

A Slice of Layer Cake Runner

REBECCA FOX



Photos by Matt Graves

HANDWOVEN



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STRUCTURE

Plain weave.

EQUIPMENT

2-shaft loom, 10" weaving width; 12-dent reed; 1 boat shuttle; 1 stick shuttle; 2 bobbins.

YARNS

Warp: 8/2 unmercerized cotton (3,360 yd/lb; Valley Yarns; WEBS), #8990 Black, 136 yd; #8001 White, 32 yd; #8682 Silver Gray, 64 yd. 8/2 unmercerized cotton (3,360 yd/lb; UKI; Yarn Barn of Kansas), #02 Charcoal, 64 yd.
Weft: 8/2 unmercerized cotton, #8990 Black, 50 yd. 8/4 cotton carpet warp (1,600 yd/lb; Yarn Barn of Kansas), #83 Black, 10 yd. Toscana layer cake quilting cotton, 10" square (100% cotton fabric; Northcott), Evening Shadow precut tiles, 1 pack.

OTHER SUPPLIES

Pinking shears, 5 mm; rotary cutter; self-healing cutting mat.

WARP LENGTH

148 ends 2 yd long (allows 5" for take-up, 33" for loom waste; loom waste includes fringe).

SETTS

Warp: 36 epi (3/dent) and 6 epi (1 every other dent) in a 12-dent reed.
Weft: about 9 ppi (body) and 24 ppi (hems).

DIMENSIONS

Width in the reed: 8 $\frac{7}{12}$ ".
Woven length: 34".
Finished size: 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ " × 30" plus 2" fringe.

Weavers dabble in all types of fiber pursuits, and I am no exception. I love quilt fabrics, although I'm not much of a quilter. When I saw precut fabric squares in a neutral palette from black to white with shades of gray, I immediately wanted to use them to weave something. I have since learned that the precut 10" squares are known as layer cakes, while precut long strips 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide are known as jelly rolls. (I do wonder why these precut fabrics have food-related names.)

Using fabric strips as weft is not a new idea. Weavers have recycled old fabrics into rag rugs for ages. If you have a stash of precut quilt fabrics, you can make use of them with this project.

My layer cake was 10" wide, which limited the width of my warp to about 9" wide. My first thought was to use rep weave, which is warp-faced—but I wanted to see the fabric strips more easily. Instead, I utilized the crammed-and-spaced technique with a plain-weave threading. The result has a rep feel to it without being a true rep weave.

I cut the fabric squares into $\frac{1}{2}$ " and 1" strips, discarding any that contained pinked long edges. A rotary cutter made this job quick and simple.

The resulting table runner has adorable ruffled edges and a spongy, thick texture that will protect your table from hot pans (I recommend throwing on extra warp to make some terrific trivets). This woven layer cake will look beautiful gracing your table as you showcase your baking skills! *Bon appétit!*

1 Wind a warp of 148 ends 2 yd long following the warp color order in Figure 1. Warp your loom using your preferred method.

Notes on Weaving

- When weaving the fabric strips, Rebecca found that having a small rubber band around one end of the stick shuttle was useful. Tucking one end of the strip under the rubber band helps with placement in the shed.
- Jelly rolls of quilting fabric are strips 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide × 20"–44" long. Rebecca found during further experimentation that cutting these strips in half (1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide) did not make a visual difference in the weaving compared to the 1" strips she used in this project.
- Rebecca's layer cake has pinked edges. If yours does not, she highly recommends pinking the narrow ends that stick out on either side of the runner to prevent some of the raveling at the edges of the fabric strips.

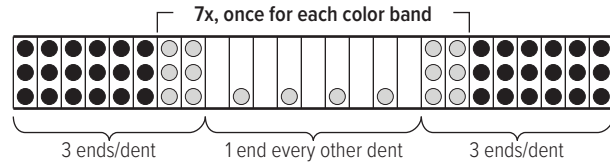
Centering for a weaving width of 8 $\frac{7}{12}$ ", sley the reed following Figure 2.

2 Wind a bobbin with Black 8/2 cotton and another bobbin with about 10 yd of Black 8/4 cotton.

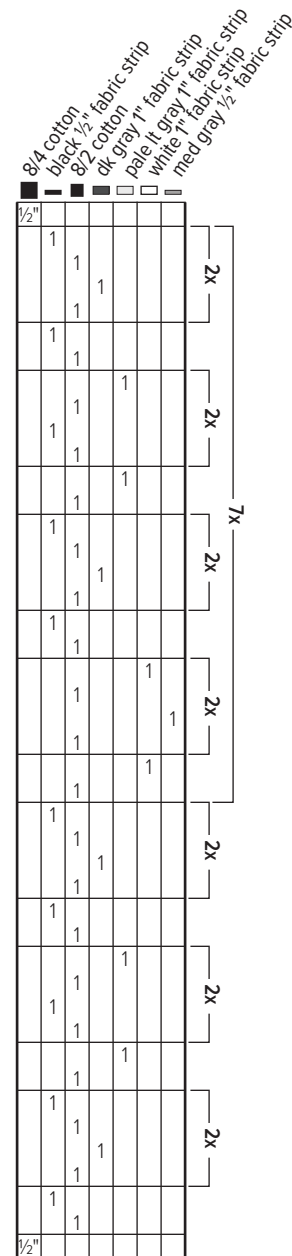
1. WARP COLOR ORDER

16	16	☐ #8001 White
32	16 16	▒ #8682 Silver Gray
32	16 16	■ #02 Charcoal
68	34 34	■ #8990 Black
148 ends total		

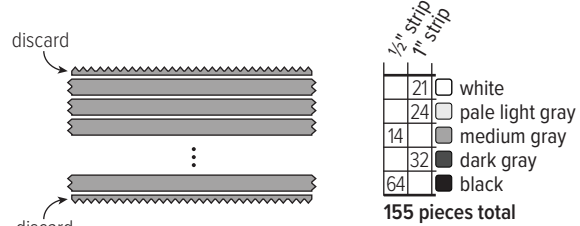
2. SLEYING



4. WEFT COLOR ORDER



3. FABRIC STRIPS



3 Using a rotary cutter and a self-healing mat, cut the squares of quilting cotton into 1" and 1/2" strips according to Figure 3. Discard the long pinked edges of the squares, but leave the short pinked ends on each strip.

4 Allowing 3" for fringe, spread the warp with scrap yarn. Leaving a 1 yd tail for hemstitching, weave 1/2" with 8/4 cotton. Hemstitch using the long tail in bundles of 4 ends in the crammed sections and 2 ends in the spaced sections.

5 Switch to 8/2 cotton. Start inserting fabric strips following the weft color order in Figure 4, alternating picks of fabric and 8/2 cotton.

Center each fabric strip visually, leaving the ends of the strips sticking out from the selvages.

6 Continue weaving until there are 7 full repeats of dark and light. Finish with a single dark section.

7 Weave 1/2" with Black 8/4 cotton and hemstitch as at the beginning.

8 Cut the fabric from the loom. If any fabric strips are too long, trim the sides with fine-tooth 5 mm pinking shears.

REBECCA FOX loves to experiment with unusual materials when weaving, always asking that question, What would happen if...?