

SQUARED UPTOWN BAG

Designed by Constance Hall



Difficulty rating: Beginner weaving

Overview: The squares are easy to weave and assemble. They are constructed into a bag checkerboard fashion and felted. The findings are then added. Knitting or crocheting optional.

Once you weave a square on your new Zoom Loom you are going to be intrigued by this fun way of weaving and will want to find new ways to use these quick and easy squares. This bag is just one of many great projects you will be able to make with your squares. The Uptown Bag is easy to weave and takes just an afternoon to assemble and felt. After attaching the hardware, you will be ready to show off your new bag. No one will believe that it is made from your Zoom Loom Squares. The simple process is: weave the squares, sew them together, knit or crochet or weave 5 small rectangles and sew them to the bag. Felt the bag, shape and dry. Attach your hardware and it is done.

Finished Size: 13" high, 12" wide, 3" deep after felting

Yarn:

- Malabrigo Seleccion Privada, color H, 1 skein
- Malabrigo Worsted, black, 2 skeins

Quantities:

- Malabrigo Seleccion Privada, Shown in colorway H, 23 squares
- Malabrigo Worsted Black, 33 squares
- Each square takes 8 yards. One skein of the Seleccion Privada is just enough if you are careful.

- 4 knitted rectangles -- 1" x 3"
- 1 knitted rectangle -- 1.5" x 4"

Notions, equipment and tools:

- JUL Black Floating Buttonhole with a JUL Resin Kiwi Disk as button.
- JUL 24" Small Cool Handle in Black .
- Tapestry needle. Knitting needles size 7.
- Lining is optional.
- Interfacing
- Needlepoint plastic grid to stiffen bottom, also optional but helpful

Weaving Instructions

Weave 23 squares with Seleccion Privada and 33 squares of black Worsted Malabrigo. This worsted weight yarn felts quite readily (something to keep in mind if substituting yarns). The shrinkage after felting is about 25%. When measuring the yarn to weave the black squares make sure it is the full 5 wraps around the Zoom Loom. Then you can use the end of the weaving yarn to sew a square to the next square, when possible.

Tabs: The 4 tabs for the handles and the one for the button hole/closure are knitted and sewn on the bag. You could also crochet these, if preferred. For the tabs, cast on 8 stitches and knit until the rectangle measures 3", bind off. Make 4 of these. For the buttonhole/closure, cast on 10 stitches and knit or crochet until it is 4" long.

Alternative: If you do not want to knit or crochet the tabs, weave 5 extra black squares to use as the tabs for the handle and closure tab. These can be folded over into rectangles, sewn shut and then sewn on the bag before felting.

Assembly

This bag is laid out with the squares on point. Orient all the squares in the same direction so the beginning tails are all pointing in the same direction. It doesn't matter which direction, just as long as they are in the same direction. This will help when sewing them together. Refer to the picture to see how the squares are arranged.

As you sew your squares together, pick one side to be the front of the bag. On the top row in the center of the front, substitute a black square for one of the colored squares so the button can be attached on top of a black square. Use the ends of the black yarn to sew a square to its neighbor, two by two. The pairs are then sewn together using more black yarn. Use only the black yarn to sew the squares together, even when sewing the colored squares. The black yarn will disappear when the bag is felted. The squares continue around the bottom and up the other



Sewing two squares together

side. There is no center seam on the bottom. When you get to the squares on the bottom corners they will be folded over on the bottom of the bag and sewn down.

Since the bag is going to be felted, you do not need to weave in the tails. These can be left on the inside of the bag and cut off after felting. Although there is no right side or wrong side of the squares, it is important that *all sewing is done on the SAME SIDE*, which becomes the inside of the bag. When felted, you won't see any stitches on the outside.

Sew on the four tabs that will attach the handle to the four top points of the bag. Overlap slightly the end of each of the tabs to the top point of the bag and sew each securely with two rows of stitches. When felted the thicker fabric won't be noticeable but will ensure the handles won't distort the top of the bag. Sew the last tab to the valley on the center top BACK of the bag on the inside. The back gets the tab and the front has the one extra black square in the top row for the button. Overlap it the same way and sew it securely. The bag is ready to be felted.

Finishing

Start the felting process by hand in hot water in a sink. Let the bag soak for an hour in warm water. Drain the sink and refill with hot water adding a small amount of Dawn (just enough to make the water a bit slippery) and then gently start agitating the bag, stopping to drain and refill the sink with hot water and soap, when needed. The yarn needs to bloom and fill in the stitching really well before you increase the agitation.

Check the progress of the bag every few minutes. After you see the yarn start to full well then you can increase the agitation of the bag. Check the size of the bag and keep agitating until the bag is the desired size and the fabric of the bag is dense and felted. Rinse the bag in clear, warm water three times or until there is no sign of soap in the water. Fill the sink once more with cool water and let the bag soak for another 30 minutes.



Unwashed (back) and felted (front) squares

After the last soak you may put the bag in the washing machine and use the spin cycle to spin the water out of the bag. If you do not have a washing machine that can run ONLY the spin cycle, squeeze out as much water as you can.

Be careful to not let the bag stay in the washer after it has spun. Take it out immediately after the spinning stops and mold the bag to the desired size and shape. If it has shrunk too much in any direction it can be stretched while it is still wet.

The creases on the bottom and up the sides need to be formed now. Pinch the fabric into the desired shape and then use clothes pins to hold the creases in place while the bag dries. Place a folded paper towel under each clothes pin to make sure they don't leave marks in the wool. Moving the clothes pins every so often also helps keep any dents from marring the bag.

Fold a dry towel and put it inside to help the bag hold its shape while drying. Then lay the bag on its side on a sweater drying screen or a dry towel and periodically turn the bag over as it dries. Take the towel out and replace it with a dry one when needed. It might take two or three days to dry completely.

If you want the surface of the wool to be smoother, you can use a razor to shave the wool once the bag is totally dry. Drag the razor over surface of the bag until it is smooth.

Insert the rings of the handles into the tabs and sew the ends of the tabs to the inside. If the tabs are too long just cut them to shorten them and sew them down.

The JUL closure used on this bag makes the last step on this bag very easy. The closure is fitted with a screw that goes right through the felted wool. Just make a small hole in the bag and put the shank through the wool. Then attach the screw to the inside and the button is on. Repeat the process on the tab and your closure is done.



Attaching the rings and the closures

This bag was lined with black fabric with interfacing ironed onto the lining. To stiffen the bottom, cut a piece of needlepoint plastic canvas and fit it to the bottom of the bag. Tack it down to the inside corners of the bag. If you are lining the bag, first cut the lining to the size of bag, then sew it together and sew it to the top edges of the bag. Tack the bottom corners of the lining down on top of the plastic bottom.

Enjoy your new bag and congratulations on starting down the fun and winding road of weaving projects. Check back here often for new patterns and inspiration. Patterns are like recipes, they are a good place to start. How you change them to suit yourself is where the creativity takes place and makes the project your own. Have fun!