



# Embellished TABLET TOTE

by Shelley Scott-Tobisch

**B**atik fabrics enhanced with pretty embellishments make this lovely tablet tote both beautiful and functional. An inside zippered pocket adds a bit of security, and the customizable pocket organizer can be used for a cell phone, iPod, ear buds, or other items that might otherwise fall to the bottom of the bag.

For more detailed information on making quilts and quilted items, see the AQS Quilting Essentials at [www.AmericanQuilter.com](http://www.AmericanQuilter.com)

## Preparing the bag panels

Join in order along the long edges: 1 medium blue batik panel, 1 green/yellow batik panel, and another medium blue batik panel. Press seam allowances on this top panel unit open. Repeat with 1 green/yellow batik, 1 medium blue batik, and another green/yellow batik panel pieces.

### FABRIC & CUTTING REQUIREMENTS

Skill level: Intermediate

Bag size: 11" x 8¾" x 2"\*

- Requirements are based on 40" fabric width.
- Strips are cut selvage to selvage unless otherwise noted.

Medium blue batik –  
¼ yard

- top panel, 3 pieces 4½" x 8½"

Green & yellow batik –  
¼ yard

- top panel, 3 pieces 4½" x 8½"

Medium green batik  
(accent) – ⅓ yard

- handle front, 1 strip 3¼" x 40"
- bag accent, 1 strip 4½" x 15"
- welt pocket lining, 1 strip 6" x 13"

Dark blue batik – ½ yard

- handle back, 1 strip 3¼" x 40"
- bottom panel, 1 piece 8½" x 12¼"
- outer zipper flaps, 2 pieces 2½" x 8½"
- pocket organizer accent, 1 strip 3½" x 11½"
- welt zipper pocket flaps, 2 pieces 2" x 6"
- zipper sleeves, 4 pieces 2¼" x 2½"

Light batik – ½ yard

- lining, 1 strip 11½" x 25"
- pocket organizer, 1 strip 11½" x 15"

Medium weight canvas –  
½ yard

- handle, 1 strip 1½" x 40"
- top panels, 2 pieces 9" x 13"
- bottom panel, 1 piece 8½" x 12½"
- accent panel, 1 piece 4½" x 15¼"

\* These measurements were designed for an Apple iPad measuring 9.5" x 7.3". For a tailored fit, measure your tablet before cutting the fabric. Larger or smaller tablets may require adjustments to the size of the panels before assembly.

**SUPPLIES:** Zippers – one 14" and one 9" nylon coil zipper to match the bag fabrics; water-soluble fabric basting glue – I like Roxanne Glue-Baste-it!; glue stick; Fray Check; 505 Spray and Fix Temporary Fabric Adhesive; size 80/12 or 90/14 Microtex needles; metallic needles (optional); fabric marking pen or pencil; freezer paper; fusible web; assorted threads, cords, and size 6 beads for embellishment

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Spray one side of a canvas top panel with the temporary fabric adhesive. Center a stitched top panel unit right-side up over the glue. Smooth in place. Using a walking foot, topstitch  $\frac{1}{8}$ " from the top raw edge of the fabric. Make 2.

For the bottom panel, repeat the spray and stitching process with the canvas and dark blue batik bag bottom pieces.

### Embellishing the panels

For embellishment, choose a variety of colors, fibers, and sizes of thread and yarn that enhance and blend with the fabrics (photo 1). Work with medium-light to medium-dark values. Threads or cords that are too light or too dark will appear as a solid line when stitched and will break up the visual flow of the piece. For a small bag such as this, do not use cords over 2mm in diameter.



Photo 1

Thread the machine with the decorative thread of choice mounted on the vertical spool pin. Use 100% cotton thread that blends with your fabrics in the bobbin.

Set your machine with a fairly long stitch, as the longer stitch enhances the appearance of the decorative threads. I use 2.7mm (9 stitches per inch). *Tip: Put together a practice panel of fabric and canvas to test stitch decorative threads and cords.*

For the bag top panel, I stitched soft, undulating curves in several different decorative threads (photo 2). The thread paths of differing colors cross over one another to add interest. I then added curves of couched cord. To couch the cord, I used my machine's cording foot and thread to match the cord. I stitched with a zigzag stitch wide enough to cover the cord and long enough so it was securely fastened to the panel yet didn't show through. *Tip: If you do not have a cording foot, try an open-toe foot instead.*



Photo 2

After adding the cord, I machine stitched beads along some of the cords of the panel. For more information on machine beading, see my article "Beading by Machine" in the September 2011 is-

sue of *American Quilter* magazine, available online for AQS members.

I stippled the bag bottom with a variegated thread (photo 3). You could also try stitching 60° hanging diamonds or 45° crosshatching.



