



# Creative Projects & Ideas Book

## WINTER 2022

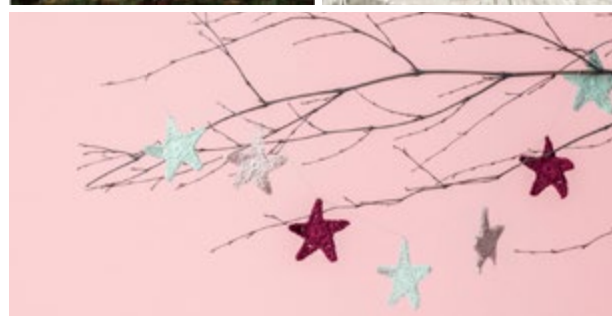






## *It's holiday making time!*

Are you ready for the holidays? Take a look at this lineup of 30 crafts sure to make your home merry and bright. Knit hip hats, crochet snowflakes, sew stockings, quilt tree skirts, or paint snowmen – there's no limit to what you can do. You can make the perfect gift for everyone on your list. Cook up an extra helping of cheer with adorable cookies, gingerbread house cake pops, tasty breads or other shareable-giftable foods. No matter what craft you choose, you'll be making something from the heart that shows the true meaning of the season.





## These Crochet Stars Are On Point!

By Kathryn Senior

A night under the stars is even better when those stars are crocheted. String these cuties on a garland, turn them into a mobile, or keep it simple and hang 'em on a tree. There's no wrong way to bring a little star power into your life.

### **You will need the following:**

- Yarn (you can use whatever you like here, we used Cloudborn Pima Cotton, a DK-weight yarn)
- Crochet hook (use a hook half a size smaller than what your yarn label suggests – it will keep your points pointy)
- Yarn needle

### **Abbreviations**

- Ch - Chain
- Dc - [Double crochet](#)
- Hdc - [Half double crochet](#)
- Htr- Half treble crochet: Yarn around the hook twice, insert the hook into the next stitch, yarn over the hook and pull up a loop (4 loops on hook). Yarn over your hook and pull through two loops, yarn over the hook once more and pull through all three loops that are left.
- Sc - [Single crochet](#)
- Sl st - Slip stitch





## 1. Make the Center

Make a magic ring, ch 2 (these do not count as a stitch).

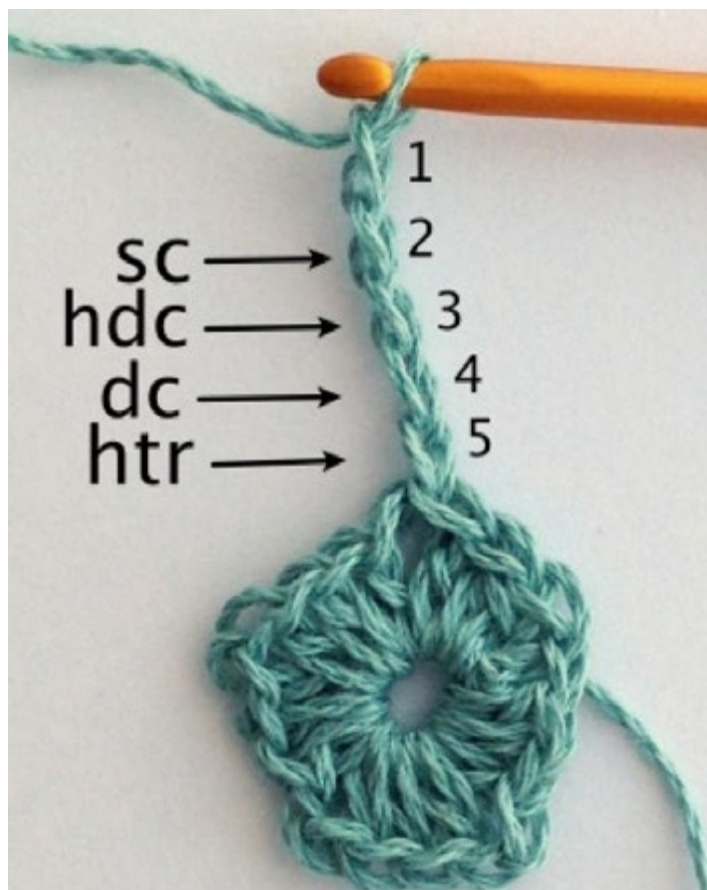
Work 3 half double crochets (hdc) into the ring, followed by a chain stitch. Repeat 4 more times. After the last chain, join to the first hdc with a slip stitch.

You will have a small pentagon (five-sided shape) with a chain space at each point. Do not tighten your starting circle too tightly at this point, and do not weave in the tail end.

## 2. Make the Points

Make a slip stitch into the next stitch and then into the chain space that forms the next point of your pentagon. This brings you to exactly the right position to start the first point of your star.

Ch 5. These stitches are numbered in the photo below to help you with the next step.



Now, work a sc into the second chain from your hook, then a hdc into the third chain, a dc into the fourth chain and a htr into the fifth chain.



Join this point to the body of the star with a slip stitch in the next chain space on the starting pentagon.



You should now have something that looks like the photo above.



Continue working points all the way around, until you've made all five points. Join the last point into the first chain space of the starting pentagon with a slip stitch.



If you want to be done at this point, skip down to the finishing section.

### 3. Slip Stitch Border (optional)

This step is optional – adding a slip stitch border will make the edges and points a little sharper and your whole star a bit sturdier. It's totally up to you whether you try this step or not.



Working with the right side of the crochet star facing you, make a slip stitch in each stitch along the side of the first point of your star. When you get to the chain space at the top, work a slip stitch, chain 1, slip stitch, into the same space, then work down the other side of your point with slip stitch in each stitch. Continue working your way around, joining with a slip stitch to finish.

