

## Subway Map Tote



Rebecca Kemp Brent

Creative Machine Needlearts

Subway maps are the meeting point of art and information. They're colorful and pack a graphic punch; people often frame them for display. With a few easy tricks, you can turn this paper keepsake of your travels into a terrific tote bag that will be useful long after you've taken the stairs to the street.

Approximate size: 14" x 14" x 4"

### Materials

Subway or other map, approximately 24" x 32"

5/8 yard of medium-weight duck for lining\*

Roll of clear 18"-wide self-adhesive plastic such as Contact

1 yard of 1"-wide webbing for handles

Coats Dual Duty XP All Purpose thread

Threads for embellishment (Sample uses Coats Cotton Quilting Thread)

\*Choose a solid color or a print with a wrong side that can be visible in the finished tote.

### Instructions

Seam allowance is 1/4".

### Preparing Your Map

Take a moment to really look at your map. You may want to adjust the size of the tote pieces to avoid locating a favorite place in a seam, or because your map has different dimensions. Use these instructions as a starting point.

1. Press your map with a warm iron if necessary to remove creases. Don't worry if the map has torn slightly along a crease; it will be repaired as the plastic is applied.
2. Lay the map face up on your table. Cut an 18" x 32" piece of plastic. Roll the plastic backwards to relax its curl and begin peeling its paper backing from one end. Peel back about 2" of the paper backing all the way across the plastic's 18" end.
3. Beginning at one edge of the map, smooth the plastic into place on the map. Position the plastic so that you can pull the paper away with your left hand as you smooth the plastic onto the map with your right hand (or vice versa). Proceed with 3" or 4" at a time, keeping the edges even and avoiding bubbles. The plastic is not high tack, so it's possible to lift and reposition an inch or two of the plastic if necessary.
4. When all of the plastic is in place, trim your map into:
  - 2 rectangles, 14" x 18"
  - 1 rectangle, 4" x 13 1/2"
5. Cut a 6" x 18" piece of plastic and remove the paper backing completely. Lay the plastic, adhesive side up, on your work surface.
6. Arrange the three map rectangles on the plastic, abutting their edges and centering the small rectangle between the large ones. Be sure the top edges of the map are at the outer ends of the assembly to position the map right side up on both faces of the tote. You're also inserting a boxing strip for the bottom of the tote.

### INSERT ILLUSTRATION A

7. Lay the assembled map piece on the lining fabric, wrong sides together. Be sure the fabric extends at least 1 1/2" beyond the map at both ends. Use spray adhesive or pieces of tape to baste the layers together; do not use pins. Sew 1/8" inside each side edge with a 3 mm-long straight stitch to hold the layers together; these stitches will be within the seam allowances and hidden in the finished tote.
8. Set your machine for a 3-step zigzag stitch 7.0 mm wide and 1.4 mm long. Stitch through the layers along the abutted edges at the bottom of the tote, further securing the map pieces to the fabric.

### INSERT ILLUSTRATION B

9. Embellish your map as desired. The sample uses a title and symbols digitized from hand-drawn images with Dream Maker Pro software and is stitched on The Dream Fabric Frame. You could also use small machine-embroidered motifs or decorative stitches highlighting your favorite subway route.

10. Trim the fabric to match the map at the sides. Cut the fabric 1 1/4" beyond the map edges at both ends for hems.

11. Divide the webbing into two equal lengths. Position the ends of the webbing on the fabric edges, 5" from the side seams, matching the ends of the webbing to the raw edge of the hem. The webbing should lie on the right (map) side of the tote, with the loop of webbing lying over the tote's body. Use tape or clips to hold the handle ends in place.

12. Finish the 18" ends of the fabric by serging or overcasting with your sewing machine, catching the raw ends of the webbing straps in the stitching.

13. Press the hem allowances to the wrong side along the top edges of the fabric. In the process, you will also flip the handles up into position. Either press from the wrong (fabric) side, without steam, or finger press the hems to avoid damaging the plastic. Use clips or tape to hold the hems and handles in position.

*Caution: Do not place your iron directly on the plastic or expose the tote to high heat.*

14. Set your machine for a straight stitch 3.0 mm long and topstitch the hem 1/8", 3/4". And 1" below the folded upper edge on both ends of the tote. Stitch through all layers: map, fabric, and webbing, to secure both the hems and the handles.

15. Sew the side seams of the tote with right sides (map sides) together, still using the 3.0 mm straight stitch. Finish the raw edges with a serger or an overcasting stitch on your sewing machine. Use a slightly longer than usual stitch length to avoid perforating the plastic too closely.

16. Refold the tote to match the raw edges at one bottom corner and stitch a 1/4" seam to box the corner. Repeat at the second corner and finish the seam allowances as before. Carefully turn the tote right side out, smoothing the plastic-covered map as you go.