

Metallic Cork Tote Bag

Ellen March

Metallic is the new black! Showcase the shimmer and shine of metallic cork fabric, linen and thread in a functional yet fashionable tote bag. The inner padded pocket fits a laptop and the zippered pocket is perfect for smaller essentials.

Cork fabric is the latest trend and it's sticking around as a great alternative to leather. It's soft and supple and super easy to sew. Use it for small items, such as wallets and luggage tags, or as garment accents, such as epaulets or collar points. Anywhere you'd add an accent of leather, consider using cork fabric instead. It's more readily available, comes in all colors and varieties, and it's vegan!

Cork fabric doesn't require any special adjustments to your sewing machine. Just keep in mind that you'll be sewing through thicker layers of fabric, so you'll want to use a topstitch or denim needle. If using metallic thread, as for the featured tote bag, use a metallic needle and test-sew on a scrap of cork first to determine if any stitch settings or combination of materials need to change depending on your desired look.

This easy-sew tote bag features an inner padded pocket, perfect for toting your laptop, an inner zippered pocket and sturdy straps. The purse feet give it professional polish, and keep the bag base free from dirty surfaces. With this pattern, you'll learn how to create perfectly sewn corners, insert a welt zipper and install purse hardware.

THREAD CHOICE

There are many varieties of [metallic thread](#).

Sulky [Sliver Metallic](#) comes in 24 colors. It's a thin, flat, ribbon-like, (solid-color) foil that is laminated with polyester, which makes it brilliantly reflective so you can add the ultimate sparkle to all of your decorative projects. Works perfectly on sewing, serging, and knitting machines, and for handwork.

Sulky [Holoshimmer Metallic](#) comes in 24 colors. It's a thin, flat, ribbon-like, (holographic) foil that is laminated with polyester, which makes it amazingly reflective so you can add the ultimate sparkle to all of your decorative projects. Works perfectly on sewing, serging, knitting machines, and for handwork.

Sulky [Original Metallic](#) thread comes in 36 colors. It's a round, twisted thread, created by twisting and bonding a fine metallic foil around a strong core to create an exceptionally smooth, strong and pliable thread. It's easy to work with and I've chosen it for this project.

If your machine has a vertical spool pin, use that for metallic thread so it winds off the spool with ease. If your machine only has a horizontal spool pin, there are adapters and [kits](#) you can

purchase that allow you to convert the horizontal spool pin into a vertical spool pin, which makes sewing with metallic thread much more effortless.

For the bag construction, I'm going to use a 40-wt polyester thread ([Sulky PolyDeco](#)) for strength and lasting through wear and tear. I'm also going to use polyester thread in the bobbin, even when I'm using the metallic thread for topstitching.

Once the machine is threaded, we can start on the bag construction.

SUPPLY LIST

Sulky PolyDeco 40 wt. Polyester Thread (963-1082)

Sulky silver Metallic (143-7001) or PolyStar (963-50514) Thread

Organ needles: 80/12 universal (construction), 90/14 topstitch or metallic

Sulky Fuse 'N Stitch (interfacing)

Flex Foam Fusible 2-Sided Foam Stabilizer

Fabric Funhouse Cork Fabric (Natural with Silver)

Fabric Funhouse 1"-wide Cork Strap (Natural with Silver)

Robert Kaufman Essex Yarn Dyed Metallic Linen (E105-1268 Oyster)

9"-long all-purpose zipper

Prym Consumer USA Double-Cap Rivets (Nickel #750-65)

Prym Consumer USA Double-Cap Rivet Tool (#750T)

4 Purse Feet (Silver)

CUTTING

From the metallic linen, cut the following:

(2) 5"x15" rectangles (lining sides)

(2) 5"x9" rectangles (outer sides)

(1) 33"x15" rectangle

(2) 9"x15" rectangles (outer rectangle)

(1) 15"x23" rectangle (padded pocket)

(1) 11"x16" rectangle (zippered pocket)

From the metallic cork, cut the following:

(1) 15"x17" rectangle (outer rectangle)

(2) 5"x7" rectangles (outer sides)

From the Fuse 'n Stitch stabilizer, cut the following:

(1) 33"x15" rectangle (lining)

(2) 5"x15" rectangles (lining sides)

(2) 9"x15" rectangles (outer rectangles)

(2) 5"x9" rectangles (outer sides)

From the foam interfacing, cut one 11"x14" rectangle.

From the strapping, cut two 24" lengths.

PREPARE

Fuse the Fuse 'n Stitch rectangles to the corresponding linen rectangles. (The padded and zipper pockets don't have interfacing.)

