



LADY LIBERTY BAG

by Deborah G. Stanley

Skill level: Easy**Finished bag size: 13¾" x 16" x 3½"**

Fabrics from City Quilter's NYC collection

My sturdy, easy to construct tote features a Statue of Liberty batik from The City Quilter's NYC collection, but you can make the bag using any fabric. Simply gather up your leftover batik strips, and try a little improvisational piecing to form a city skyline around the focus fabric of your choice. Note: Use a ¼" seam allowance throughout construction.

MATERIALS

Note: Requirements are based on 42" usable width of fabric.

- ★ Assorted batik strips – about 20 strips 1¼" to 2" wide by 18" long; these strips should contrast with the background.
- ★ Large-scale print – ½ yard; focus fabric for the bag. I used the Statue of Liberty batik from The City Quilter.
- ★ Dark navy or black batik – ⅞ yard; for background. *Editor's note: You may want to match this fabric to the background of your focus fabric.*
- ★ Lining – ⅝ yard
- ★ Interior pocket – ¼ yard
- ★ Foam batting – 2 pieces 16" x 20"; I like Soft & Stable or In-R-Form. You can substitute extra-heavyweight stabilizer.
- ★ Assorted threads to match batik fabrics
- ★ Fabric marking pen or pencil

Cutting

Note: All strips are cut across the width of fabric (WOF) unless otherwise noted.

From the large-scale print:

- ★ 4 rectangles 5½" x 12" (A); these rectangles are cut with the long edge parallel to the selvage. If you are working with the Statue of Liberty batik, fussy cut 4 statues, centering each in the rectangle.

From the dark navy or black batik:

- ★ 8 rectangles 5½" x 5" (B)
- ★ 2 strips 2½" x 40" for handles
- ★ Assorted strips for building background – see "Preparing the skyline strips."

From the lining fabric:

- ★ 2 rectangles 16" x 20"

From the interior pocket fabric

- ★ 2 rectangles 8" x 15"

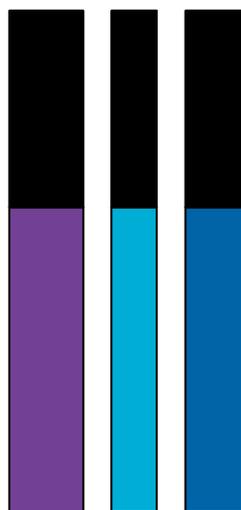
Preparing the skyline strips

Sew a B rectangle to each end of an A strip. Press seam allowances toward the darker fabric. Make 4. Set these focus strips aside.



Focus strips –
Make 4

From the assorted batik strips, select one strip for the first building. Cut a background strip the same width as the building strip and 10" long. Sew to the top of the building strip to form your first skyscraper. Press seam allowances toward the darker fabric and set aside.

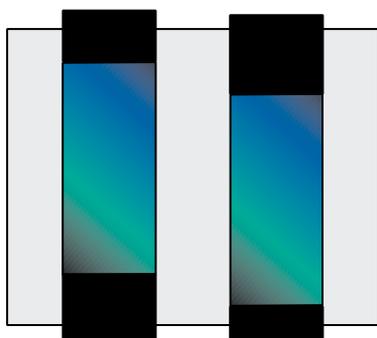


Building strips – Make 20

Repeat to complete approximately 20 buildings; some are for the front and some for the bag back.

Making the bag panels

Using a 16" x 20" foam batting piece as a design surface, place 2 focus strips approximately 3" from each side.

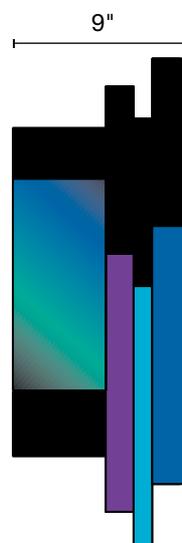


Place the focus strips

Tip

If you are using fussy-cut Statue of Liberty pieces, make sure the bottom of each statue is at least 2" from the bottom of the foam; the statues can be at the same or different heights. Trim the top and bottom of the focus strips so that they extend beyond the top and bottom of the foam by about ½".

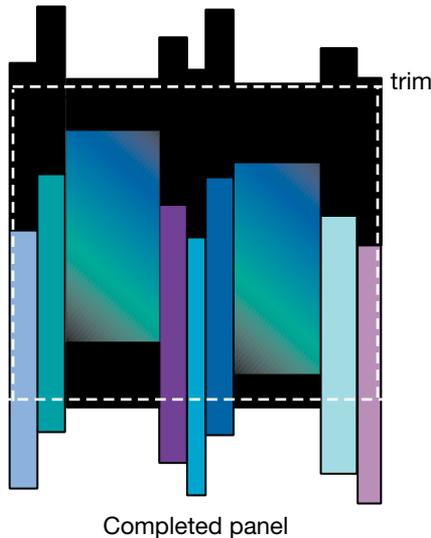
Remove the left focus strip from the foam batting. Sew a building strip to the right edge of the focus strip. Add another building, varying placement and colors to create the city skyline. Continue to add buildings to the right of the focus strip until the sewn panel measures about 9" wide.



