



DENIM PATCHWORK TOTE BAG

♥ Step-by-Step Tutorial ♥

FINISHED SIZE: 38 cm (W) x 42 cm (H) x 6 cm (D)

MATERIALS

- Denim fabric in different shades (light, medium, dark)
- Lining fabric
- Fusible interfacing (medium)
- Thread (matching colors)
- Sewing machine
- Scissors, pins
- Iron, ruler, fabric marker
- Denim needle (90/14)

FABRIC REQUIREMENTS

PIECE	SIZE (CM)
Front Patchwork Panel	38 x 42
Back (Denim)	38 x 42
Lining (2 pieces)	38 x 42
Strap (2 pieces)	8 x 110
Bottom Gusset (rectangle)	10 x 38 cm
Interfacing (front panel)	38 x 42

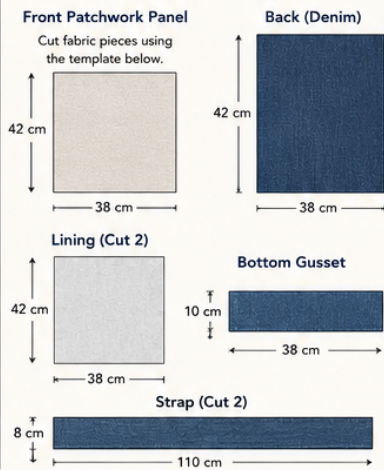
SEAM ALLOWANCE

1 cm included in all measurements.
Press all seams as you sew.

