

Make a Furoshiki

This Japanese wrapping cloth is beautiful and functional

by Pepper Cory

Sponsored by Bernina of America and QNNtv



Susan Brubaker Knapp and Pepper Cory

Materials

Finished Size: 30" square

- 1 yard large-scale focus fabric (I used a dramatic Asian-style print.)
- 10" square of indigo blue solid (This square will be sashiko stitched.)
- 5" square of a bright accent solid (This square will be sashiko stitched.)
- 3/8 yard light-medium solid (I used a natural linen-like fabric.)
- 1/4 yard dark solid for sashing
- 1 yard backing (I like to choose a hand-woven check or plaid to bring in the idea of a "country versus city" look. The humbler check represents the rural, country influence while the patchwork side is more sophisticated—city style.)
- #8 white perle cotton for sashiko
- #8 dark perle cotton (matching the sashing) for embellishment stitching
- Chalk or hera marker

Note: Fabric requirements assume 40" usable width of fabric.

See Assembly Diagram on the last page.

Furoshiki (pronounced f'rosh-kee) have been a staple of Japanese domestic life for many years but only recently have become important in the U.S. and even world-wide, where the inundation of flimsy plastic bags accumulating in landfills has become a concern.

Carrying a furoshiki when you're running to the store is a quick way to handle small purchases and save a bag. I wear mine to the store as a scarf and leave the clerks speechless when I whip it off, bundle my items in the center, tie up the corners, and walk out of the store!

This furoshiki is patchwork, lined, and includes sashiko hand stitching. A furoshiki may also be a single layer of fabric.

CUTTING

From focus fabric, cut:

- 10½" x 30½" rectangle for center.
- 6½" x 10½" rectangle for left panel.
- 10½" x 12½" rectangle for right panel.

From light-medium solid, cut:

- 1 (2½" x 40") strip. From the strip, cut 1 (2½") square, 2 (2½" x 4½") rectangles, and 1 (2½" x 6½") rectangle.
- 1 (3½" x 40") strip. From the strip, cut 1 (3½" x 6½") rectangle, 2 (3½" x 9½") rectangles, and 1 (3½" x 12½") rectangle.
- 2 (6½" x 12½") rectangles.

From dark solid, cut:

- 3 (1½" x 40") strips. From the strips, cut 2 (1½" x 30½") sashing strips, 2 (1½" x 6½") sashing strips, and 2 (1½" x 12½") sashing strips.

From backing, cut:

- 1 (30½") square.

Create the sashiko

Sashiko is basic hand quilting in a Japanese style. It is a simple running stitch done without tension or an embroidery hoop. It is done through 1–2 layers of fabric rather than a traditional quilt sandwich.

Note: *Sashiko stitching patterns are not provided here but there are many excellent books and online references for ideas.*

1. To make the large sashiko (bottom right corner), transfer or trace the design of your choice centered on the 10" square of indigo blue fabric. Choose a motif about 5" square, as the fabric will be trimmed to 6½" square before piecing. (The finished size once pieced will be 6" square.)
2. Repeat with the 5" square of bright accent fabric (for top left corner). Choose a motif about 1½" square (will be trimmed to 2½" square; finished size once pieced will be 2" square).
3. When the sashiko stitching is complete, press the squares well before trimming.

Tip: *Center the stitched motif carefully before trimming. Consider chalking the lines before cutting to inspect the centering.*

4. Trim the squares.

SASHIKO STITCHING TIP

- Stitch the marked design starting in the middle of the motif and work out.
- Use the image of a grain of rice to keep consistent stitches. Stitch length is often gauged as twice as large as the gaps between stitches (2:1).
- Complex designs may require slightly smaller stitches but strive to be consistent.

- Stitches should not touch or cross.
- When ending a thread—stop when you have about 4" left—take the needle to the back and lay the work flat. Make a once-under-the-needle loop and gently tighten into a knot, making sure the knot is right on the fabric surface. Clip the thread, leaving about a ¼" tail.

Assembly

1. Following the **Assembly Diagram**, create 2 sashiko-centered blocks with the pieces noted, sewing Log Cabin-style around the sashiko center. The large block will be 12½" square and the small block will be 6½" square.
2. Arrange the sashiko blocks, sashing strips, and other cut pieces into sections following the diagram.
3. Sew each section together; sew the 3 sections to create the furoshiki top. Press seam allowances toward the sashing strips.
4. Layer the furoshiki top and backing square right sides together. Sew ¼" seam allowance around all 4 sides, leaving a 14" turning gap.
5. Trim the corner triangles and turn the piece right side out. Poke out the seams and corners gently.
6. Press the piece carefully, taking time to align the corners squarely. Fold in the unsewn seams at the turning gap and hand stitch it closed.