Add building strips

Add the second focus strip to the right end of the unit. Its top edge should be even with the top edge of the first focus strip. Add more building strips to the left and right until the sewn section covers the 16" x 20" foam batting. Trim this finished front panel to 16" x 20".

Repeat to make a 16" x 20" back panel.

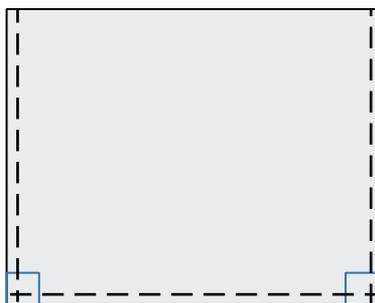


Layer the finished bag front panel right-side up over the foam batting and baste to secure. Substitute extra-heavyweight stabilizer for the foam rectangle if you like. Quilt as you like. I stitched in the ditch between the building strips. Repeat for the bag back.

Assembling the bag

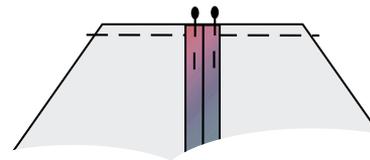
Sew the bag front and back together along the sides and bottom. Turn wrong-side out and flatten.

To box the corners, measure and mark a square $1\frac{3}{4}$ " x $1\frac{3}{4}$ " at each bottom corner on the wrong (foam) side of the flattened bag. Cut away the squares on the marked line.



Draw squares on corners

Pull the layers apart. Open a side seam and adjacent bottom seam. Match the seam lines and pin. Stitch. Repeat for the other corner. Turn the bag right-side out.



Stitch to box the corner

Pin the pocket pieces right sides together. Sew all around, leaving a 3" opening on one long edge. Turn right-side out through the opening.

Place the pocket on the right side of a 16" x 20" lining piece, 3" from top, centered side to side and with the opening used for turning at the pocket. Topstitch around the sides and bottom of the pocket. Be sure to catch the pocket opening in the stitching. Add stitching to subdivide the pocket if desired.

With right sides together, sew the lining rectangles together along the sides and bottom, leaving a 6" opening in the bottom seam for turning.

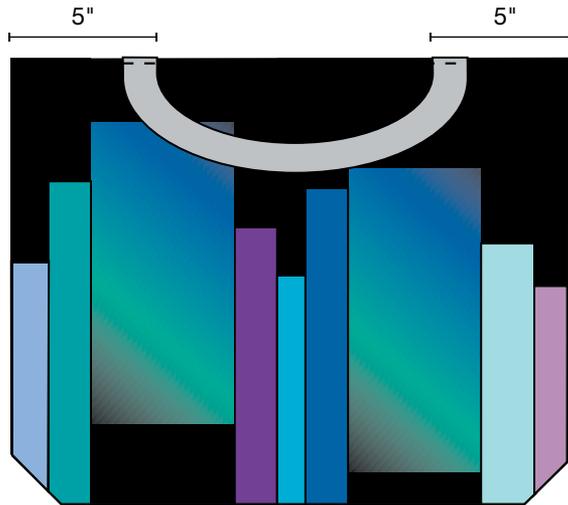
Box the corners as you did for the bag. After boxing, leave the lining wrong-side out.

Adding the handles & finishing

Fold a handle strip in half, right sides together and short end to short end. The folded strip should measure $2\frac{1}{2}$ " x 20". Sew along both long edges leaving the end open for turning. Turn right-side out. Press. Make 2.

To add stability to the handles, make several rows of stitching along each in random waves using variegated or assorted threads. I matched my threads to the building colors.

On the top edge of the bag front, measure and mark 5" in from each side. Pin a handle in place with the inside edge of the handle at the mark. Baste. Repeat for the bag back.



Place and baste handles

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Slip the bag into the lining with right sides together and being careful to tuck the handles between the bag and lining. Match seam lines and pin. Sew all around the top edge. Turn right-side out through the opening in the lining. Press. Top stitch $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the top of the bag. Use a slip stitch to close the opening in the lining.



Deb's specialty in sewing/quilting is designing small, easy-to-complete projects and quilts. She is an independent pattern designer for several fabric companies. Her handbags, lap quilts, and pillows have appeared in several quilting magazines and her work is also included in *New York Beauty Simplified* (Linda J. Hahn, AQS Publishing).

