

Project: Log Cabin Tote Bag

INSPIRED BY CONTRASTING CABINS FROM DESIGNER LISSA ALEXANDER (MODALISSA.BLOGSPOT.COM)



Design director Nancy Wiles cut scrappy strips of assorted Bali Batiks from Hoffman California Fabrics (hoffmanfabrics.com) to make two mirror-image Log Cabin blocks. She featured one block on each side of her pieced handbag, adding an extra $1\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ " strip at the bottom of each block to allow for the bag's depth. A wide band at the bag top and matching handles incorporate the two main colors used in the blocks.

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Materials

- ½ yard total assorted brown and tan batiks (bag body)
- ½ yard total assorted teal and blue batiks (bag body)
- ¼ yard brown-and-turquoise batik (bag band, straps)
- ⅝ yard dark brown batik (bag and strap lining)
- ⅞ yard of 22"-wide heavyweight fusible interfacing

Finished bag: 8×13½×4"

Quantities are for 44/45"-wide, 100% cotton fabrics.

Measurements include ¼" seam allowances. Sew with right sides together unless otherwise stated.

Cut Fabrics

Cut pieces in the following order.

From assorted brown and tan batiks, cut:

- 2—1½×12½" strips
- 2—1½×11½" strips
- 2—1½×10½" strips
- 2—1½×9½" strips
- 2—1½×8½" strips
- 2—1½×7½" strips
- 2—1½×6½" strips
- 2—1½×5½" strips
- 2—1½×4½" strips
- 2—1½×3½" strips
- 2—2½" squares

From assorted teal and blue batiks, cut:

- 2—1½×12½" strips
- 2—1½×11½" strips
- 2—1½×10½" strips
- 2—1½×9½" strips
- 2—1½×8½" strips
- 2—1½×7½" strips
- 2—1½×6½" strips
- 2—1½×5½" strips
- 2—1½×4½" strips
- 2—1½×3½" strips
- 2—1½×2½" strips

From brown-and-turquoise batik, cut:

- 2—1½×22" strips
- 2—3×12½" rectangles

From dark brown batik, cut:

- 2—1½×22" strips
- 2—12½×16" rectangles

From interfacing, cut:

- 2—1×22" strips
- 2—12½×13½" rectangles
- 4—3×12½" rectangles

Assemble Blocks

1. Referring to **Diagram 1**, sew together a brown or tan batik 2½" square and a teal or blue batik 1½×2½" strip. Press seam away from brown or tan batik square.
2. Add teal or blue batik 1½×3½" strip to right-hand edge of Step 1 unit (**Diagram 2**). Press as before.
3. Sew brown or tan batik 1½×3½" strip to top edge of Step 2 unit (**Diagram 3**). Then add brown or tan batik 1½×4½" strip to left-hand edge of unit (**Diagram 4**). Press all seams away from center.
4. Referring to **Diagram 5**, continue adding assorted batik strips to pieced unit in counterclockwise order, pressing all seams away from center, to make a Log Cabin block. The block should be 12½" square including seam allowances. Sew a teal or blue batik 1½×12½" strip to bottom edge of Log Cabin block; press seam toward strip. The block should now be 12½×13½" including seam allowances.
5. Referring to **Diagram 6**, repeat steps 1-4 using remaining brown, tan, teal, and blue batik square and strips to make a mirror-image block. Add remaining teal or blue batik 1½×12½" strip to bottom edge of mirror-image Log Cabin block.

Assemble Bag Body and Straps

1. Fuse an interfacing 12½×13½" rectangle to wrong side of each Log Cabin block. Then fuse an interfacing 3×12½" rectangle to wrong side of each brown-and-turquoise batik 3×12½" rectangle.
2. Referring to **Diagram 7**, sew together a fused Log Cabin block and a fused brown-and-turquoise batik rectangle; press seam toward brown-and-turquoise rectangle. Topstitch ⅛" above seam line to make bag front. Repeat to make a mirror-image bag back.
3. Layer bag front and back; sew together side and bottom edges to make bag body (**Diagram 8**). Using tip of iron, carefully press seam open.
4. To shape a flat bottom for bag, at one corner match bottom seam line to side seam line, creating a flattened triangle (**Diagram 9**). Measure and mark on seam allowance 2" from point of triangle. Draw a 4"-long line across triangle, and sew on drawn line. Trim excess fabric. Repeat at remaining bottom corner. Turn bag body right side out.
5. Sew together dark brown batik 12½×16" rectangles along both sets of long edges and one set of short edges, leaving a 4" opening in one long edge, to make bag lining. Do not turn bag lining right side out.
6. Repeat Step 4 to shape a flat bottom for lining.