Hand stitched accents

1. Pin the top near the sashing strips.
2. Mark a line with chalk or a hera marker down the center of each sashing strip.

3. Hand sew running stitches with the dark perle cotton in sashiko-style, through the 2 layers and following the marked lines. Bury knots by coming up to the line through a nearby seam and pulling the knot gently between the layers. End stitching by angling off the loose thread tail through a seam and crossing back-and-forth within the layers. Trim the thread tail right at the surface—carefully!

Note: *Start stitching 1" in from the outer sewn edge. Make the stitching on the side sashing strips come to meet—but not cross—the long vertical sashing.*

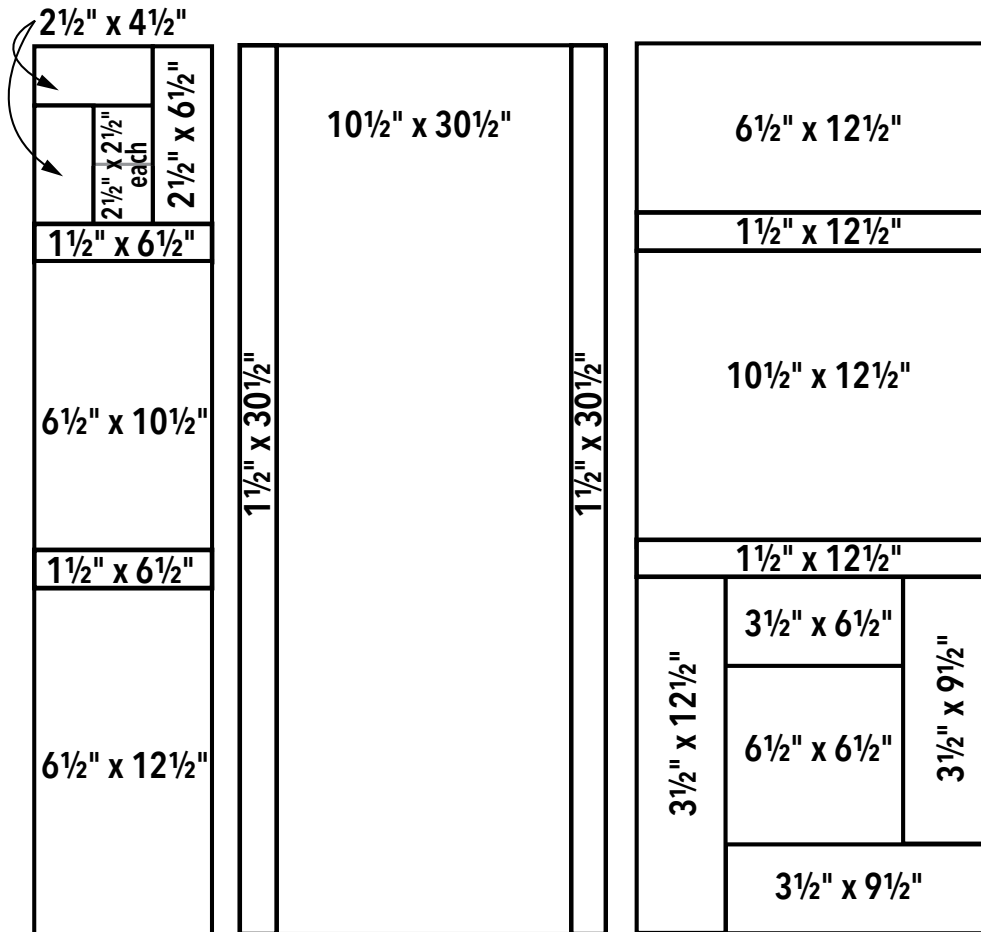
4. The final stitching is a framing line of stitches—still using the dark perle cotton—around all sides of the furoshiki. Mark a line with chalk or a hera marker 1" from the sewn edge on all 4 sides and stitch. ■

peppercory.com



BERNINA 
made to create

 QNNtv



Assembly Diagram (cut sizes shown)