### 4. Finishing

Pull on the tail at your magic circle so the center closes up nice and snug. Weave in your ends.



Now let's make those points pop. Place the star on a surface that won't scratch. Insert the end of your yarn needle into each point of the crochet star and pull gently to stretch each point slightly.

If you're a complete perfectionist, you'll want to block your star – this will make its shape even sharper, and help keep those pointy points. If you used cotton, wool or another natural fiber yarn, pin your star out on a blocking board or a clean towel on your ironing board, spray with cold water to dampen and then leave it to dry for 24 hours. Unpin it and you're good to go.

If your star is acrylic, pin it out and hold a steam iron about an inch above your work, gently steaming your star. Once the acrylic star has cooled, it'll keep its shape.

Still not stiff enough? It's time to bust out the big guns. If you're planning to use your stars for a hanging decoration or garland, spray those bad boys with fabric stiffener while they're pinned out and let them dry.



## DIY This Cute Gift Bag in Under an Hour



By Linda Reynolds

Making presents yourself is totally a go-to if you're a crafter. Why can't your packaging be decked out and DIY, too? Not only is this bag easy and fun, it's also reusable – so it's like a whole other gift for your recipient!

### **You will need the following:**

- Fabric cut 21" x 9"
- Crafting weight fusible interfacing, 2½" x 6"
- Two 10" pieces of ribbon

### **1. Fold and Press the Fabric**

Fold the fabric in half lengthwise, placing the wrong sides together. Press the fold so you can easily see the crease. Then unfold it and lay it out so the wrong side of the fabric is facing up.



### **2. Place the Interfacing**

Position the fusible interfacing so it's on the center of the fold line. The interfacing will form the bag's base and make sure it sits straight, so it's important that it's centered on the fold. If necessary, use a marker to help you align. Press the interfacing to fuse it into place.

### **3. Serge the Sides**

With right sides together, fold the fabric in half lengthwise and pin it together. Sew straight down each side edge and finish the edges to your liking, or you can go the fast route and serge the edges together. It's much more efficient than stitching.



### **4. Square the Corners**

Fold the bottom corners as shown, flattening the bottom of the bag where your interfacing is, and bringing those corners to a point.





Stitch next to the interfacing each side. Then, use a serger to finish and trim off the corner points.



## 5. Hem

Trim along the edge with pinking shears. Turn the edge under by about 1/2" and press in place. Topstitch along the edge to hold the fold in place.



## 6. Sew the Handles

Take each piece of ribbon and cut the ends on the diagonal. Turn your bag right side out, and position each ribbon onto the top of the bag so they're evenly centered. Pin in place, stitch 'em down and you're done!



## Cute Christmas Mug Rug



By Diane Knott

We may be a bit biased, but that [homemade pumpkin spice latte](#) seems to taste so much better – and is way more photogenic – when it's resting on top of a festive mug rug. This stacked presents pattern is perfect for Christmas, but you could easily swap out the red and green fabric for colors better suited to Hanukkah, a birthday, or any other occasion worth celebrating. Talk about versatility!

**Pro Tip:** This mug rug is designed as a pile of presents, and the rickrack ribbons are the perfect place to tuck a gift card or small present. You could even tuck a surprise in each gift box to make someone's holiday extra special.

### You will need the following:

- 3 gift box fabrics (you can use any fabric you want)
- 1 background fabric
- 1 backing fabric
- 1 binding fabric
- One 8" x 10" scrap of batting
- 1 or more rickrack or ribbon scraps
- Rotary cutter or scissors
- Ruler
- Cutting mat
- Sewing pins

### Cutting instructions

- 2½" x 3" rectangle for the top gift box
- 3" x 3½" rectangle for the middle gift box
- 3½" x 4½" rectangle for the bottom gift box
- 3" x 7½" strip from the background fabric
- Two 2½" x 2¾" rectangles from the background fabric
- Two 3" x 2½" rectangles from the background fabric
- Two 2" x 3½" rectangles from the background fabric
- 2" x 36" strip for binding
- 8" x 10" rectangle for backing
- 2½", 3" and 3½" ribbon or rickrack pieces for gift boxes
- 10" ribbon or rickrack piece for the bow





## 1. Sew the Rows

Lay the cut pieces out so the gift boxes are stacked on top of each other and sandwiched by background fabric, as shown above. Sew each row together and press the seams toward the darker fabric.



## 2. Pin the Rickrack

Pin the ribbon or rickrack in place where you want them on your gift boxes. Then, fold the 10" rickrack in half and pin the center to the top piece of fabric. Fold each end down and pin into place to form the 3D loops for the bow.

**Pro Tip:** If you place the rickrack on the presents so they're offset, like shown above, this will cut down on bulk. But if you're using a thin silk or satin ribbon, bulk won't be an issue and you can pin a continuous line across the pieces.



### 3. Sew It All Together

Sew all the fabric rows together to secure the rickrack. For the bow, sew the ends to the long edge of the top gift.



### 4. Finish

Layer the mug rug top on top of your batting and backing to [make a quilt sandwich](#). Quilt the piece as you like. Trim the edges evenly and attach the binding.



### Free-Motion Quilted Gifts

The best quilt projects are the ones that get used. And these small-but-mighty projects certainly fit the bill. Practice your free-motion quilting as you create a quilted journal cover, basket, and zippered bag with step-by-step guidance from designer Christina Cameli.