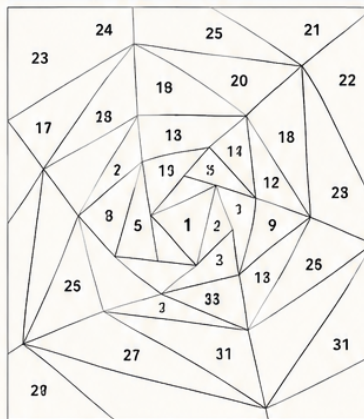
MAIN METHODS USED

- 1/4" Seam
- Piecing
- Topstitching
- Pressing
- Boxed Corners

CUTTING GUIDE



PATCHWORK TEMPLATE



DENIM PATCHWORK COLORS EXAMPLE

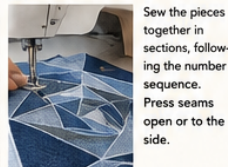


STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

1 PREPARE THE PATCHWORK



2 PIECE THE PATCHWORK



3 COMPLETE THE FRONT PANEL



4 INTERFACING



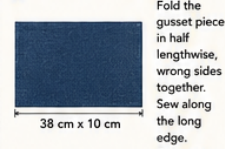
5 PREPARE THE STRAPS



6 ATTACH STRAPS



7 PREPARE THE GUSSET



8 ATTACH THE GUSSET



9 SEW THE SIDE SEAMS



10 PREPARE THE LINING



11 INSERT THE LINING



12 SEW THE TOP EDGE



13 TURN & FINISH



14 FINAL PRESS



TIPS

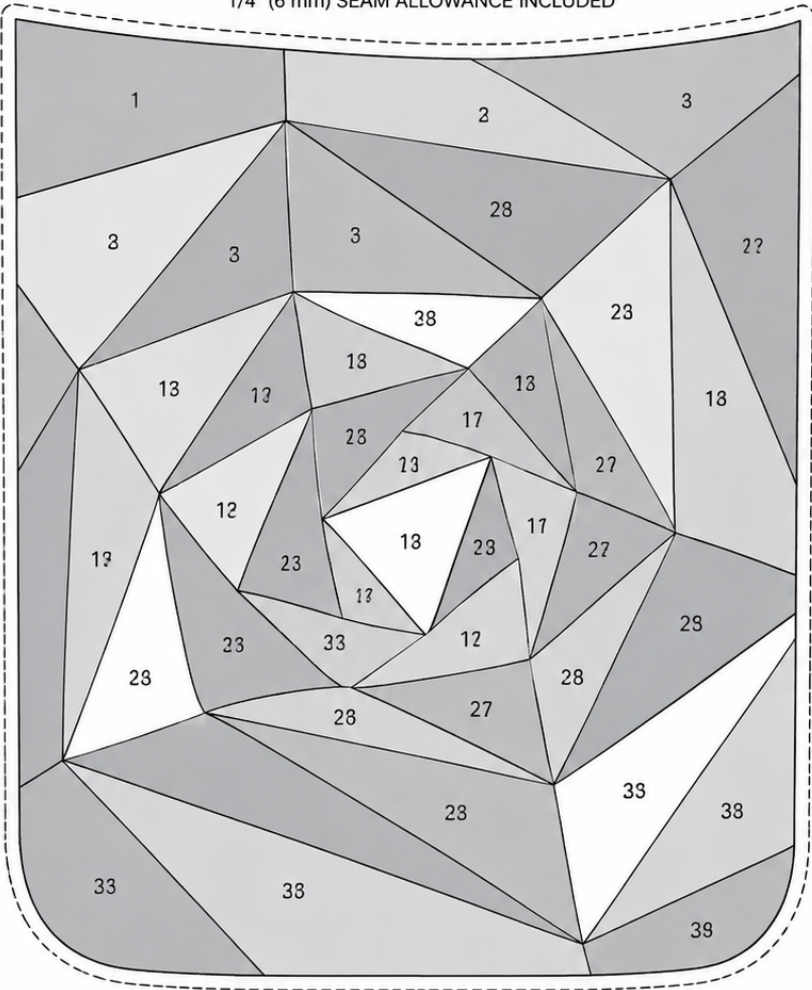
- ★ Use denim needle and strong thread.
- ★ Press seams carefully for a flat finish.
- ★ You can quilt the front panel for extra durability.
- ★ Mix denim shades for a beautiful effect.

ENJOY YOUR HANDMADE DENIM PATCHWORK TOTE BAG! ♥

DENIM PATCHWORK TOTE BAG – FOUNDATION PAPER PIECED PATTERN

INCLUDES 1/4" (6 mm) SEAM ALLOWANCE

BAG FRONT (CUT 1)
1/4" (6 mm) SEAM ALLOWANCE INCLUDED



SEAM ALLOWANCE

1/4" (6 mm)
INCLUDED



FINISHED SIZE (APPROX.)

Width: 13" (33 cm)
Height: 15" (38 cm)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cut fabric pieces following the numbered templates.
2. Sew the pieces together in numerical order using foundation paper piecing.
3. Remove the paper after completing the design.
4. Press the panel flat.
5. Assemble the bag using your preferred method.

HANDLES (CUT 2)

23 1/2" x 2 1/2"
(60 cm x 6.5 cm)

23 1/2" x 2 1/2"
(60 cm x 6.5 cm)

BAG BACK (CUT 1)
CUT 1 PIECE ON FOLD

FOLD

* All measurements include 1/4" (6 mm) seam allowance.

FOR PERSONAL USE ONLY

Denim Patchwork Tote Bag: Complete Step-by-Step Sewing Tutorial

This Denim Patchwork Tote Bag combines recycled denim, geometric patchwork, sturdy construction, and practical everyday dimensions. The finished bag measures approximately 38 cm wide × 42 cm high × 6 cm deep, or about 15 in wide × 16½ in high × 2⅜ in deep.

The front panel is assembled from numbered geometric denim pieces in light, medium, and dark shades. These pieces form a striking spiral-style patchwork design. A plain denim panel is used for the back, while a rectangular gusset creates the bottom depth.

This tutorial follows the measurements and construction order shown in the graphic. A 1 cm seam allowance, approximately ⅜ in, is already included in all measurements unless otherwise stated.

Materials and Sewing Supplies

Gather all your materials before cutting the fabric:

- Denim fabric in light, medium, and dark shades
- Lining fabric
- Medium-weight fusible interfacing
- Strong polyester sewing thread in coordinating colors
- Denim sewing-machine needle, size 90/14
- Sewing machine
- Fabric scissors or rotary cutter
- Cutting mat
- Quilting ruler
- Fabric marker or tailor's chalk
- Straight pins or sewing clips
- Iron and ironing board

- Patchwork template based on the numbered diagram
- Optional topstitching thread
- Optional walking foot
- Optional lightweight batting for a quilted front panel

Use denim pieces with similar weights whenever possible. Mixing extremely thick denim with very lightweight denim can make the patchwork difficult to sew and press evenly.

