

Citrus Holiday: Fussy Cut Placemats

Editor: Liz Johnson

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A 'Fussy Cut' is not pitching a fit in the barber chair when one side of your bangs is longer than the other. Although that is perfectly justified behavior. To fussy cut in sewing is to select and cut out a specific motif from a printed fabric or center your pattern piece directly over a design within your fabric that you want to feature. This is what we did to perfectly center the beautiful pineapple design on each of our placemats.

By emphasizing a large motif and using a contrasting fabric for the borders, this placemat design creates the perfect frame for your best holiday dishes.

Our Citrus Holiday projects were made using Heather Bailey's delightful Pop Garden & Bijoux Collection. To learn more about how we created this non-traditional holiday palette, read our article: [Citrus Holiday: Christmas Dining Room](#).

Sewing Tools You Need

- Any Sewing Machine (we recommend the [Janome ThreadBanger30](#))

Fabric and Other Supplies

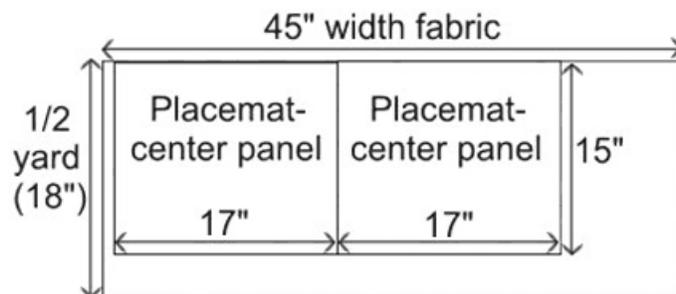


- Fabric for center placemat panel: ½ yard of 45" wide fabric will yield two center placemat panels (get 1½ yards if you want to make six placemats as we did in our table setting): we used Heather Bailey's Pop Garden & Bijoux in Canary Pineapple Brocade. NOTE: if you fussy cut, you'll need additional fabric, see Hints and Tips below.
- Fabric for placemat borders: ½ yard of 45" wide fabric will yield 12 borders (2 borders per placemat x 6 place mats)we used Amy Butler's Decorator Solid in Natural
- Fabric for placemat bottoms: ½ yard of 45" wide fabric will yield two placemat bottoms (1½ yards total is needed if you do six placemats): we used Amy Butler's Decorator Solid in Natural
- All purpose thread in color to match fabric
- Contrasting color thread for topstitching
- See-through ruler
- Fabric pencil
- Iron and ironing board
- Scissors or rotary cutter and mat
- Straight pins

Getting Started

These Getting Started notes are for making two placemats. Just keep going if you need more.

1. Use your see-through ruler and fabric pencil to draw two rectangles 17" wide x 15" high onto the fabric you're using for your center placemat panels. If you have a large design to center or want to fussy cut, you should make a 17" x 15" paper pattern to determine exactly where your rectangles should be. See Hints and Tips below.

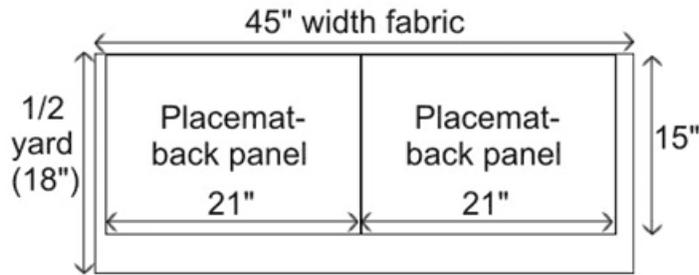


2. Draw four rectangles 3" wide x 15" high onto the fabric you're using for your placemat borders. As we mention above, a ½ yard cut will allow you to make 12-15 borders, depending on your actual fabric width and its selvedge.



Cut 4 borders that are 3" width x 15" height...up to 12-15 borders will fit on fabric cut.

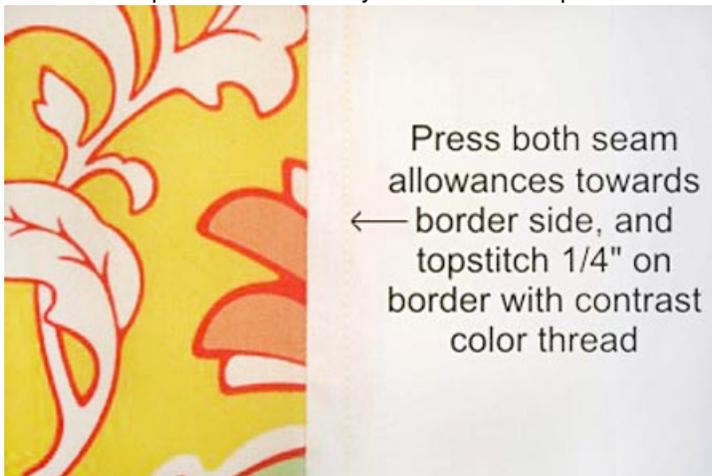
3. Draw two rectangles 21" wide x 15" high onto the fabric you're using for the placemat bottoms.