## These Light-Up House Ornaments Are Made From Toothpaste Boxes

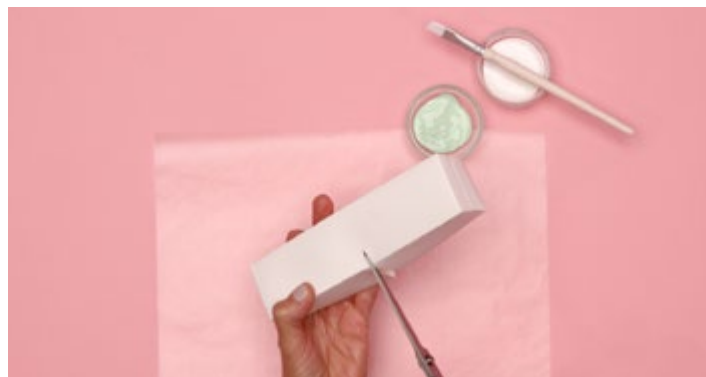


By Craftsy Editors

Talk about a breath of inspiration: these super-fun ornaments came from humble beginnings. That's right – they started as leftover toothpaste packaging! Here's how to turn that ho-hum household good into sparkly decor that's worthy of a standout spot on your tree.

### **You will need the following:**

- Toothpaste box
- Scissors
- X-ACTO knife
- Green paint
- White paint
- Mod Podge
- Hot glue gun
- Wax paper
- Glitter
- Pipe cleaner
- Mini balloon light

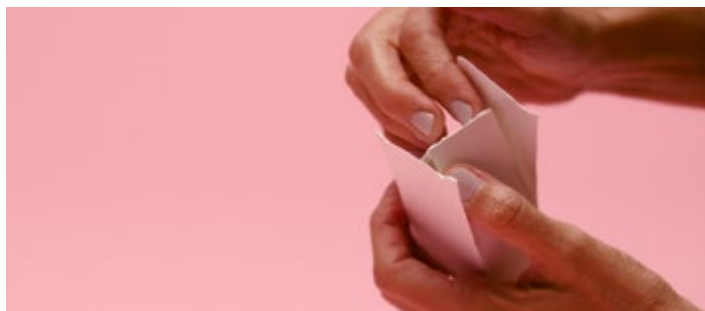


### **1. Cut Down the Box**

Use your scissors to cut the box in half horizontally.

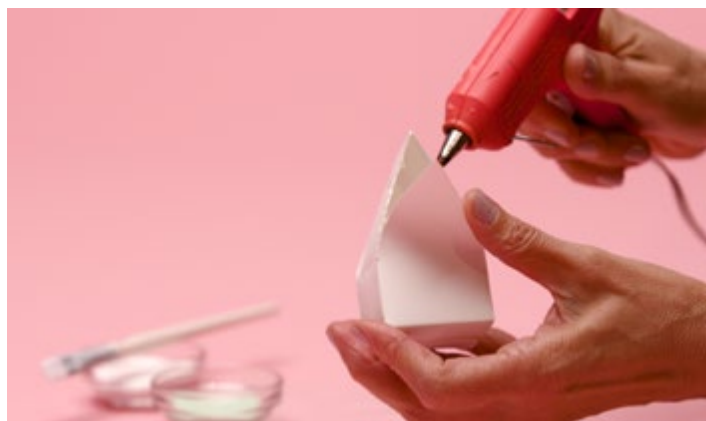


Cut each edge of the box about halfway up to make flaps.

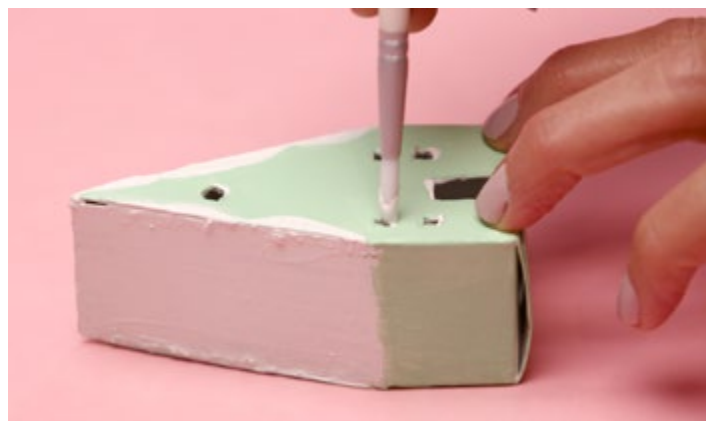


### **2. Shape the House**

Bend two opposite flaps out so they're not in your way. Use your hot glue gun to glue the other flaps together as shown.



Once the first two sides are glued, fold the other sides back up against the triangle. Use your scissors to cut along the edge and form the house's roof. Then, glue the edges of the roof together.



Then go back with a little bit of white paint and add some snow accents around the door and each window.



### 3. Paint

Cover the sides of your house in your fave color, then paint the roof white so it looks like the house is dusted with fresh snow. Have some of the paint spill over the edges of the roof to add more snow detail!



When the paint is dry, turn your house upside down and cut a flap in the base. This is an important step for lighting up the house!



### 4. Cut Out the Details

Use an X-ACTO knife to cut out a door and windows in the front of your house.



### 5. Add Wax Paper

Cut out a piece of wax paper so it's the same size and shape as the front wall of your house. Dip a small paint brush in Mod Podge, reach up through the opening in the base, and paint the front interior wall with glue. Then, stick on the wax paper.





