just catch the quilting stitches, and add one bead at a time.

{6} SEW THE BAG. First, unzip the zipper. Then, pin the sides, and bag the bottom edges right sides together. Stitch around the edge of the bag with a $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch seam allowance, starting on one end of the zipper and finishing on the other. Trim seam allowances to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, and zigzag the edges together.

{7} SHAPE THE BOTTOM. To add dimension to the bag, bend the tip of each bottom corner toward the bottom seam, draw a line across the exposed side of the bend $\frac{1}{4}$ inch below the very tip, and pin it in place. Hand-stitch along the line, trim off the excess corner fabric, and zigzag. Turn the bag right-side out, and use a point turner to make the corners neat.

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Copy these templates to create the beaded bags.
We copied ours at 400 percent.