Prewash and dry all washable fabrics before cutting. This removes excess dye and prevents the completed tote bag from shrinking unevenly later.

Fabric Cutting Requirements

Cut the following main pieces:

- Front patchwork panel: 38 × 42 cm, approximately 15 × 16½ in
- Back denim panel: 38 × 42 cm, approximately 15 × 16½ in
- Lining: Cut two pieces, each 38 × 42 cm
- Straps: Cut two pieces, each 8 × 110 cm, approximately 3⅛ × 43⅜ in
- Bottom gusset: Cut one rectangle measuring 10 × 38 cm, approximately 4 × 15 in
- Front interfacing: Cut one piece measuring 38 × 42 cm
- Optional back interfacing: Cut one additional 38 × 42 cm piece when using soft or lightweight denim

The lining pieces shown in the graphic are simple rectangles. Their lower corners will be shaped during construction by attaching the bottom gusset or by using the same finished dimensions as the outer bag.

Label each piece immediately after cutting so that the front, back, lining, gusset, and straps do not become mixed together.

Understanding the Patchwork Template

The geometric front panel is made from many individual shapes arranged in a spiral. Each shape in the template has a number indicating its position or color group.

Create a full-size paper template measuring 38 × 42 cm. Copy the geometric lines from the graphic onto the paper, maintaining the general spiral arrangement from the center toward the outer edges.

Number every paper shape before cutting the template apart. The numbers are essential because many pieces have similar angles but fit in different locations.

Mark an upward arrow or orientation line on each paper piece. This will prevent pieces from being accidentally rotated or flipped during assembly.

The template should represent the finished arrangement. When using separate paper pieces to cut the denim, add the required seam allowance around every shape. The graphic instructs you to cut the template pieces with a 1 cm seam allowance.

For greater accuracy, prepare two paper copies. Keep one copy intact as an assembly map and cut the second copy into individual pattern pieces.

Choosing the Denim Colors

Select at least three contrasting groups of denim:

- Light blue denim
- Medium blue denim
- Dark indigo denim

You may also include a few charcoal, gray, or white denim pieces, as shown in the sample bag.

Place the denim scraps beside the intact template before cutting. Distribute the colors so that neighboring pieces are clearly different. This contrast makes the spiral pattern visible.

Avoid placing all dark pieces on one side and all light pieces on the other. A balanced mixture creates a more dynamic patchwork effect.

The center of the design can include high contrast, such as white, pale blue, and dark blue. Continue alternating shades as the shapes expand outward.

Photograph the planned color arrangement before sewing. The photograph will serve as a reference if the pieces become moved.

Step 1: Prepare the Patchwork Pieces

Place each paper template piece on the wrong side of the selected denim fabric.

Pay attention to the grain direction. Denim is strongest and most stable when the grain runs vertically or horizontally. Small decorative pieces may be placed at an angle, but avoid cutting too many pieces on a loose bias.

Trace around each template with a fabric marker. Include the 1 cm seam allowance around all sides.

Write the template number on the wrong side of every fabric piece. A small piece of masking tape can also be used for labeling.

Cut the shapes carefully with sharp fabric scissors or a rotary cutter. Accurate cutting is especially important because a minor difference in one piece can affect several surrounding seams.

Arrange all the cut denim pieces on top of the intact paper map. Confirm that every shape is present and correctly oriented before beginning to sew.

Step 2: Piece the Center of the Patchwork

Begin with the smallest pieces near the center of the spiral.

Place the first two neighboring pieces right sides together. Align the edges that connect on the template.

Pin or clip the seam, keeping the points and corners aligned. Sew with a 1 cm seam allowance.

Backstitch at the beginning and end of each seam. Use a slightly longer stitch length, approximately 2.5 to 3 mm, because denim is thicker than ordinary quilting cotton.

Open the pieces and press the seam. Depending on the thickness of the denim, press the seam open or press it toward the darker piece.

Compare the sewn unit with the intact paper diagram. Add the next numbered piece to the correct edge, sew it in place, and press again.

Continue working outward from the center. Do not attempt to sew the entire design in one continuous circle. Instead, create manageable units that can later be joined together.

Step 3: Build the Patchwork in Sections

Divide the design mentally into several sections surrounding the center.

