

Bag of the Month

MARIA CHRISTINA CAPELLOTTO



Photos by Joe Coca

EASY WEAVING WITH
little looms

Bag of the Month

March: patchwork peg-loom bag

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This bag is made of five loosely woven plain-weave squares using three colors of sisal. The sisal threads are grouped differently from square to square to give each one a different look. Sometimes eight threads alternate with four, sometimes four with four, sometimes the groupings vary within a square. Here's a portable project to take on your next vacation—you can make your own peg loom, tuck it in your suitcase, and weave lots of squares for lots of bags.

The sisal yarn used for this bag is available in Brazil (the bag uses three colors; natural, orange-gold, and brown). But any fiber, especially those made of plant material (hemp, linen, and linen blends), will work. If the resulting cloth is not stiff enough, you can use a heavyweight interfacing as a stiffener.

The equipment

To make this bag, you'll first need to make a peg loom. For a bag 12" x 12", start with a sturdy frame about 10" square and set twenty-seven $\frac{3}{4}$ " nails $\frac{3}{8}$ " apart and $\frac{1}{4}$ " deep on all four sides of the frame.

Weaving on a peg loom

The warp for a peg loom is a continuous thread. Tied to the first peg on one side, it is wound from peg to peg across the loom until the desired width is reached.

The weaving is done with a darning or sacking needle. Threaded with the weft, the needle passes over and under pairs of warp threads or groups of threads from



This bag is constructed from five 8" x 8" squares. A peg loom with pegs on all four sides is used so that loops (caused by the pegs) extend from all four selvages.

one side of the loom to the other. The needle then returns by passing over the threads it went under and under the threads it went over in the previous row. For this bag, the weft yarn goes around a peg on the side of the loom from row to row to form loops similar to the loops formed as the warp passes around pegs on the top and bottom of the loom.

After each square is woven, a single line of crochet is worked around all four

edges to secure them. The finished square is then lifted off the pegs.

Bag construction

To make the bag, the squares are folded along the diagonal and joined by crocheting together the loops along the edges. One of the squares is folded back on itself at the front of the bag; another square becomes the flap. All of the edges of the bag are folds except for the flap.



Maria Cristina Capellotto São Paulo, Brazil, creates unique fabrics on simple looms with about thirty other weavers at Estúdio 56.



STEPS FOR WEAVING AND CONSTRUCTING THE BAG

Step 1 Using a doubled strand of yarn in one or more colors, wind the warp from the edge peg on one side of the top or bottom of the frame to the corresponding peg on the opposite side and back again until the 27 pegs on both sides are included. Knot the end of the warp around the last peg (you can also thread the uncut warp yarns on the sacking needle to use as weft without cutting and tying).


Step 2 Weave the first square using the same yarn as in the warp. You can choose to go over 4 threads/under 4; over 8/under 8; over 4/under 8; over 2/under 2, or vary the groupings. Go around the pegs from one side to the other; on the return, go under the warp threads you went over and over the warp threads you went under. Include the same number of strands in each "weft" that you've grouped together in the warp. Use the tapestry comb to align the weft, if necessary.

Step 3 When you've finished the weaving, run a line of single crochet just inside the pegs on all four sides of the square and then lift the square off the pegs.

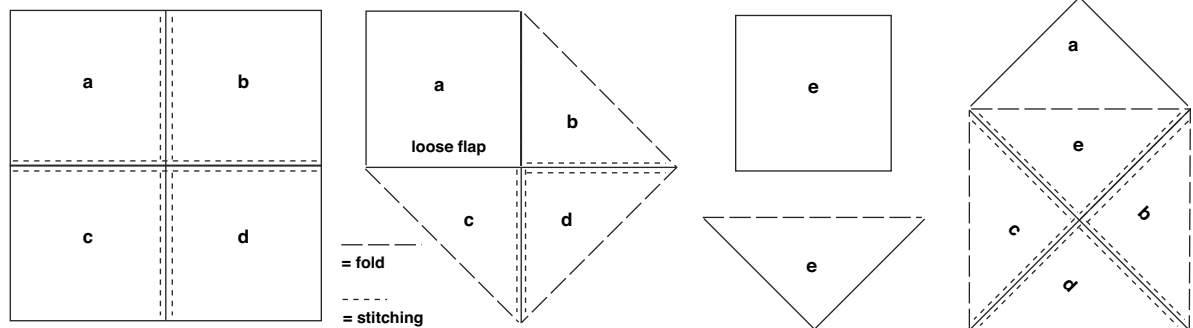
Step 4 Repeat for four more squares, varying the arrangement of the colors and the grouping of warp and weft threads as desired.

Step 5 To construct the bag, label the five pieces a, b, c, d, and e. Join pieces a and b along one edge and join pieces c and d along one edge. (To join the edges, work a single crochet stitch through the loops of warp and weft yarn that extend from the selvages.) Then join the two rectangles (a-b and c-d) along one long side. Fold pieces c and d up along their diagonals and join the two edges that meet in the center (a triangular pocket will be formed). Fold b down along its diagonal and sew the bottom edge of b to the upper edge of d. The halves of three squares (b-c-d) will now meet in the center with one square (a) remaining free as the flap. Take the fifth square (d), fold it in half along its diagonal, and join its to the edges of c and b in the same way, going through both layers of e. You now have a bag with a flap (a) that folds down over the double thickness of square e.

Step 6 Cut Fast-2-Fuse interfacing so that folded in half and placed inside the bag, it is $\frac{1}{4}$ " narrower than bag width and fits $\frac{1}{2}$ " from bag top. Center and fuse interfacing to the wrong side of lining fabric $13" \times 26"$. Fold lining in half right sides together and sew side seams. Fold the top edge over the interfacing to the wrong side. Attach a patch pocket if desired. Place lining in the bag and handsew around the top.

Step 7 The strap for this bag is a 3-strand braid. Each strand of the braid is made up of 12 strands of yarn (12 brown for one strand, 12 natural for each of the other two for this bag). Cut 36 strands (each 72" long), tie them to a stationary object, and work the braid. Tie a single strand of yarn around each end to secure. Stitch the braid to the bag sides with the ends placed 2-3" up from the bottom of the bag. For a button loop, make a plied cord using some of the yarns from the bag (8 strands are used in each group of this cord). Attach the loop to the flap and sew a decorative button to the bag. 

1. Steps for constructing the bag



PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

Weave structure for bag fabric

Plain weave.

Equipment

10" peg loom with 27 pegs or nails $\frac{3}{8}$ " apart on each side; tapestry comb; long darning needle or a 6" bent Navajo sacking needle; crochet hook.

Yarns

Warp and weft: about 200 yd linen, hemp, or other plant fiber about 1,000-2,000

yd/lb (14/2 linen at 2,000 yd/lb, 10/2 linen at 1,500 yd/lb, 2-ply hemp at 1,200 yd/lb) in three or more colors.

Yarn sources

14/2 Euroflax linen is available from Louet, 10/2 linen from The Woolery, 2-ply hemp from The Mannings.

Notions and other materials

Sturdy cotton lining fabric about $14" \times 32"$, heavyweight Fast-2-Fuse interfacing $12" \times$

$24"$ (for stiffener), coordinating button.

Warp order and length

54 doubled ends about 10" long each.

Warp and weft spacing

Warp and weft density is about 12 threads per inch (in groups of 2-8 threads).

Finished dimensions

Amounts produce one bag $12" \times 12"$ with a braided strap 50" long.