

## **Tea Towels with Jumbo Ruffles**

Editor: Liz Johnson

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We love Moda Toweling! How could you not love something that comes to you pre-hemmed into a handy 16" width - perfect for towels, curtains, pillows and more?! With the hems in place, this project is about as fast and easy as they come. We chose a beautiful solid natural for our tea towels, accenting it with bright wide ruffles and ribbon. But, you can also choose from toweling in a wide array of nostalgic prints in classic pastel stripes and plaids as well as pretty fruit and floral border prints. I think my grandmother had towels in *all* these patterns. They are 100% cotton and machine washable... so get ready to dry some dishes!



We found [plain Moda toweling](#) at [Fabric.com](#) as well as a nice selection of the [broader collection](#) at [Fabric Depot Online](#). The collection we used for the ruffles is *Domestic Bliss* (appropriately enough!) by *Liz Scott* for *Moda Fabrics*. This is an older collection, which can be hard to find. But with all the beautiful new fabric out there, we know you'll have no trouble finding something to love. Because each ruffle can be done with just  $\frac{1}{4}$  yard, the perfect fabric(s) may already be in your stash! For the best look, choose a bright, bold motif to pop against the neutral toweling. We suggest a pinch of retro, a dash of sizzle and a splash of happiness.

## Sewing Tools You Need

- Any Sewing Machine (we recommend the [Janome 4120QDC](#))

## Fabric and Other Supplies



Amounts shown below are for ONE towel.

- 1 yard of 100% cotton toweling; we used *Moda's Toweling in Natural* (as mentioned above, this comes in a 16" finished width with ½" double turned hems along both sides)
  - ¼ yard of 44"+ wide cotton fabric for the ruffle accent
  - ½ yard of ½" ribbon in colors to coordinate with the accent fabrics; we used a pink grosgrain ribbon with brown accent border lines, purchased locally
- NOTE: If doing multiple towels, using the same ribbon on all is a good way to bring them together into a coordinated set.
- All purpose thread to match fabric and ribbon
  - See-through ruler
  - Fabric pen or pencil
  - Iron and ironing board
  - Scissors or rotary cutter and mat
  - Seam gauge
  - Seam ripper
  - Straight pins

## Getting Started

1. Pre-wash the toweling, the fabric for the ruffle accent, and the ribbon. Pre-washing is *always* a given with our projects, but when the item is something that is likely to be laundered often, like these tea towels, we like to emphasize it. The rule of thumb is to pre-wash the fabric and trims in the same way you plan to launder the final sewn item. If you plan on being able to throw the project in the washer and dryer, then that's what you should do with your fabric and trims prior to starting. See our tutorial for [more information about pre-shrinking](#).
2. From the Moda Toweling, for each towel you are making, cut ONE 28" length, which means your rectangle is 16" x 28".  
NOTE: *If you are not using the cool, pre-hemmed Moda Toweling, you will need to cut a rectangle 18" wide and make a ½" double turned hem along both sides.*
3. From the fabric for the ruffle, for each towel you are making, cut ONE 33" wide x 6" high rectangle.
4. From the ribbon, for each towel you are making, cut ONE 17" length of ribbon.

## At Your Sewing Machine & Ironing Board

1. Create a ½" double-turn hem along both short sides (both 6" sides) and the **BOTTOM** long side (the bottom 33" side) of the ruffle band. To do this, fold the raw edge of the fabric under ½" along all three sides and press. Fold under another ½" and press again. Pin in place.



2. Topstitch in place close to the inside fold.



NOTE: *If you are new to hemming, read our tutorial: [How to Make a Simple Hem](#).*

3. If you want to make neat corners like ours, read our tutorial: [Quick Tip: 1/4" Double-Turn Clean Finished Corner](#) – simply adjust the tutorial's 1/4" measurements to 1/2".
4. Using a long basting stitch, stitch 3/8" along the top raw edge of the hemmed ruffle band (the remaining 33" side), leaving 4-5" thread tails at the beginning and end of the stitch.
5. Using these 4-5" lengths of thread, gently pull the thread to gather the ruffle evenly to a 16" width.

NOTE: *If you are new to machine gathering, we have a [tutorial on the subject](#)*

6. Place the newly gathered ruffle band and a toweling panel **WRONG** sides together, aligning the raw edges of each piece. Adjust the gathers as needed so they are even across the width of the towel. Pin in place.



NOTE: *Yes, this means your seam will show on the **RIGHT** side of the towel. That's okay. We're going to cover it up with the ribbon, then the back of the towel will have a nice, clean finish as will the front.*

7. Stitch the ruffle band to the toweling panel, using a 1/2" seam allowance.
8. Trim the seam allowance back to 1/4". Press the seam allowance up towards the towel.



9. Lay the ribbon over the seam. Trim to size if need be, leaving about 1/2" extending beyond both sides.
10. Fold under each end of the ribbon 1/2" so it is flush with the hemmed sides of the towel and lightly pin in place.



11. Re-thread your machine with thread to match the ribbon in the top and thread to best match the toweling and accent fabric in the bobbin. In our sample, we went with pink thread in the top and a neutral thread in the bobbin. This makes a neat finish on both the front and back.
12. Edgestitch the ribbon in place around all four sides.  
*NOTE: Pivoting at the corners of the ribbon will be a bit of a challenge because you are working through multiple layers close to the edge of the fabric. Our Janome machine was able to power through with barely a notice. If your machine normally has challenges with layers and edgestitching, you might need to stop with your needle in the down position to pivot and then turn the machine's handwheel manually to slowly make your way around the corner.*
13. Press well from both sides.
14. Here's what our towels looked like at the edge from the front and the back.



15. Finally, create a ½" double-turn hem along the top raw edge of the towel. To do this, fold the raw edge of the fabric under ½" and press. Fold under another ½" and press again. Pin in place.
16. Topstitch in place close to the inside fold.

### **Contributors**

Project Design: Alicia Thommas

Sample Creation and Instructional Outline: Gregory Dickson

### Kitchen Linens

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