Sew together two or three pieces at a time. After each seam, press the unit flat before adding another piece.

When several seams meet at one point, match the seam intersections carefully. Insert a pin directly through the intended matching point on both layers.

If a seam is slightly too long, do not stretch the shorter piece aggressively. Ease the difference gradually along the seam.

Trim small protruding seam allowances when necessary, but do not remove so much fabric that the seam becomes weak.

Denim seams can become bulky where several points meet. Carefully grade the seam allowances by trimming one layer slightly narrower than the others. Do not cut through the stitching.

Topstitching may be added along selected seams for a decorative effect. Stitch approximately 3 mm or $\frac{1}{8}$ in from the seam line.

Step 4: Join the Patchwork Sections

Once the smaller sections are complete, arrange them on the full-size template.

Confirm that the spiral pattern flows in the correct direction. Check the numbers and color placement before sewing the sections together.

Place two adjoining sections right sides together. Match the beginning and ending points of the seam first, followed by any internal intersections.

Pin carefully along the entire edge. Sew using the same 1 cm seam allowance.

Press the seam before attaching the next section. A tailor's clapper can help flatten thick denim seams while they cool.

Continue joining the sections until the complete front panel has been assembled.

The unfinished patchwork may look slightly uneven around the outer edges. This is normal and will be corrected when the panel is squared.

Step 5: Complete and Square the Front Panel

Press the finished patchwork panel thoroughly from the wrong side.

Protect the denim with a pressing cloth, especially when using stretch denim or fabric containing synthetic fibers.

Place the panel on a cutting mat and use a large quilting ruler to square it to 38 × 42 cm, approximately 15 × 16½ in.

Keep the central spiral visually centered while trimming. Remove only the minimum amount necessary from each edge.

Check that the top and bottom edges are parallel and that both side edges are straight.

Staystitch around the outer edge approximately 5 mm or slightly less than ¼ in from the raw edge. This prevents the patchwork seams from opening during later construction.

Optional: Quilt the patchwork panel to thin batting before applying the interfacing. Stitch in the ditch or topstitch along selected geometric lines.

Step 6: Apply the Fusible Interfacing

Place the patchwork panel wrong side up on the ironing board.

Position the fusible interfacing with the adhesive side against the wrong side of the panel. The adhesive side usually feels rough or appears slightly shiny.

Make sure the interfacing covers the entire panel without extending beyond the fabric edges.

Follow the interfacing manufacturer's heat instructions. In most cases, lower and lift the iron rather than sliding it across the surface.

Fuse one section at a time, holding the iron in place for the recommended number of seconds.

Allow the panel to cool completely before moving it. Fusible adhesive continues bonding as it cools.

Check all corners and edges. Press again if any area has not bonded securely.

The front panel should now feel stable while still remaining flexible enough for a tote bag.

Step 7: Prepare the Back Panel

Cut the plain denim back panel to 38 × 42 cm.

Check the grain direction and make sure the fabric is not twisted.

When using lightweight denim, fuse an additional piece of medium-weight interfacing to the wrong side of the back panel.

If the denim is already heavy, interfacing may not be necessary. However, the front and back should have reasonably similar structure.

Staystitch around the back panel's outer edges.

Optional: Add a slip pocket or zippered pocket to the back panel before assembling the bag. Keep all pocket edges at least 3 cm or 1¼ in away from the outer seam allowances.

Step 8: Prepare the Straps

Each strap begins as a rectangle measuring 8 × 110 cm, approximately 3¹/₈ × 43³/₈ in.

Place one strap wrong side up. Fold it in half lengthwise and press to create a center crease.

Open the strip. Fold each long raw edge inward so that it meets the center crease.

Press both folds carefully.

Fold the entire strap in half again along the original center crease. All long raw edges should now be enclosed.

Pin or clip along the length.

Topstitch close to both long edges. For greater strength, sew an additional line of stitching down the center or approximately 6 mm or 1/4 in from each edge.

Repeat with the second strap.

After folding, each finished strap will be approximately 2 cm or 3/4 in wide.

Step 9: Attach the Straps to the Bag Panels

Lay the patchwork front panel right side up.

Place the two ends of one strap along the top edge. The graphic positions each strap end approximately 10 cm or 4 in from the nearest side edge.

