



Sew What! Bags: 18 Pattern-Free Projects You Can Customize to Fit Your Needs

Lexie Barnes

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From daypacks for hiking to everyday grocery totes, bags are an essential accessory for life on the go. In this inspiring guide, Lexie Barnes shows you how to create handmade bags that provide customized functionality while showcasing your own personal style. With step-by-step instructions for 18 pattern-free projects that include drawstring sacks, handbags, and messenger bags, Barnes encourages you to experiment with bold fabrics, hand-picked materials, and purpose-tailored dimensions to create fashionably unique bags that are suitable for your individual needs.

Sew What! Bags: 18 Pattern-Free Projects You Can Customize to Fit Your Needs Details

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Staci says

I'm glad that I picked up this little book. It has inspired me to get my sewing machine out and to try to make myself a messenger bag. I like the examples that the author gave but I wish there would have been more styles to choose from. The colors that she used for examples were gorgeous and now I want to get lost in a fabric store!!

Debra says

The author presents 18 bags that can be made by the home sewer. I found the projects modern and attractive. After checking the book out at the local library, I elected not to purchase a copy, but I did photocopy two of the projects for my personal collection: a wall caddy and a child's tiny tote. Recommended.

Carmen Carson says

This book is easy to understand for a beginning seamstress. The author goes into great detail in the first two chapters on the sewing techniques necessary to complete the projects, and the projects themselves have illustrations and photos for every step. I love this book! I've made four tote bags so far.

Ligaya says

Ok instructional book, mostly for beginners. If you have any sewing experience and modicum of creativity, most things in this book will be very easy for you as the bags are all basic shapes. Good introduction, clear instructions, and plentiful photographs.

Miki says

I like big bags and I cannot lie...because - hello! - they hold a lot of stuff! Some of these bags were for single items...SMALL single items. I fail to see the point of making a bag for one thing. So what?

JayeL says

I was sitting at a cafe' when I started looking at this book. I glanced through it first and decided that I liked the format and the layout, but wasn't enamored of the projects. I didn't see any of the bags that I thought were useful looking.

"Listen to the Mustn'ts child, listen to the Don'ts.
Listen to the Shouldn'ts, the Impossibles, the Won'ts.
Listen to the Never Haves, then listen close to me.
Anything can happen, child, anything can be."
-Shel Silverstein

That poem is how the text of the book started. It grabbed my attention and changed my idea about the book. I didn't see it at first, because the color of the text was invisible in the glare of the cafe' light. I looked through it a little more slowly and found that it is a book with really good bones. There are projects at the end that look useful and I would make, including a messenger bag and a wall organizer with pockets. I think the best part is that the author shows the reader how to think about bag making. The idea is not all about making her bags.

I, first, heard about this book on the Quilted Cupcake podcast. I wrote about in one of my summer catch up posts. I finally got it from the Library using Link+, a better, faster and more convenient way of getting interlibrary loans. It actually works for real people! Thank you, SFPL!!!

"A note on fear: It's okay to be afraid to start a project. It's okay to read the book for a while or just look at the pictures until you feel ready to jump in. The trick is that you have to jump in at some point. Like swimming or sky diving or picking up a pencil for the first time - like anything worth doing - you have to start somewhere. Start today. Start now. Don't worry about getting it right or making the perfect bag. It's likely that the first thing you make may not be perfect....but you will still treasure it. ... the safety net will appear just when you need it. So jump."

This note cemented my initial idea about the book. I think the safety net comment is a good one to keep in mind. The tone of the book is really friendly and accessible and she has some great overarching ideas about making bags, such as "Build a bag from the inside out." Another thing Lexie Barnes discusses is the length of the straps. I have been making the Eco Market tote with 54" straps. 54" fits me and works with the pattern. They go almost all the way around the bag and are sewn into the bottom of the bag seam. This reminder is good because I may want to make a bag where the straps do not go all the way around the bag. I also like the paragraph on designing pockets (pg.15), because it gives the maker practical ideas about making useful pockets. The section called "Graph, Paper, Scissors" discusses using graph paper (pg.14) to design a completely new bag to scale. I immediately drew a preliminary drawing (not to scale!) a for a saddle type bag.

I am going to spend some more time with this book.

Michelle says

Cute projects that are stylish and trendy right now. I did think it's funny that there's not only an eye glass case but a garden shear bag, a lip gloss bag, a sandwich pouch, a business card bag, and a map case. Very amusing! They missed a water bottle bag!

My favorite was the messenger bag and the crafter's tool belt (which admittedly I'd never use).

Sew What Bags

JulieAnn says

A great book if you want a few basic ideas for bag-making and want to be able to customize your piece without a pattern. I jumped right into the "daredevil" level messenger bag and was able to make it easily in just a few hours, and I'm no expert or "daredevil."

Stephanie says

Great book for someone with a little sewing experience but wants to be able to take a basic construction and run with it. I made a little purse from this book and I love it, but I also love that based on that one purse, I feel like I can take that pattern into so many different directions. I also have the Sew What! Skirts book but have yet to make anything from it yet.

Deirdre says

reviewed on my knitting blog here: [http://wyvernfriendknits.blogspot.ie/...](http://wyvernfriendknits.blogspot.ie/)

Ashley says

It was pretty cool! All sorts of neat patterns that I could use to make little (or big) bags for all sort of things. Both of my brothers have decided that, once we get a sewing machine, I will be making them each a DJ style bag. Designed after their favorite games/movies. Nicky - an Indiana Jones themed one, and Jeff - a Pokemon styled one (with a hoodie to match..) I personally thought the Tissue case, map sack, and ditty bags were awesome! (I also liked the slightly larger version of the DJ bag..)

Sarah says

This book helped me get back into sewing again. I love it because there are no patterns (and patterns scare me!) So far, I've made a sunglasses case and am excited about working my way up to more advanced projects. Lexie Barnes' instructional style is really casual and easy to follow too, so it is more like a friend explaining how to do everything. I love that!

Laura (Kyahgirl) says

4/5; 4 stars; A-

I've read quite a few bag making books in the last while and this one stands out because its all about

empowering the reader to figure it out for themselves and not be locked into thinking 'I have to have a pattern' to make something good.

The author has lots of practical advice on how to dream up your own pattern for whatever you might need to make, and tells you how to do it. She also has many example bags to make, with step by step instructions.

After reading this book I was inspired to combine my ideas and several online tutorials I've seen to make a messenger style diaper bag for a friend.

Kara says

Another great book in this series. Includes a full range of projects, and a good way for the zipper-jittery to take the leap. The smaller, simpler projects can be completed rather quickly if you've been sewing for a while, so I let my 4-year old pick out the fabric she wants from my scrap bag and less than an hour later -- a tissue holder! Not having to deal with cutting patterns is a plus. Haven't tackled any of the more complicated projects yet, but glad this book is on my shelf.

Kimberli says

Very simple and easily explained bags and organizers for home, market & travel. Good book for the beginner.

Projects include: Eyeglass Case, Tissue Case, Totes, Hanging Wall Organizers & a Tool Apron

Book appropriate for sewing level: Beginner and above