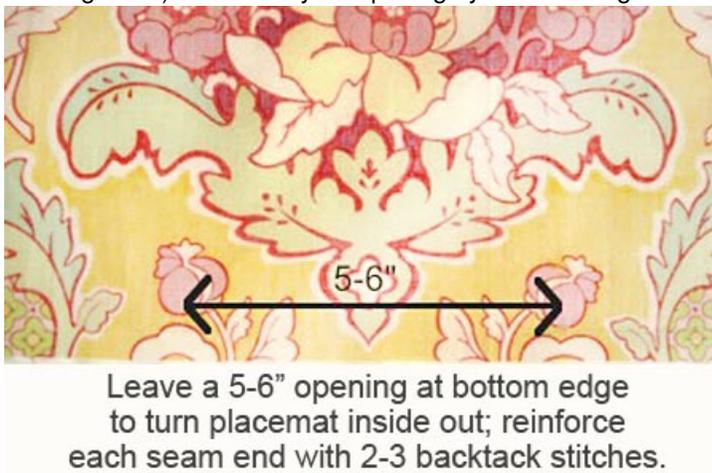
4. Cut along all drawn lines. You now have all the pieces you need for two placemats. Repeat steps 1-3 for each additional set of two placemats.

At Your Sewing Machine & Ironing Board

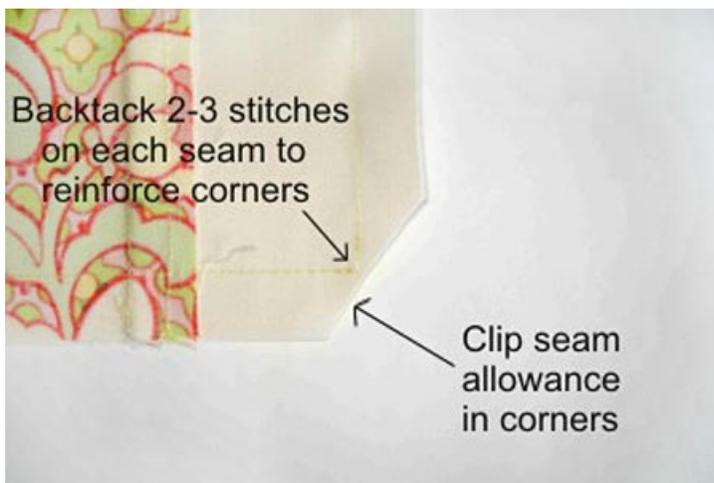
1. Thread your machine with the matching thread. Pin a placemat border piece, right sides together, to the center placemat panel along the 15" edge, on both the left and right sides of the center placemat panel. Sew a 1/2" seam.
2. With the placemat facing up, press these joined seams flat so both seam allowances are facing towards the border side of the seam.
3. Thread your machine with the contrasting thread, and topstitch 1/4" from the seam on the border piece. Do this on both the left and right sides. This topstitching will go through the top border layer and the seam allowance, holding the seam allowance in place. This is now your Placemat Top.



4. Re-thread your machine with the matching thread. Pin the Placemat Top to the Placemat Bottom, right sides together, and sew a 1/2" seam around all four edges, leaving a 5-6" opening along the bottom edge of the placemat (along one of the long sides). Reinforce your opening by back-tacking a few stitches at the beginning and end of your seam.



5. Clip all four corners of the placemat. It's also a good idea to back-tack at each corner to reinforce them and make sure they stay sharp when turned right-side-out.



6. Using the 5-6" opening you left in the bottom of the placemat, turn the sewn placemat right-side-out to reveal the right sides of the Placemat Top and the Placemat Bottom. Be sure to push out each corner so it is flush and square. Use a long tool with a dull point, like a knitting needle or a chopstick.
7. Tuck in the raw edges of the opening ½" so they are even with the sew edge. Press flat around all four edges and all four corners of the placemat.
8. Re-thread your machine with the contrasting thread. Topstitch ¼" all around four edges of placemat. This topstitching will seal the 5-6" opening.



Hints and Tips

Military corners

Here's a great tip for making nice, sharp corners when topstitching: work with the needle in the down position, which means whenever you stop sewing, your needle should be down through your fabric. Some machines, such as the Janome model recommended above, have a needle up/needle down selector button; that's really handy because then the machine remembers so you don't have to. When you get to a corner and are about to turn to topstitch the next edge, stop with the needle down through the fabric, lift the presser foot, and turn the placemat to line up the next edge, using the needle as your pivot point.

Accommodating large and fussy cut designs

If you decide, as we did, to use a print fabric with a large design pattern (called a "large repeat") for the center placemat panels, be sure to purchase enough fabric so the repeat can be centered on the placemat panel. You may want to cut the 17" wide x 15" high center placemat panel out of paper first, then bring it with you to the fabric store, so you can lay it on top of the actual fabric to determine if you will need more than 1½ yards. It's always better to buy a little more than to realize too late that you don't have enough. If you are buying fabric online, get at least an extra half yard.

Contributors

Project Design: Alicia Thommas
Sample Creation & Instructions: Gregory Dickson

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