Make sure the strap is not twisted. The length of the strap should extend downward over the front panel temporarily while the ends point toward the top raw edge.

Align the raw strap ends with the top edge of the panel.

Pin the strap ends securely.

Baste each end in place within the seam allowance.

For extra strength, sew a small rectangle and an “X” through each strap end. Keep this reinforcement low enough that it will eventually be hidden by the top seam.

Repeat the same placement on the back denim panel with the second strap.

Before continuing, place the front and back panels side by side. Confirm that all four strap ends are positioned at equal distances from the side edges.

Step 10: Prepare the Bottom Gusset

Cut the bottom gusset rectangle to 10 × 38 cm, approximately 4 × 15 in.

Fold the gusset in half lengthwise with wrong sides together to identify the center line. Press lightly, then unfold.

Mark the center of both long edges.

Finish the short raw edges with a zigzag stitch or overlock stitch if the denim frays heavily.

Optional: Fuse a strip of interfacing to the wrong side of the gusset when using soft denim.

Press the piece flat before attaching it to the outer panels.

The gusset creates the bag’s bottom depth. After seam allowances and shaping, the finished depth will be approximately 6 cm or 2³/₈ in.

Step 11: Attach the Gusset to the Front Panel

Place the patchwork front panel right side up.

Position one long edge of the gusset along the bottom edge of the front panel, right sides together.

Match the center mark of the gusset with the center of the panel.

Align both ends and pin or clip the remaining edge evenly.

Sew across the bottom using a 1 cm seam allowance.

Backstitch securely at both ends.

Press the seam allowance toward the gusset. Optional topstitching may be added along the gusset side of the seam.

Check the front of the panel to ensure that no patchwork seam has folded or puckered near the bottom edge.

Step 12: Attach the Gusset to the Back Panel

Place the denim back panel right side up.

Bring the remaining long edge of the gusset to the bottom edge of the back panel, right sides together.

Match the centers and both ends.

Pin or clip the layers securely.

Sew across the entire bottom edge using a 1 cm seam allowance.

Press the seam allowance toward the gusset.

The front and back panels are now connected by the rectangular bottom piece.

Arrange the pieces so that the patchwork front and denim back lie right sides together, with the gusset folded neatly between them.

Step 13: Sew the Side Seams

Align the side edges of the front and back panels with right sides together.

Make sure the strap sections are safely inside the bag and away from the side seams.

Pin or clip both sides from the top edge down to the gusset.

At the bottom corners, carefully align the gusset seams. The bottom piece should sit flat without twisting.

Sew down both side seams using a 1 cm seam allowance.

Backstitch at the top and bottom of each seam.

Because the bottom gusset is already attached, the side seams close both sides of the outer bag and form the boxed bottom corners.

Trim excess bulk from the corner seam allowances. Do not cut too close to the stitching.

Finish the raw side seams with a zigzag or overlock stitch if desired.

Turn the outer bag right side out temporarily. Push out the corners and check the shape.

Confirm that the bag stands evenly and that the patchwork front is not distorted. Turn the outer bag wrong side out again before inserting the lining.

Step 14: Prepare the Lining

Place the two lining rectangles right sides together.

Pin the side edges.

Sew both sides using a 1 cm seam allowance.

Prepare the lining bottom so that it matches the outer bag. The most consistent method is to cut and attach a lining gusset measuring 10 × 38 cm, following the same process used for the denim outer bag.

Attach one long gusset edge to the bottom of the front lining piece.

Attach the second long gusset edge to the bottom of the back lining piece.

Sew the short side ends of the gusset into the lining side seams.

Leave an opening measuring approximately 10 cm or 4 in in one lining side seam or along the bottom seam. This opening will be used to turn the finished bag right side out.

Backstitch securely at both ends of the opening.

Press the lining seams open.

Optional: Add an interior pocket before assembling the lining. A useful finished pocket size is approximately 18 × 20 cm, or 7 × 8 in.

Step 15: Insert the Lining

Keep the outer bag wrong side out.

Turn the completed lining right side out.

Place the lining inside the outer bag. The right side of the lining should face the right side of the denim.

The visible fabric surfaces will therefore be touching inside the bag.

Match the lining side seams with the outer bag side seams.

Align the top raw edges all the way around.