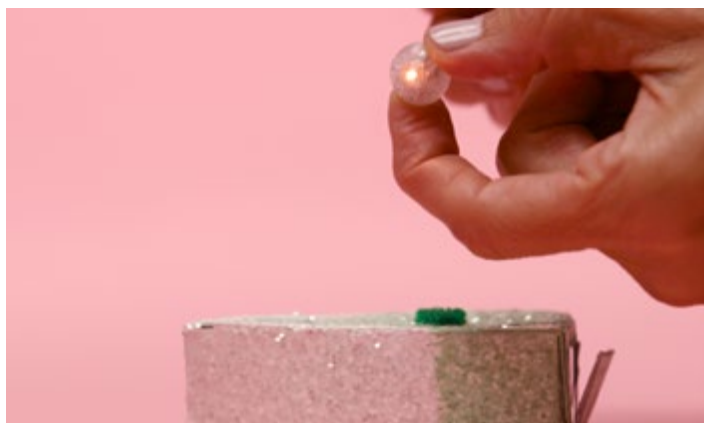
## 6. Glitter Bomb

Coat the whole outside of the house in Mod Podge ... and bring on the glitter. Sprinkle each side (and be generous!) until the ornament sparkles.



## 7. Make a Pipe Cleaner Wreath

Twist a small length of pipe cleaner into a circle, and you've got a tiny wreath for your house! Use hot glue to place it above your door.



## 8. Light It Up

Insert a mini balloon light through the base opening and close it up with tape.



Now just glue on some string and hang it up!



# Paint This Fast and Fabulous Watercolor Pine Forest



By Elise Engh

'Tis the season to wear all the sweaters, eat all the carbs and remember just how stunning a winter landscape can be. So whip out those watercolor paints. When you're done with the fun and easy project below, you'll have a pine forest worthy of a wintry reverie.

## You will need the following:

- Watercolor paper
- Phthalo green watercolor paint
- Ivory black watercolor paint
- Paintbrush
- Water

## FIRST, PAINT A PINE TREE



### 1. Mix Your Color

Combine Phthalo green and ivory black to get a dark green.

### 2. Paint the Top of the Tree

Starting at the top of your [watercolor paper](#), paint a thin, short line down. This is the top of the tree.

Paint some short branches just below the top of the tree. First, place a loaded brush near the top of the tree, then sweep your brush slightly down and out, curving back up a little at the ends. Do this on each side of the tree, painting branches a short distance down the tree but staying well above the middle. Think about making a triangle shape with a little flare at the ends.

### 3. Fill in More Branches

Work your way down the tree in sections, making each series of branches a little longer than the ones above. Leave some space between sections. Pine trees look more realistic if they're not packed with branches all the way down.

Make sure to add some branches around the trunk of the tree too. Vary the direction and thickness.

### 4. Create the Trunk

Paint a short, thick line at the bottom for the trunk.





## CREATE A VALUE SCALE



It helps to create a value scale on a scrap piece of watercolor paper before you start painting an entire forest. Keep it and use it as a reference as you paint, to keep your values on track.

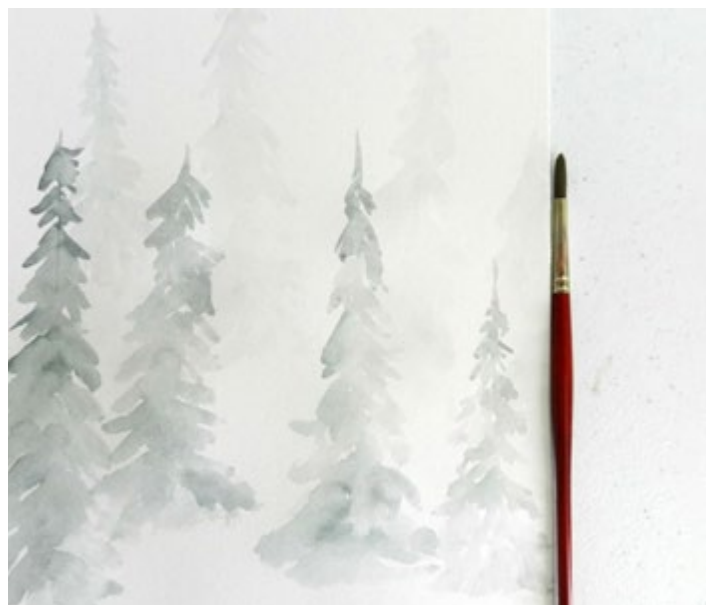
To make a value scale, divide your paper into three equal sections. In the first section, paint a very light wash. In the second section, paint a medium wash and in the third, paint a dark wash. Let all the areas dry.

## NOW PAINT YOUR FOREST



### 1. Start With the Light Wash

Using the first and lightest value from your scale, paint a row of trees. These trees should be so subtle, they're barely visible. Start these trees near the top of your paper and end them somewhere in the bottom third. Let dry.



### 2. Go to Your Medium Wash

Using your middle value, paint another row of trees on top of the first row. This row is darker and should stand out against the lighter first row. Start the tops of these trees slightly below the tops of the first row, and end the trees near the bottom of the paper. Let dry.



### 3. Finish With Your Dark Wash

Using your darkest value, paint a third row of trees on top of the first two, with the tops starting below the tops of the second row. This row should be much darker than the other two rows and will stand out. Paint these trees all the way down to the bottom of the paper.

