

Italiano Kitchen: Bistro Napkins

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My favorite part of Italian cooking is the sauces. Spicy red sauce with lots of chunky vegetables. Rich alfredo sauce with extra garlic and parmesan. They're all deliciously drippy. And, none can be properly eaten without a nice, big napkin. Our Bistro Napkins are generous at 20" x 20" and feature a fun border strip along the bottom of each. Cloth napkins are truly one of the very easiest projects for a beginner, and a great way to 'go green.'

All the projects in our Italiano Kitchen series use a wonderful new fabric collection from our friends at [Michael Miller Fabrics: Alfabeto Italiano Collezione](#). You'll find it online and in stores now.

The yardage shown below is based on a finished napkin size of 20" x 20", standard for a dinner napkin. You can certainly cut smaller or larger squares to best fit your table (and the relative messiness of its inhabitants).

To further confound your brain, we used *three* different fabrics to create our *four* napkins. At our imaginary table, Mom's and Dad's napkins match in Black Numeri Piccolo. Then, there is a slightly different design for each of our imaginary kids: two in Cream Numeri Piccolo and two in Cream Alfabeto Piccolo. Each napkin has the same coordinating stripe so they all go together beautifully. We are lucky enough to have lots of fabric to work with and so love to mix and match. If you want to conserve fabric, the easiest thing to remember is: $\frac{3}{4}$ of a yard will make two 20" x 20" finished napkins. Increase to $1\frac{1}{4}$ yards to make a matching set of four napkins.

Sewing Tools You Need

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

Fabric and Other Supplies



- $\frac{3}{4}$ yard of 44- 45" wide fabric: we used *Alfabeto Italiano Collezione* from Michael Miller Fabrics in *Black Numeri Piccolo*
- $\frac{3}{4}$ yard of 44- 45" wide fabric: we used *Alfabeto Italiano Collezione* from Michael Miller Fabrics in *Cream Alfabeto Piccolo*
- $\frac{3}{4}$ yard of 44- 45" wide fabric: we used *Alfabeto Italiano Collezione* from Michael Miller Fabrics in *Cream Numeri Piccolo*
- $\frac{1}{4}$ yard of 44- 45" wide fabric: we used *Alfabeto Italiano Collezione* from Michael Miller Fabrics in *Mustard Cha Cha Stripe*
- All purpose thread to match or contrast with your fabric: we used *red thread to contrast with our fabric*
- Scissors or rotary cutter and cutting mat
- Fabric pen, pencil or chalk
- See-through ruler
- Seam gauge
- Straight pins
- Hand sewing needle
- Ironing board and iron

Getting Started

1. Use your see-through ruler and pencil to draw six 21" x 21" squares onto each fabric you are using for a napkin. Cut along the drawn lines.
2. From the fabric for the contrasting stripe (*Cha Cha Stripe* in our sample), cut TWO strips 3" x Width of Fabric (WOF). Cut each strip in half, then trim about 1" from the selvedge ends to create four pieces 3" x 21".



At Your Sewing Machine & Ironing Board

1. On each of the four 3" x 21" contrasting strips, press under ½" along both 21" sides.

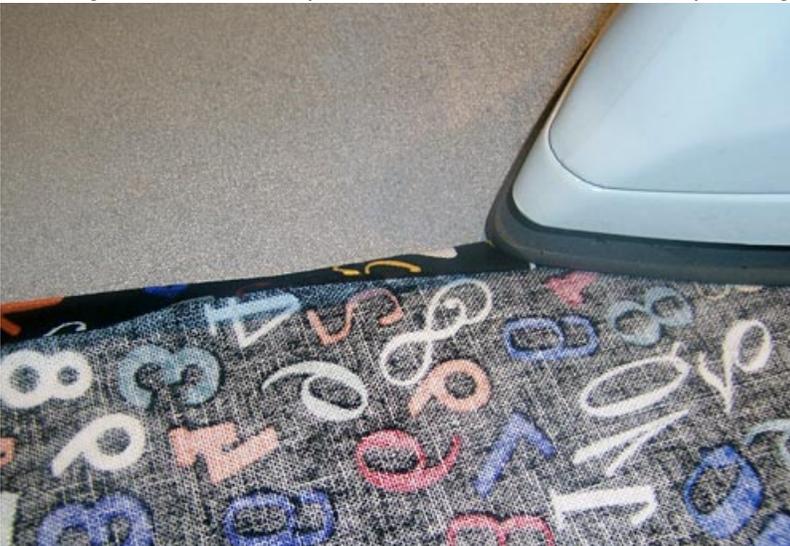


2. Place a folded strip 3" from one raw edge of the right side of a napkin square. Pin in place.



NOTE: If you choose a directional-print fabric as we did, you should pin the strip 3" from the bottom edge.

- 3.
4. Repeat for each napkin.
5. Create a narrow ½" double-turn hem around all four edges of the napkin. To do this fold the raw edge of the fabric under ¼" along all four sides and press. Fold under another ¼" and press again.



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

6. Topstitch around all four sides in matching or contrasting thread (we used a contrasting thread). Stay just under 1/4" from your folded edge. Sew slowly. To keep your corners sharp, work with your needle in the down position and pivot. 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 napkin to line up the next edge, using the needle as a pivot point.



7. For super neat corners like ours, read our tutorial:



Contributors

Project Concept: Alicia Thommas

Sample Creation: Michele Mishler

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Table Linens

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[Italiano Kitchen: Bambina Apron](#)

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