Make sure the straps are completely enclosed between the outer bag and lining. They must point downward inside the bag and remain away from the top stitching line.

Pin or clip around the entire top edge. Use extra clips at the side seams and strap positions.

Step 16: Sew the Top Edge

Sew all the way around the top edge using a 1 cm seam allowance.

Sew slowly over the strap ends because these areas contain several layers of denim.

Use the handwheel to guide the needle through very thick sections. Do not pull the bag from behind the presser foot.

Backstitch where the stitching begins and ends.

Check that the lining, outer denim, and all strap ends were caught securely in the seam.

Trim and grade the seam allowances to reduce bulk. Leave the strap areas slightly wider for strength.

Clip the seam allowance near the side seams if needed, taking care not to cut through the stitching.

The graphic mentions leaving a turning opening near the top edge. However, leaving the opening in the lining side or bottom seam generally creates a cleaner, easier finish. Either method

can be used as long as a 10 cm or 4 in opening remains accessible.

Step 17: Turn the Bag Right Side Out

Reach through the opening in the lining.

Gently pull the outer bag through the opening. Work slowly so that the patchwork seams, lining, and straps are not strained.

Continue pulling until the entire bag is right side out.

Push the outer bottom corners into shape using your fingers or a blunt turning tool.

Push the lining corners out as well.

Fold the raw edges of the lining opening inward so that they align with the sewn seam.

Press the folded opening.

Close it with a narrow machine stitch or an invisible hand-sewn ladder stitch.

Push the lining inside the denim bag and smooth it into the bottom corners.

Step 18: Topstitch the Bag Opening

Press the upper edge carefully so that the denim rolls slightly toward the inside.

The seam between the denim and lining should sit exactly along the top edge.

Make sure the straps extend upward evenly and are not twisted.

Pin or clip around the top opening.

Topstitch around the entire bag approximately 3 to 5 mm, or about 1/8 to 3/16 in, from the upper edge.

For added strength, sew a second parallel row of topstitching approximately 8 mm or 5/16 in from the edge.

At each strap position, stitch slowly through the thick layers.

This topstitching keeps the lining from rolling outward and reinforces the strap attachment.

Step 19: Give the Tote Bag a Final Press

Shape the bag with your hands and place it upright on the ironing board.

Press the patchwork front from the wrong side whenever possible. Use a pressing cloth on the right side.

Flatten the side seams and bottom gusset.

Press the straps so that they lie smoothly.

Avoid placing the full weight of the iron on bulky seam intersections for too long, especially when the denim contains stretch fibers.

Allow the bag to cool completely before using it. Cooling helps the interfacing and pressed seams retain their shape.

Remove any visible basting stitches, fabric-marker lines, loose threads, or lint.

Your handmade Denim Patchwork Tote Bag is now complete.



Helpful Tips for Sewing Denim

Use a new 90/14 denim needle at the beginning of the project. Replace it if the machine begins skipping stitches or producing uneven tension.

Choose strong polyester thread rather than lightweight cotton thread. Polyester thread handles the stress placed on straps and side seams more effectively.

Test the stitch length and tension on several denim scraps before sewing the actual bag.

Press every patchwork seam as it is completed. The geometric design will look much cleaner when the seams lie flat.

Use a hump jumper, folded scrap of denim, or sewing-machine leveling tool when crossing thick seams. This keeps the presser foot level and reduces skipped stitches.

Do not force thick fabric under the presser foot. Turn the handwheel manually through difficult sections.

Use sewing clips instead of pins when several heavy layers are joined.

Trim and grade bulky seam allowances, but preserve enough fabric to maintain seam strength.

Mixing several shades of denim produces the strongest visual effect. Light pieces emphasize the center spiral, while dark pieces create depth and contrast.

The front panel may also be quilted for extra durability. Add lightweight batting behind the patchwork and stitch along the geometric seam lines before applying the final interfacing.

Care Instructions

Wash the completed tote bag only when necessary.

Use cold water and a gentle cycle to reduce fading.

Place the bag inside a laundry bag or pillowcase before machine washing.

Avoid chlorine bleach.

Reshape the bag while damp and allow it to air-dry.

Press with a warm iron and a pressing cloth when needed.

Because different denim fabrics may fade at different rates, slight color changes over time are natural and can enhance the handmade patchwork appearance.

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