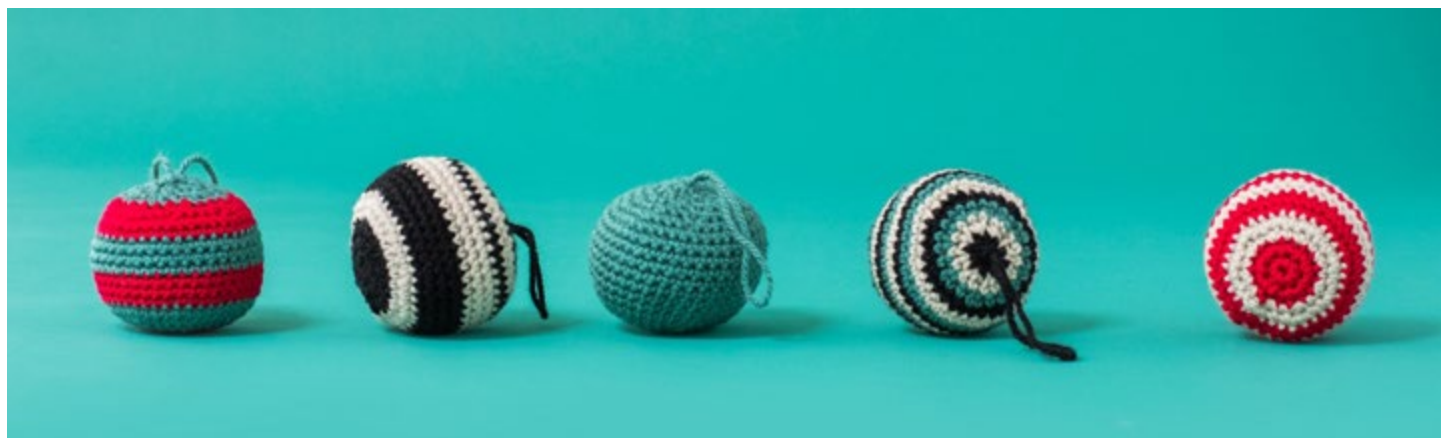


And... there's your pine forest. Stare at it and daydream about winter wonderlands, or get to work painting the next pine forest, and the next.



### Startup Library: Watercolors

Color your world with watercolors! Join expert Kateri Ewing in this comprehensive beginner's class as she helps you navigate all the basics. You'll explore a range of tools and supplies, essential techniques, plus hands-on demonstrations and so much more to help you paint with watercolors.



## A Beginner-Friendly Crochet Ornament You Can Stitch This Weekend

By Maria Weaber

These crocheted ornaments are every kind of perfect: simple to make and soooooo cute. You can customize the pattern in endless ways (thick stripes, thin stripes, no stripes!), so you'll never get bored making them. This is why every single person on your list might get one this year.

### **You will need the following:**

- Worsted weight yarn (shown here in Sprightly Acrylic Wool Worsted)
- Size G/4.00mm hook
- Polyester stuffing
- Tapestry needle
- Scissors

### **Abbreviations**

**Ch** - chain

**Sc** - single crochet

**St** - stitch

**YO** - yarn over

### **Crochet a Flat Circle**

[Crochet a flat circle](#) by [creating a magic ring](#).



### **Round 1:**

Ch 1, 8 sc in magic circle, join to first sc.



**Round 2:**

Ch 1, 2 sc in each st around, join to first sc.

**Round 4:**

Ch 1, \*2sc in next st, sc in next 2 st, repeat from \* around, join to first sc.

**Round 3:**

Ch 1, \*2sc in next st, sc in next st, repeat from \* around, join to first sc.

**Round 5:**

Ch 1, \*2sc in next st, sc in next 3 st, repeat from \* around, join to first sc.



## Form the Sides of the Sphere

Continuing from the circle you just made...



### Row 6-14:

Ch 1, sc in each st around, join to first sc.

## Start Decreasing to Close Up the Sphere

Rather than using a traditional single crochet decrease, we'll use an invisible single crochet decrease. This method of decreasing helps the decreases blend seamlessly with the other stitches.



### Invisible single crochet decrease:

Insert hook into front loop only of first st, YO, pull up a loop, insert hook into front loop only of second st, YO, pull up a loop, YO pull through all 3 loops on hook.



### Row 15:

Ch 1, \*sc in next 3 st, invisible decrease, repeat from \* around, join to first sc.

### Row 16:

Ch 1, \*sc in next 2 st, invisible decrease, repeat from \* around, join to first sc.

### Row 17:

Ch 1, \*sc, invisible decrease, repeat from \* around, join to first sc.



## Stuff and Close Sphere

It's time to stuff! Trust us, if you wait much longer, it's going to be really hard to get the stuffing in there. Really make an effort to pack the ornament tightly with stuffing, because the stuffing will settle over time and your adorable ornament will go all droopy. So sad. Once you have stuffed firmly, continue on to Row 18.



**Row 18:**

Ch 1, invisible decrease around, join to first sc.

Fasten off and leave a tail for sewing up the hole.



Pull the yarn tight to close up the hole and make a knot around one of the stitches to secure.



Using a tapestry needle, close up the hole by inserting the needle through the first loop of one stitch from the outside to the inside. Continue to do this for each stitch around.



Insert tapestry needle through the top of the sphere and pull through to hide the tail end and cut excess yarn with scissors.





## Create a String to Hang the Ornament

Cut a piece of yarn about 7" long. Use your crochet hook to pull that yarn through the top stitches of the ornament.

Next, tie a knot to form a loop and hide the knot inside the ornament.

## Dress Up Your Ornament With Stripes:

Now that you've got the basics under your belt, it's time to stripe it up!



## Stately Stripes

Alternate colors every two rounds for stately stripes.





### The Skinny

Use three colors and switch every round for cheery skinny stripes.



### Go Bold

Bold stripes are created by changing colors every three rounds.



### Whimsically Random

No rules here: just change colors when ever you feel like it!



## Crochet Cute Little Snowflakes Faster Than They Can Fall

By Dedri Uys

If you're looking at your holiday project list and starting to panic, we've got you! These crochet snowflakes are fast, easy, cute and totally giftable. Stitch up a flurry and show that list who's in charge.