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7. Center a $1\frac{1}{2} \times 22$ " interfacing strip on wrong side of a brown-and-turquoise batik $1\frac{1}{2} \times 22$ " strip; fuse. Layer fused brown-and-turquoise batik strip with a dark brown batik $1\frac{1}{2} \times 22$ " strip (Diagram 10). Stitch together strips' long edges; avoid catching interfacing in seams. Turn right side out and press flat; topstitch $\frac{1}{8}$ " from long edges to make a strap. Repeat to make a second strap.

8. Referring to Diagram 11, pin a strap's raw ends to front edge of bag body; make sure strap is centered with 4" between the ends. Baste strap ends to bag body a scant $\frac{1}{4}$ " from bag's edge. Repeat with second strap and bag back.

Assemble Tote Bag

1. Insert bag body inside bag lining with right sides together; straps should be between bag

and lining. Align raw edges and seams. Stitch together upper edges of bag body and lining, backstitching over each strap for reinforcement.

2. Turn bag and lining right side out through opening in lining; then pull lining out of bag. Machine-stitch opening of lining closed.

3. Insert lining back into bag and press upper edge. Topstitch $\frac{1}{8}$ " from upper edge to complete tote bag.

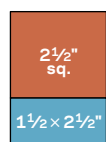


DIAGRAM 1

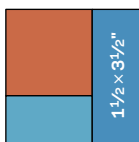


DIAGRAM 2

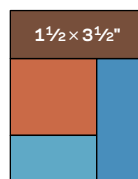


DIAGRAM 3

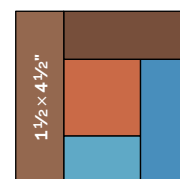


DIAGRAM 4

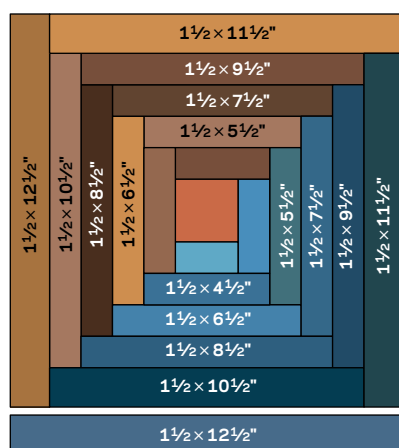


DIAGRAM 5

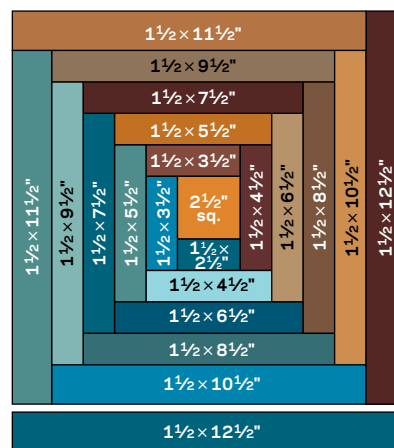


DIAGRAM 6

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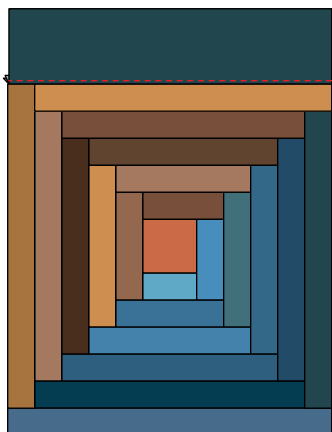


DIAGRAM 7

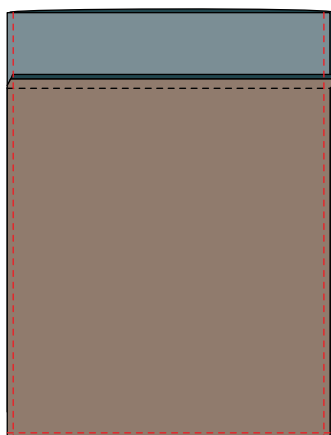


DIAGRAM 8

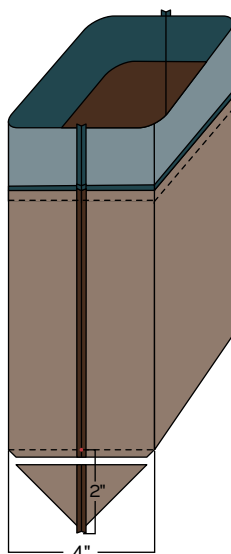


DIAGRAM 9

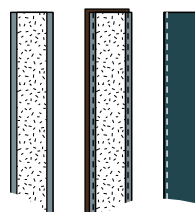


DIAGRAM 10

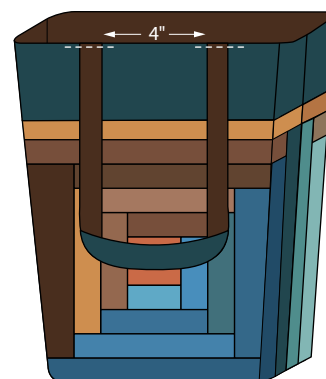


DIAGRAM 11