Photo 3

For the bag accent strip, I first stitched corded pintucks spaced  $\frac{3}{8}$ " apart (photo 4), then attached the piece to canvas with fusible web. If you prefer to embellish the accent with decorative stitching, repeat the spray and stitching process as described for the bag panel, using the green bag accent piece and canvas accent panel.



Photo 4

For pintucks, refer to the sewing machine manual for information on threading your machine. Use decorative thread on top and cotton in the bobbin. To add the

cord, I removed the stitch plate on my machine and threaded mini pintuck cord into the little round hole in front of the zigzag opening of the stitch plate. I put the plate back on the machine and left the bobbin door open so the cord would feed smoothly. *Editor's note: This technique does not work on all machines.* It also helped to wind the cord around a spool of thread and set it on the floor near the machine. After pintucking, remember to fuse the piece to canvas before continuing.

### Making the handle

*Note: For best results on all bag assembly steps, use a ¼" seam, a stitch length of 2 mm (12 stitches per inch), a size 80/12 Microtex needle, and 100% cotton thread. Unless otherwise stated, topstitching is ⅛" from seams with a stitch length of 2.7mm–3mm (8–9 stitches per inch). Basting stitch length is 3mm (8 stitches per inch).*

Place the medium green batik and dark blue batik handle pieces right sides together. Stitch along one long edge. Press seam allowances toward the dark fabric. Position the canvas handle strip under the seam allowance pushed right up to the stitching line. Fold the dark batik around so it encases the canvas and its long raw edge is aligned with the stitching line. Press.

Fold the other handle fabric piece to the stitching line and press (photo 5). Fold over and line up the folded edges of the 2 handle strips. Lightly glue-baste the pieces together. Topstitch along both long edges. Set aside.



Photo 5

### Assembling the bag

Trim the embellished top panels to 8" x 11¾" and the bottom panel to 7½" x 11¾". From the embellished accent piece cut 2 accent panels 1¾" x 11¾". Finish all raw edges with a zigzag or overlock stitch.

Draw a line ½" from the short ends of a dark blue outer zipper flap. Fold the raw edge to the line on both sides. Glue-baste and press. Fold in half lengthwise, wrong sides together. Press. Topstitch along both short edges. Make 2.

Center the pieces along each side of the 14" zipper so the folds just touch the zipper teeth. Glue-stick in place (photo 6). Topstitch ⅛" and ¼" from the fold on both pieces. Set this bag zipper assembly aside.

Stitch a top panel to an accent panel, right sides together. Press seam allowances open. Topstitch on both sides of the seam. Make 2. *Tip: If your pintucked panel seams are not lying flat, use a rubber mallet to flatten them. To do this, place the project over a piece of batting on a smooth, clean, hard surface such as a piece of wood. Gently hammer the seam on the wrong side to flatten it.*

Stitch the bottom panel between the accent panels, right sides together (photo 7). Press seam allowances open. Topstitch on both sides of the seam.



Photo 6



Photo 7

Fold the bag in half, with right sides together and the top edge and seam lines aligned. Stitch the side seams. Press the seam allowances open.

### Forming the bag bottom

With the bag still wrong-side out, use a pencil and ruler to draw a line 1" up from the bottom. Flatten the bag bottom so that the corner forms a perfect 90° angle with the side seam going through the middle of the angle (photo 8). Press. Draw a line at each corner connecting the pencil lines along the bottom of the bag. Repeat for the other corner (photo 9). Stitch on the corner lines. Set the bag aside.

### Adding the lining welt pocket

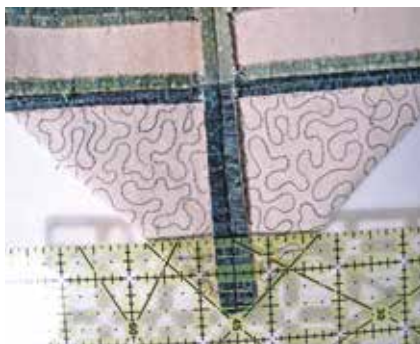


Photo 8



Photo 9

Trace all lines of the welt zipper pocket pattern A onto the dull side of a piece of freezer paper. Cut out on the outer line. Position the freezer-paper template 1 ¼" from the top (short) edge of the 11 ½" x 25" lining piece, centered side to side and with the shiny side of the template to the right side of the lining. Press until the freezer paper adheres to the lining (about 10 seconds).

Cut through the paper and fabric on the interior solid lines. Do not cut the dashed lines. *Tip: Begin cutting the center line with a rotary cutter and ruler, then switch to sharp scissors (photo 10). When approaching the corners, cut to but not through the corners.* Use a toothpick to apply a drop of Fray Check sealant to the corners. Fold the fabric and freezer paper to the back of the lining along the dashed lines (photo 11). Press.

