

## Basic Tote Bag

Pattern by Lynn Weathers of [alamosaquilter.blogspot.com](http://alamosaquilter.blogspot.com)

Materials:

- 5/8 yard of duck canvas (should be 54" to 60" wide)
- 3/8 yard of cotton fabric (This is the exact amount you will need. If you are purchasing fabric for this I recommend you get a little extra so you have enough to square up the edges)

From the canvas, cut a 22" by 40" piece. I like to leave the canvas folded in half and cut a 22" by 20" folded piece. From the remaining canvas, cut two 6" by 7.5" pieces.

From the cotton fabric, cut (3) 4" by WOF (width of fabric piece) and (1) 1.5" by WOF piece. Cut one of the 4" pieces in half to create (2) 4" by half WOF pieces. From the 1.5" by WOF piece, cut (2) 1.5" by 6" pieces.

Sew one of the half 4" strips to each of the other two 4" strips. These should measure somewhere between 60" and 64" long. These will become the bag handles. Press the sewn seam open and set these aside for a bit.

Press one of the 1.5" by 6" strips in half lengthwise. Open this back out and press one side to the center fold. Repeat with the other side. Then press this in half again on along the center fold. Repeat these steps with the other 1.5" by 6" piece. These will be the top edge of each pocket. They are decorative, but will also conceal the raw edge of the canvas pocket.

Find the two 6" by 7.5" pieces of canvas. On one of the shorter sides, press over a 1/4" twice, and then topstitch this folded edge.

On both pockets, slip the top edge of the pocket inside the 1.5" by 6" folded piece and topstitch. Be sure that you catch both edges (inside and outside) of the cotton fabric so that the top of the pocket is securely covered on both the inside and outside of the pocket.

Set the pockets aside and pick up the 4" wide handle pieces. Create the handles using the exact same folding process we did for the tops of the pockets, with one addition. Fold the two short sides of the handle pieces in 1/4" so that all raw edges are inside the folded handle pieces. Topstitch along both long edges of each handle piece. You do not need to sew the short edges closed at this point. We will do this later when we attach the handles to the bag.

Set the handles aside and pick up your 22" by 40" piece of canvas.

Fold the top edges of the bag (the 22" edges) over once 1/2" and then again 1" and press. Then topstitch both.

Now find your pocket pieces. Lay out one pocket on one side of the main bag piece. The pocket should be 6" up from the fold (center of the 40" of the main bag piece) and 8" in from each side of the bag. Pin the pocket in place and sew it to the bag along the bottom edge of the pocket only. The sides of the pocket will be attached with the handles.

Now pick up one of your handles. Starting from the fold (center of the 40" side of the main bag piece), lay the handle on the main bag piece **being sure that the handle is not twisted**. Pin the handle in place. The handle should cover about a 1/4" of each side of the pocket. The outer edge of the handle should be about 7.5" from each edge. The inner edges of the handle should be about 5" apart. I usually don't measure, just try to get the handle on reasonably straight.

Starting from the fold (bottom of the bag) sew the handle to the main bag fabric. (I like to backstitch a few stitches at the start.) Go up one side of the handle along the topstitching line, stop about 1/4" from the top edge of the bag. Leave your needle down and pivot to sew across the handle at the top to the other topstitching line. Again leave your needle down and pivot, then sew back down to the bottom of the bag again along the topstitching line. Leave your needle down and pivot, sew across the bottom of the handle. You should be back to where you started from sewing this part of the handle to the bag. Backstitch a few times. Now repeat for the other side of the handle. Do this for the other side of the bag with the remaining pocket and handle. The handles should line up along the bottom of the bag.

Fold the bag half, right sides together (that is, the pockets should be on the inside). Pin the side edges and sew them with a 1/2" seam allowance. Backstitch at the top edge. You do not need to back stitch at the bottom because we will be boxing the corners.

If you have a serger, serging the raw edges is best. However, I don't have a serger. So I use the overlock stitch on my machine to mimic a serged edge. Do this stitch along both side edges of the bag.

Almost done, we just need to box the bottom.

Align one of the sewn side edges with the center fold which is the mark for the bottom of the bag. Pull out the corner so it makes a point. With a ruler, measure in 2.5" from the corner, right along the fold, and draw a line. If you have everything folded correctly, this line should measure 5". Pin the corner and sew directly on the drawn line, backstitching at both ends. **Do not cut off the corner!** Repeat for the other bottom corner. Turn the bag right side out and enjoy!



Adding a lining would make a nice touch but for my purposes it would make the bag too expensive. Remember, I am giving these away. Adding a piece of fabric along the bottom, between the bottoms of the two pockets, would also jazz this up. But again, I'm trying to keep cost down so I didn't add this.

If you want to add this piece, you will need a 12.5" by 22" piece. Fold the 22" edges under 1/4" and press it in half. The pressed fold should match up with the fold in the canvas. You can attach this after you sew the bottom of the pockets to the main bag fabric. I would do this after I have also attached the handles, but you could also do it between attaching the pockets and the handles.

The finished size of the bag is approximately 16" wide by 16" high by 5" deep.

To view a tutorial with pictures for this bag pattern, go to [www.alamosaquilter.blogspot.com](http://www.alamosaquilter.blogspot.com) and click on the tutorials tab near the top of the page.