# SEW SERENDIPITY BAGS

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Fresh + Pretty Projects to Sew and Love

Kay Whitt



# LUNCH BUCKET BAG

What a stylish way to carry your lunch! This little bag is a modern twist on the old-fashioned "lunch pail" from long ago. Featuring decorative hardware on the handle and a convenient drawstring closure, this bag is not only functional, but good-looking and easy to make. Once you carry this little number to work, everyone will want one!



#### my initial sketch

Make this bag your own with a funky choice of fabrics. This is the perfect opportunity to use all of those cool food prints. Another great idea is to use laminated (vinyl-coated) cotton for the liner so that any spills or moisture can be easily wiped away. (See page 41 for tips on working with laminates.)

### materials list

#### Fabric

Fabric A—bag exterior & handle: ½ yard (% yard if using laminated cotton)

Fabric B—lining, binding & drawstring: ½ yard (¼ yard if using laminated cotton)

Fabric C—drawstring section for top of bag: <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> yard

All yardage is based on 45"-wide cotton fabrics.

#### Other Materials

One-sided fusible stabilizer (Peltex 71): <sup>3</sup>⁄4 yard

Fusible interfacing for light- to mid-weight fabrics: 1 yard

Two 1¼" rings for handle (can be rectangular or circular, though the latter may require extra stitching to secure)

Rotary cutter, ruler and mat

Sharp, pointed scissors

Removable marking pencil

Heavy-duty machine needle (such as for denim)

Thread to match fabrics

Large safety pin (or bodkin)

#### Finished Dimensions of the Bag

10" (counting the drawstring unit)  $\times$  7", without the handle The handle has an 8" drop.



#### LAYOUT & CUTTING

The only pattern piece provided for this bag is the circular Bag Base (sheet 2). The rest of the pieces should be cut according to the measurements provided using a rotary cutter, ruler and mat.

#### MAIN BAG & HANDLES

- 1 Using the Circular Base pattern piece, cut one base each from Peltex and Fabric A; transfer all markings. Fuse the Peltex to the Fabric A piece (fusible side of Peltex to wrong side of fabric). Set the base aside until Step 10.
- For the main body of the bag, cut one 6½"×24" rectangle from the Peltex and one from Fabric A. The design motif should run parallel to the short edge. Fuse Peltex to the wrong side of the rectangle. On the fabric side of the rectangle, mark the ring tab placement. Measure in 6" from either end and down 1½" from top edge, and mark. (figure 1)
- For the handles, cut two strips—2¼" × the width of the fabric—from Fabric A. Cut three 2¼" × 20" strips from interfacing; cut one in half crosswise. Apply the interfacing strips to the wrong side of the fabric strips, overlapping the interfacing strips by ¼" to piece.
- Follow the instructions in Essential Techniques for Making Handles (pages 16–17).
- 5 Trim the handles down to 30". Cut two 3" lengths from the leftover pieces for the ring tabs.
- 6 Place the ring tab through the ring and fold in half. Sew across the end with a ¼" seam allowance. Trim the corners diagonally and position the seam at the center of the back side of the tab. Press seam flat and to one side. (figure 2)
  - Center the tabs on the 6" mark, with the top of the tab at the 1½" mark. Sew across the lower edge of the tab, then pivot and stitch up the side to just below the ring. Pivot again and stitch just below the ring (don't stitch *too* closely to the metal or you will break the needle). Pivot once more and stitch back to the beginning. Backstitch when you reach the start of the stitching. (figure 3) If you're using circular rings, sew again over the stitching under the ring for more stability.

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- To add the handle to the rings, place one end through a ring from the front. Fold the cut end over ¼", and then turn that end up by an inch or so (take care not to twist the handle). Stitch in place in the same manner as the ring tab in step 7. Repeat for the other end of the handle. (figure 4)
- With right sides together, stitch the ends of the rectangle piece together with a ¼" seam allowance to create the main bag piece. (figure 5) Press the seam open. Fold the bag flat with the seam along one side and mark the opposite side at the top and bottom edges. Now open the bag out and align the marks just made with the seam and mark the opposite ends the same way. This divides the bag evenly into quarters, to be used later. (figure 6)
- 10 Divide the bag's base into quarters by folding the circle in half and snipping each end to mark. Open it out and fold in half the other direction (aligning your previous snips), then snip at each end to mark. (figure 7)
- 11 Complete a series of ¼" deep snips along the entire bottom edge of the main bag piece and the base. (figure 8) With right sides together, pin the main bag piece and bag base together with the wrong sides out, aligning the quarter marks. Allow the snips to ease the two pieces together. Pin fairly close together and then stitch around the bottom of the bag with a ¼"-¾" seam allowance. (figure 9)
- 12 Press the bag briefly so that the steam will soften the Peltex then turn the bag right-side out. Press along the bottom seam to smooth the main bag piece. A wadded-up tea towel held inside the bag while pressing will help shape the bag and also protect your hand from the steam. Refer to the Essential Techniques section (page 22) for more details on pressing.