Install a universal Organ needle into the machine. Thread the needle and bobbin with 40 wt. PolyDeco thread.

ZIPPER POCKET

Fold the lining and zipper pocket rectangles in half lengthwise; press to mark a center foldline, and then unfold.

On the lining rectangle wrong side, measure and mark a ½"-wide box centered 3 ½" from the right edge and 9" long.

Place the zippered pocket rectangle and lining rectangle right sides together, extending one pocket rectangle short end 1" beyond the marked zipper opening and matching the pocket and rectangle foldlines. Pin the pocket rectangle perimeter.

Flip over the lining rectangle. Sew along the marked zipper opening.

Inside the zipper opening, draw a line beginning and ending ½" from the ends and extending into the corners.

Carefully cut along the lines to the corners, making sure NOT to clip the stitching.

Turn the zippered pocket rectangle right side out through the opening; press.

On the lining wrong side, center the zipper in the opening; tape the edges to secure. Edgestitch around the zipper perimeter from the right side. Remove the tape.

Fold the zipper pocket rectangle in half widthwise with right sides together; press. Stitch the three raw pocket edges, maneuvering the lining out of the way of the stitching. Serge- or zigzag-finish the seam allowances if desired. Press again.

PADDED POCKET

Fold the padded pocket in half widthwise with right sides together. Stitch the long edge. Press to set the lower-edge crease. Turn the pocket right side out.

Insert the foam rectangle into the pocket, abutting one foam rectangle long edge with the sea, and the opposite edge with the foldline. Center the foam so there are ½” seam allowances extending beyond each side edge. Fuse the foam to each pocket fabric side, following the manufacturer’s instructions.

Position the padded pocket 3 ½” from the lining left edge, with the fold as the pocket upper edge. Edgestitch the pocket lower edge. Baste the pocket sides to the lining.

ASSEMBLE LINING

Place one lining side rectangle right side facing the lining rectangle, matching the upper edges. Stitch, using a 5/8” seam allowance, stopping 5/8” from the side-rectangle lower edge. Repeat to stitch the opposite edge. Take the fabric out of the machine and clip into the seam allowance at the corners through all layers. Align the side-rectangle lower edge with the remaining rectangle long edge; stitch from corner to corner. Clip across the corner points.

Repeat to add the second side to the lining bag. Turn right side out. Fold the lining upper edges ½” toward the wrong side; press. Set aside the lining.

PREP OUTER BAG

Stitch the linen outer rectangle long edges to the cork outer rectangle short edges with right sides together and a ½” seam allowance. Press the seams toward the cork.

Stitch one linen outer-side rectangle long edge to one cork-side short edge; press the seam toward the cork. Repeat to stitch the second outer side.

Install a topstitch or metallic Organ needle into the machine. Thread the needle with PolyStar thread and the bobbin with PolyDeco thread. Install a ditch quilting foot, if applicable.

Topstitch 1/8" from the seam along the cork on the outer rectangle and outer side pieces. If using a ditch quilting foot, place the foot rudder along the seam and move the needle 1/8" to the right of the rudder to facilitate accurate stitching.

ATTACH FEET

Place the outer bag wrong side up on a flat work surface.

Pin-mark the outer-bag rectangle widthwise center along both long edges. Measure and mark 4" vertically from the pin-marks. Measure and mark 1" horizontally on each side of those marks. The resulting four marks are the purse feet locations.

Center the backing of one foot over one marked location and mark the two lines. Remove the foot backing and use a razor blade or craft knife to carefully slice through the cork along the marked lines. Insert the prongs of the foot through from the cork right side and through the foot backing. Bend the prongs out away from the backing. Repeat to attach each foot.

ASSEMBLE OUTER BAG

Follow the instructions for attaching the lining sides to attach the outer sides to the outer rectangle, but use a 1/2" seam allowance. Make sure the cork/lining seams are aligned on the sides and rectangle when sewing each seam.

Turn right side out. Fold the upper edges 1/2" toward the wrong side; press.

ADD STRAPS

Measure 3" from the outer bag upper-edge corners along the front and back; use a clip to mark the strap end placements.

Insert one strap end 1" into and between the outer and lining bags at the marks, making sure the straps aren't twisted and the same strap resides on the same side of the bag.

With the topstitch/metallic needle still installed and metallic thread in the needle, topstitch the bag upper edge. Carefully stitch over the strap ends.

HARDWARE

For extra security, add rivets at the strap locations. The rivets give more of a professional finish to the bag, too. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to attach the rivets using a rivet setting tool. You can place one at each strap end through both bag layers, or place two side by side.

Enjoy your new sturdy metallic accented cork tote!