### **You will need the following:**

- 2.25 mm crochet hook
- Fingering weight yarn (between 5 and 10 meters, depending on gauge; we used Cloudborn Superwash Merino Fingering)

**Pro Tip:** You can use any hook/yarn combination you prefer. If you crochet loosely, use a smaller hook than suggested for the yarn so your snowflake isn't floppy.

### **Abbreviations**

- **Ch** - Chain
- **Rnd** - Round
- **Sc** - Single crochet
- **Sl st** - Slip stitch
- **St/sts** - Stitch/stitches
- **() and \*** - Repeat instructions between parentheses and asterisks the number of times specified
- **{ }** - Total number of stitches in the round

### **Crochet a Flat Circle**

Start with [a magic ring](#).



### **Round 1:**

Make 6 sc into the ring. Join to the first sc with a sl st. {6 sc}





### Round 2:

Ch 6. (Sl st in the next st, ch 6) 5 times



### Round 3:

(3 sc, ch 3, 3 sc) into each ch-6 space. Join to the first sc with a sl st. {36 sc and 6 ch-3 spaces}



To join, sl st into the back of the sl st join from the previous round. {6 ch-6 spaces}



### Round 4:

Sl st in the next 2 sts and in the ch-3 space.



(Ch 4, sl st, ch 6, sl st, ch 4, sl st) into the same ch-3 space.



Join to the next sl st with a sl st (indicated with an arrow in the photo above). {6 ch-6 spaces and 12 ch-4 spaces}



Sl st in the next 2 sts, then skip the next 2 sts (indicated with arrows in the photo above).

\*Sl st in the next 2 sts and in the ch-3 space. (Ch 4, sl st, ch 6, sl st, ch 4, sl st) into the same ch-3 space. Sl st in the next 2 sts and skip the next 2 sts.\* Repeat from \* to \* 4 more times.



Fasten off and weave in your ends. If you stitch tightly and use a dense yarn like cotton, you won't have to block your crochet snowflakes. If you crochet loosely, or you prefer a crisp, pointy snowflake, go ahead and block 'em. Want them even stiffer? Use liquid starch.





## This Addictive Christmas Caramel Mix is Made with Just 6 Ingredients



By Craftsy Editors

With so many showstopper treats appearing over the holidays, it can be hard to make a standout recipe. Fun and festive Christmas Caramel Mix brims with yuletide yumminess. You'll wonder how something that tastes so good can be so easy to make. And chances are that you already have all of the ingredients on hand. Now get cooking and be sure to save some for Santa!

### Ingredients:

12-ounce box of crispy rice-and-corn cereal (like [Crispix](#))  
1 cup butter  
½ cup light corn syrup  
2 cups brown sugar  
½ teaspoon baking soda  
12-ounce bag of red and green chocolate candies (like [M&Ms](#))

### Instructions:

1. Pour cereal into a large brown paper grocery bag. You may want to double up the grocery bags to prevent messes.
2. In a medium pot over low temperature, bring butter, corn syrup and brown sugar to a slow boil. Boil for 30 seconds.
3. Add baking soda and stir. Caramel mixture will become foamy and lighter in color.
4. Pour caramel mixture over the cereal in the bag. Stir with a wooden spoon. Fold the bag closed.
5. Microwave bag on high for 90 seconds, then shake bag. Microwave and shake three additional times to fully coat cereal with caramel.
6. Pour cereal into a large bowl (be careful, as the cereal will be very hot). Let cool, stirring often to prevent sticking.

When completely cooled, add the chocolate candies and stir. Then dig in!





## Simple Holiday Stocking Pattern

### ***You will need the following:***

- Stocking: 18" x 22" Fabric Remnant (or Fat Quarters)
- Lining: 22" x 18" Fabric Remnant (or Fat Quarters)
- Contrast (Cuff): 22" x 18" Fabric Remnant (or Fat Quarter)
- Loop: 1/2" x 8" Ribbon

### ***Final Dimensions:***

- Length: 17"
- Cuff/Leg Width: 6" Foot Width: 8"





### Step 1:

With right sides facing, stitch exterior stocking sections together with a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance, leaving upper edge open. Turn right side out and press. Repeat with lining stocking sections, but do not turn out.



### Step 2:

Insert lining (right side in) into stocking exterior (right side out), matching side seams.

### Step 3:

Take the fabric for cuff section, place right sides together, matching the long edges. Stitch a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance on both long edges. Press seams open.



### Step 4:

Fold cuff loop in half lengthwise, wrong sides together.



### Step 5:

Insert cuff fabric into assembled stocking right sides together, making sure the lining fabric as well as the raw edges of stocking exterior, lining exterior and cuff are aligned. Pin in place.





### Step 6:

Fold ½" wide ribbon in half lengthwise to form loop. Slide the loop in between the lining and the cuff, matching the raw edges of the ribbon to the raw edges of the stocking pieces (loop pointing down). Center it on the back (opposite the stocking toe) seam and pin in place. Baste if desired.

### Step 7:

Stitch a ½" seam around the top of the stocking through all layers. Finish seam with serger or zigzag stitch.



### Step 8:

Flip cuff up and fold over the exterior of the stocking. Press.