figure 5



figure б Mark the bag to indicate four even sections











Edgestitch around opening

figure 13

Down from top edge



figure 14

#### LINING, DRAWSTRING & BINDING

- For the lining, follow Steps 1 and 2 on page 36, cutting from fabric B and interfacing (not Peltex). Apply the interfacing to the wrong side of the fabric.
- 2 Sew the side seam of the bag lining with a <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" seam allowance. This larger seam allowance accounts for the bulk of the Peltex, making the pieces fit together better.
- Refer to Steps 9–11 on page 37 to assemble lining, except here, use a ¾" seam allowance.
- 4 Leaving the lining wrong-side out, place it inside the main bag. This will put the wrong sides of the bag and lining together. Line up the quarter markings and pin the bag and lining together. Trim any uneven edges. Stitch around the top of the bag, ¼" from the top edge. (figure 10)
- 5 To make the drawstring unit of the bag, cut two 12"×18" rectangles from fabric C. The direction of design motif should run parallel to the short edge.
- 6 Mark on the wrong side of fabric so the markings face up when sewn. Along the 12" edge, mark 4½" up from the bottom, and again 1" above that. Repeat on the other 12" edge. This will mark the drawstring opening. (figure 11)
- Place the two rectangles for the top portion right sides together matching raw edges and making sure design motifs run in the same direction. Sew with a ¼" seam along one side, backstitching at the first mark. Skip the 1" section. Continue the remainder of the seam from the second mark. Repeat for the other side. (figure 12)
- Press the seams open and turn right-side out into a circular shape. Edgestitch around each opening to reinforce it. (figure 13)
- Fold the drawstring unit in half, wrong sides together with bottom raw edges even and the openings on the *outside* of the folded piece. Press. From the top folded edge, measure down ½" and mark. Mark again 1" below that. Repeat the marks on the other side, and then draw a line with removable marking pencil. (figure 14) This will create the casing for the drawstring. Edgestitch along the top folded edge, then stitch along the ½" marked line and the 1" mark.

- 10 Divide the drawstring section into equal quarters (see Steps 9 and 10 on page 37). To create gathering stitches, complete two rows of stitching, using a long straight machine stitch, ¼" and ¾" from the edge. Break stitching at each seam. (figure 15)
- Pin the drawstring unit to the inside of the bag; make sure the side with the openings is facing *away* from the lining. Pull the gathering threads until the drawstring section matches the bag opening in size. Distribute the gathers evenly and pin the lining to the bag. Stitch along the top of the bag, <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" from the edge. Trim the seam to <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>." (figure 16)
- 12 For the binding, cut a 2¾" strip × the width of fabric from Fabric B. Trim away the selvedges and press in ½" to the wrong side on one narrow end. Fold the strip in half lengthwise, wrong sides together, and press.
- 13 Starting with the pressed-under edge, place the binding against the drawstring section on the inside of the bag. Pin in place until reaching the pressed end. Allow for a 1" overlap and trim away excess. Open up the pressed end and tuck the cut end inside. Close and pin in place. Stitch around the top of the bag with a <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" seam allowance. (figure 17)
- 14 Open out the binding away from the bag and press. Fold the binding down over the bag's top edge. Edgestitch the binding in place along the lower pressed edge. (figure 18)
- 15 Open out the drawstring unit from the inside of the bag and press. Stitch through all thicknesses at the upper finished edge of the binding to secure the drawstring section to the upper exterior of the bag. (figure 19)





figure 16



figure 17



figure 18



figure 19

Drawstring unit, opened out

Stitch along finished edge of binding to secure drawstring unit to upper edge of bag.

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Drawstring "tube," right-side out









figure 24

16 If you used circular rings, the bag may have a tendency to tip. To prevent this, place the handle over the binding directly opposite the ring and tab and stitch through all thicknesses (including the handle) along the previous stitching at the top edge of the binding. (figure 20) This will make the handle stationary. You can also do this with a square ring, but it may not be necessary. The bag on page 34 shows the reinforced stitching; the variation using laminated cotton on the facing page does not.

7 Cut two 2" ×27" strips from Fabric B for the drawstrings.

8 Trim away the selvedges and fold in half lengthwise, right sides together. Stitch along the long edges with a ¼" seam allowance, forming a tube. Repeat with the second strip. Turn the tubes right-side out and, with the seam along one side, press. Edgestitch along each edge. (figure 21)

Pin a large safety pin through one end of one of the drawstrings. Insert pinned end into one of the openings in the drawstring casing. Pull the drawstring all the way around until you reach the opening where you started; pull the end through. Remove the safety pin. Attach the safety pin to the remaining drawstring, insert through the opposite opening and draw through the casing the same way. There should be two ends coming out of each opening. Test to see that they were properly threaded by pulling all the ends at the same time. This should result in the bag pulling closed. If not, then the drawstrings are not correctly inserted. (figure 22)

20 Open the bag fully. With the ends of the drawstrings together and folded inward as shown in the illustration, stitch them together with a <sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" seam (figure 23). With the seam inward, stitch across the end again, encasing the seams (figure 24). Tie a knot close to the stitched ends.



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**Kay Whitt** designs dress, skirt and bag patterns through her company Serendipity Studio, and is the author of the best-selling *Sew Serendipity*. See what else Kay is up to at her blog, blog.sewserendipity.com!

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