



"FEEL THE FABRIC...EMBRACE THE CULTURE"

Eco-Friendly Bogolan Tote

Mudcloth, known traditionally as Bogolan, is a textile craft from Mali, West Africa. It's woven in narrow strips that are then sewn together, and created with organic river clay. It's a great choice for distinctive home décor, handbags, fashion & crafts with cultural style.

YOU'LL NEED:

[Bogolan fabric](#), approx 30" x 40"

1 yard black woven fusible interfacing

Pair of handbag straps, or cut from additional fabric

Remnant of plastic canvas for bag bottom

(or recycle a used rotary mat, cut to size of bag bottom)

Interfacing: Cut fusible interfacing to the size of the bogolan fabric. Apply interfacing to the wrong side of the fabric, following interfacing manufacturer's instructions.

Side seams: Fold the length in half, with right sides together. Sew the side seams, using a 5/8" seam allowance. Finish seams with a serger, or zig-zag stitch and trim close to the stitching. Press seams flat.

Top hem: Turn in 1" along the top edge of the bag; press. Turn in 1" again and press. Stitch close to the first fold.

Bottom: To create depth at the bottom of the bag, reach inside the bag, flattening out one corner so that it forms a triangle and the side seam is centered, as shown. Measure about 3½" from the point and draw a line across the triangle. (Fig 1). Stitch along this line, reinforcing stitching. Repeat for the second corner. Press the triangular corners flat against the bag bottom, secure with fabric glue or fusible tape if desired.

Straps: (If using ready-made straps, skip to * below). Cut two lengths of fabric, 3" wide by your desired length (approximately 14" long to carry by hand or 34" to carry over the shoulder.) Turn in 1" on one long side of each strap and press. Turn in ¼" on the opposite side. Bring this pressed edge over the first, bringing it close to, but not completely covering, the first fold, as shown. (Fig 2). Zig-zag through all thicknesses of the strap, catching the second fold in the stitching as shown. Zig-zag again along the opposite long side of the strap. (*) Pin straps to top edge of bag, turning under ½" of the raw edge in, placing it against the bag for a clean finish, and spacing strap ends evenly. Hold the bag and adjust if needed for a comfortable fit. Stitch straps to bag, squaring the stitching and reinforcing with "X" stitching as shown (Fig 3).

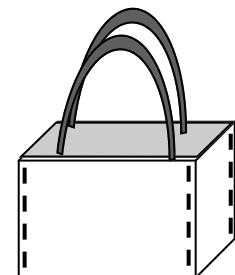
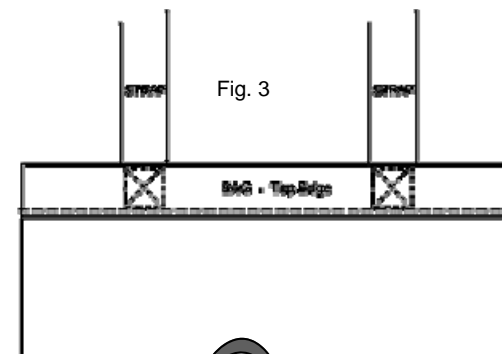
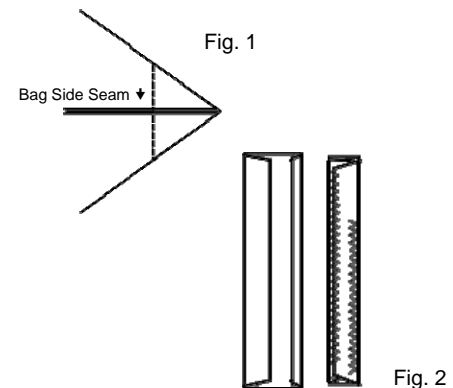
Finishing: To give the bag some shaping, make vertical creases at the corners as you'd find on a paper grocery bag. Press, then stitch the creases in from top edge to the bottom of the bag. (Fig. 4) For a rigid bottom, cut plastic canvas to the size of the bag bottom, rounding the edges of the canvas to prevent poke-through. If desired, cover plastic canvas with a coordinating fabric, then insert into the bottom of the bag.

Want to add more features to this project, like pockets & zippers? To learn more about making handbags and other accessories, see Lisa's latest book, [AFRICAN ACCENTS On The Go! Designing Accessories with Cultural Style](#)

FREE PROJECT SHEET



Designed by Lisa Shepard Stewart



Lisa Shepard Stewart is an author, designer and instructor based in New Jersey. In her how-to project books, Lisa encourages others to express themselves creatively through culturally relevant techniques and materials. She promotes her work through workshops, trunk shows and special events both in the US and internationally. Visit www.CulturedExpressions.com; call 1-866-MUDCLOTH; or write PO Box 356, Rahway, NJ 07065