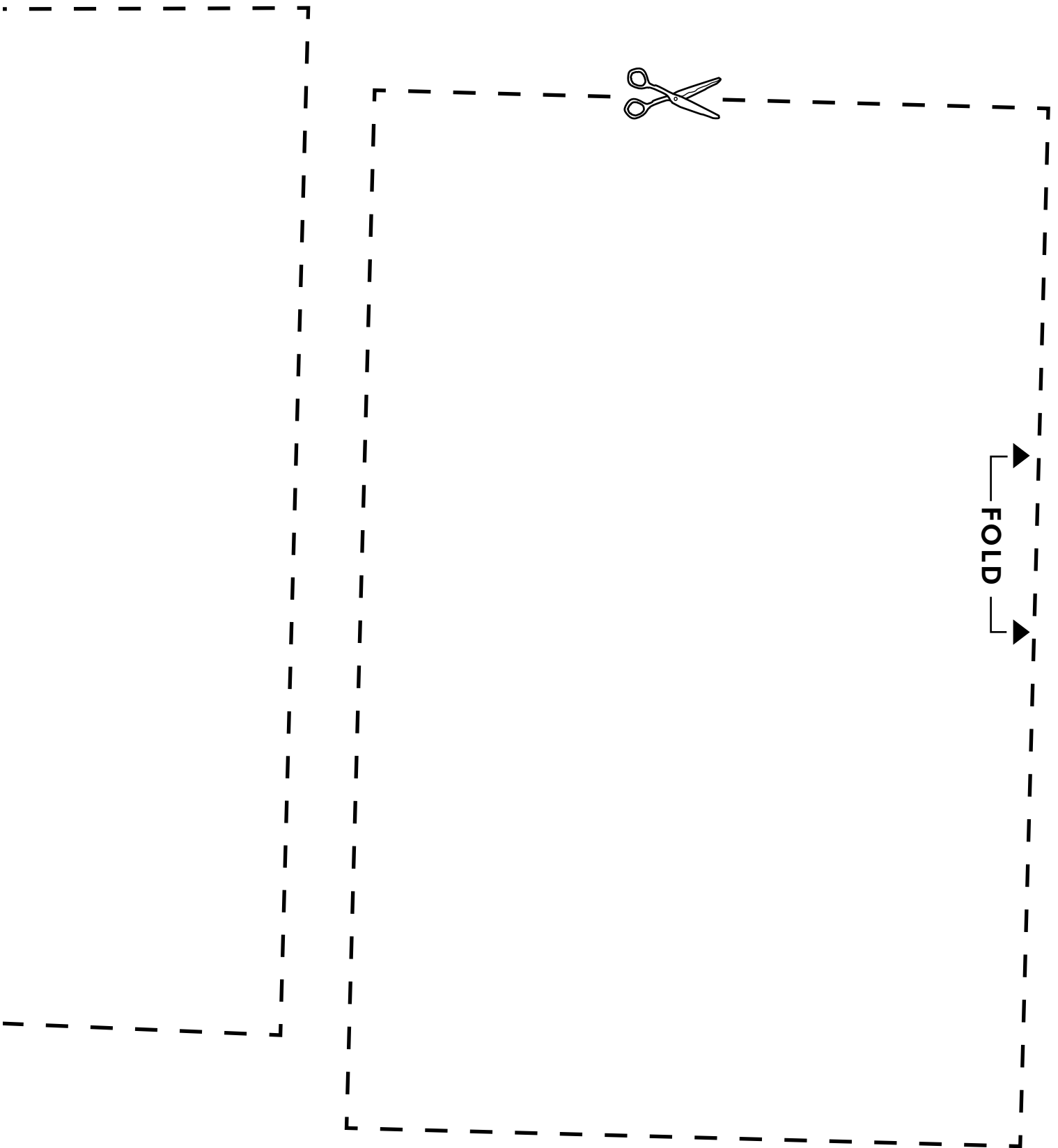


## Fab Felt Holiday Crafts

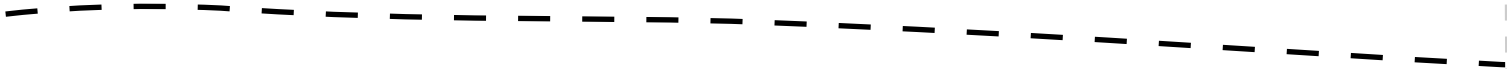
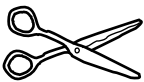
Felt expert Betz White shares her easy techniques to make stylish, handmade holiday gifts and decor using recycled and inexpensive materials.