Fold the dark blue batik welt zipper pocket flaps in half lengthwise, wrong sides together. Press.



Photo 10



Photo 11

Apply a few dots of glue along the raw edges to secure. Make 2.

Center the pieces along each side of the 9" zipper so the folds just touch the zipper teeth. Glue-stick in place. Topstitch along the fold on both pieces.

Move the zipper pull to about 1" inside the raw edge of the fabric. Stitch across the zipper teeth several times, ⅛" from the inside edge of the fabric on both ends. These are the new zipper stops. Trim the zipper ½" from the stitching.

Remove the freezer paper from the lining and press again. Center the zipper assembly in the welt window of the lining, both right-sides up (photo 12). At least ½" of the assembly should extend beyond all edges of the window. Glue-baste in place. Starting at the bottom center and leaving long trailing threads, topstitch all around. Pull the threads to the back and tie off.

Working from the wrong side of the lining, align a short edge of the medium green welt pocket



Photo 12

lining piece to the raw edge of the welt zipper assembly, right side to the zipper. Stitch, being careful not to catch the lining (photo 13). Line up the opposite edges and stitch. Pull the pocket down so the zipper assembly is at the top. Working from the right side, fold the lining back and stitch along the open edges of the pocket on both sides.



Photo 13

### Adding the pocket organizer

Align the long edge of the dark blue pocket organizer accent with an edge of the light batik pocket organizer, right sides together. Stitch. Bring the opposite edges of the pieces together and stitch, creating a tube. Press seam allowances in one direction.

Turn right-side out. Roll the fabric until 2" of the dark batik ac-

cent shows at the top of the pocket. Press the tube flat. Topstitch along the top edge and on the accent at the seams. Do not topstitch along the bottom. Press the tube flat. The dark batik accent is at the top of the pocket. Topstitch along that top edge and on the accent at the seams. Do not topstitch along the bottom.

Fold the lining fabric in half, aligning the raw edges at the top and sides. Press a crease at the bottom. Open the lining and draw a line 1" from the crease on the opposite side of the welt zippered pocket. With both pieces right-side up, position the bottom edge of the organizer pocket along the pencil line. Topstitch the bottom edge only. Glue-baste the pocket sides to the lining.

Add stitching as desired to divide the pocket organizer into sections (photo 14).

### Assembling the bag

After both the zipper welt pocket and the pocket organizer have been added to the lining, fold the lining in half, right sides to-



Photo 14

gether, and stitch the side seams, leaving a 4" opening along one side for turning.

Form the corners on the lining bottom as you did for the bag bottom (see "Forming the bag bottom").

Turn the lining right-side out and the bag wrong-side out.

Place the handle inside the bag. Center each end against the side seams of the bag, right sides together. Adjust each handle end so it extends ½" beyond the raw edge of the bag. Baste ⅛" from that raw edge.

Center one long edge of the bag zipper assembly against the bag front, right sides together. Baste together ⅛" from the raw edges. Repeat for the other edge of the zipper flap and bag back. Open the zipper. Stuff the ends inside the bag.

Place the lining in the bag, right sides together, matching side seams and centers. Pin all around. Stitch ¼" from the edge.

Turn the bag right-side out through the opening in the lining. Press. Hand stitch the opening closed. Topstitch ⅛" and again ¼" from the top edge all around.

### Adding the zipper sleeves

Trace the zipper sleeve pattern B onto freezer paper. Place 2 zipper sleeve pieces right sides together. Press the template to the wrong

side of one piece. Cut out, leaving a ¼" seam allowance all around. Stitch along the curved edge and sides of the template, leaving the straight bottom open for turning. Remove the freezer-paper template. Turn right-side out and tuck in the bottom seam allowance. Make 2.

If desired, open the zipper halfway and trim the ends of the zipper. Place a zipper sleeve over each end of the zipper (photo 15). Topstitch all around.



Photo 15

### Tips for machine embellishing

Test each stitch on a practice panel and raise or lower the upper tension until the stitch is balanced. Once the desired effect is achieved, make a note of stitch length and tension. Many decorative threads require the upper tension to be lowered to as low as 1 for a balanced stitch. These include metallic thread such as Sulky Sliver.

Also test your threads on the practice piece. Sometimes a thread looks promising on the spool, but once stitched it simply does not make the grade. The opposite can occur with a thread that looks uninteresting on the spool yet looks wonderful on the panel.

For decorative stitching use a new Microtex needle. If working with metallic threads, use a metallic needle. Avoid threading the metallic needle with a needle threader, as the hook on the threader will scrape away the Teflon coating in the eye of the needle.

Stitch slower than usual, as this will help to avoid thread shredding or breakage.

Cords are often made up of several threads twisted together. If you find a cord that you would like to use for couching but it is too thick, untwist the cord and pull on one of the threads. Use the single thread for couching.