# Simple Holiday Stocking Pattern (1 of 3)

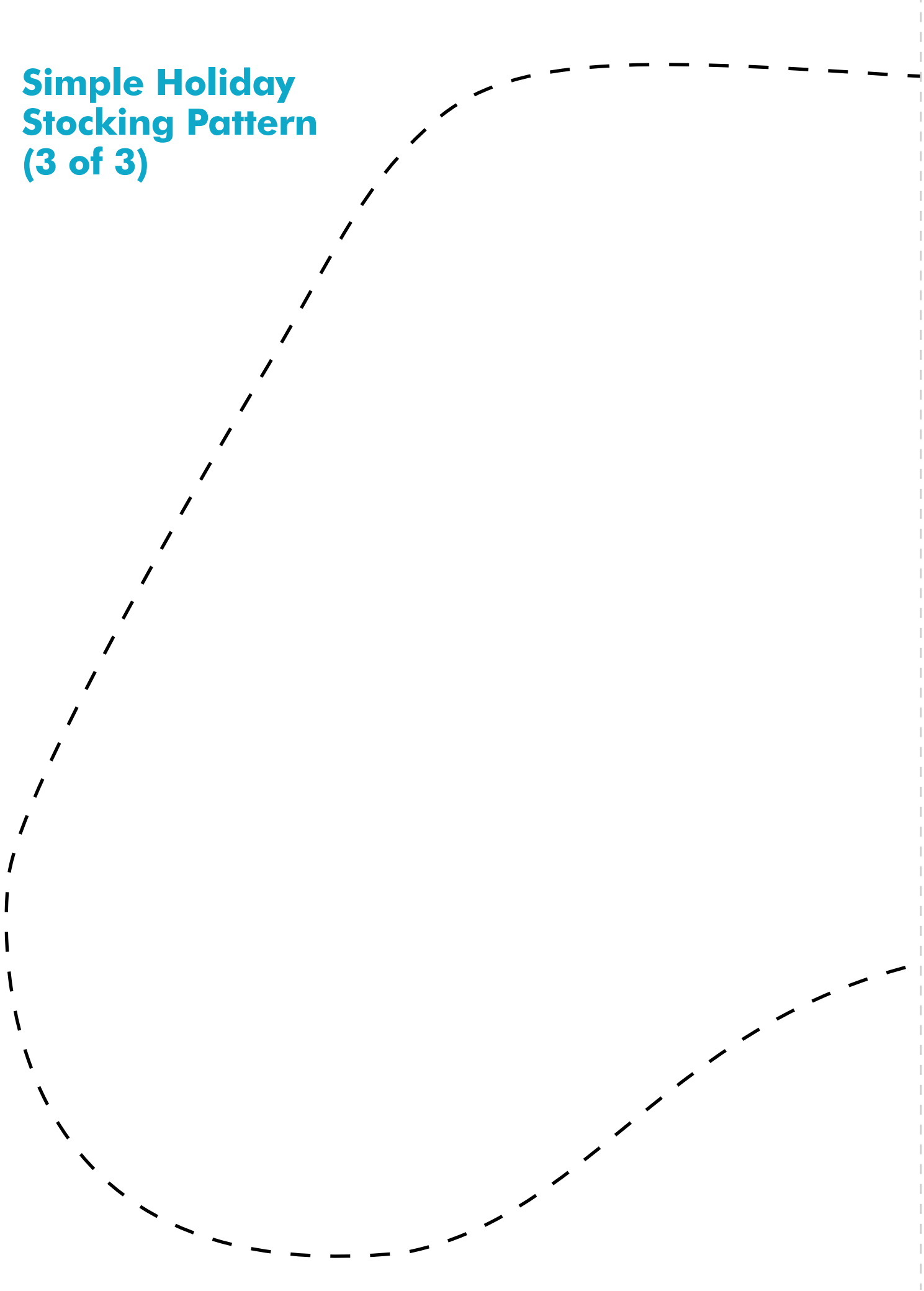


# Simple Holiday Stocking Pattern (2 of 3)





**Simple Holiday  
Stocking Pattern  
(3 of 3)**





## DIY Tree Skirt

By Beth Galvin

We love a good pom-pom fringe, especially when it's peeking out from under your holiday gifts. We've got all the info you need to craft up this easy tree skirt right here!

### ***You will need the following:***

- 2 yards of fabric for the top of the skirt
- 2 yards of lining fabric
- Ribbon
- Pom-poms
- Tape measure
- Scissors
- Pins
- Fabric marking pen



### **1. Determine Size and Cut the Circle**

The size of your tree skirt is totally up to you – it can even be as wide as the width of your fabric. My fabrics were 44" wide, and I planned a finished diameter of 42".

Fold the fabric selvedge edges together (as it comes off the bolt). You can cut the two skirt layers at once if you fold both fabrics and overlay one on top of the





other, carefully lining up the folded edges. Or you can cut out one circle, place that on top of the lining fabric and use that as a guide to cut the second circle.

To measure and cut your fabric: lay your tape measure along the folded edge. Put three pins in place – one at the beginning of your tape measure, one at the end of your distance (so, if you're like me and cutting a skirt with a 42" diameter, pin at 42") and one in the middle.

Place the tape measure at the center pin and pivot it, measuring out an equal distance (again, 42" for me) from the center pin and mark with a pen. Continue pivoting your tape measure and marking your distance until you've formed a circle. Follow these marks to make your cut.



## 2. Cut Out the Center Opening

Next, cut out the center opening that will go around the tree trunk. By keeping the two folded edges aligned and the edges of the circles even, you can easily cut the center circle out of both fabrics at the same time.

Mark and cut a small circle using the same center pivot method as in the previous step. You want the tree skirt to cover the stand, so the opening circle doesn't need to be too big – making the diameter about 5" will work well (unless your Christmas tree is absolutely enormous).



## 3. Open the Circle

In order to wrap your skirt around the tree's base, you need to have an opening. To make one, unfold the circles and keep them aligned exactly one over the other. Cut a straight line from the outer edge to the inner circle, cutting through both layers of fabric to open them up.



## 4. Add Some Ties

You can use ribbon, fabric, bias tape or anything similar for your skirt ties. For this skirt, I chose to use simple white ribbon. Just pin your closures at various points on either side of the opening so they can be tied in a cute bow once placed around the tree. But don't sew them in place just yet – that comes in the next step.



## 5. Sew the Circles Together

Once again, adjust your two circles so one is aligned on top of the other, making sure the right sides are together. Your ties should be on the inside. Pin the circles in place on either side of the opening.

Now it's time to get stitching. Begin stitching 1/2" up from the edge of the outer circle. Sew along one side of the the straight opening, pivot at the corner, continue around the center circle and then down the other straight opening. Again, leave a 1/2" opening at the outer edge. This space will allow you to place your pom-pom trim.



Now trim the corners and clip the circular opening so it can open up and lay flat when it's turned right side out.

## 6. Add Pom-Poms

Working around the outer edge of the skirt, carefully pin your pom-pom fringe to the top side fabric with the pom-poms facing in. (They'll end up facing outward when you turn your piece right side out.) Baste them in place along the fabric's edge, taking care not to stretch or distort your fabric.



## 7. Seam It Up

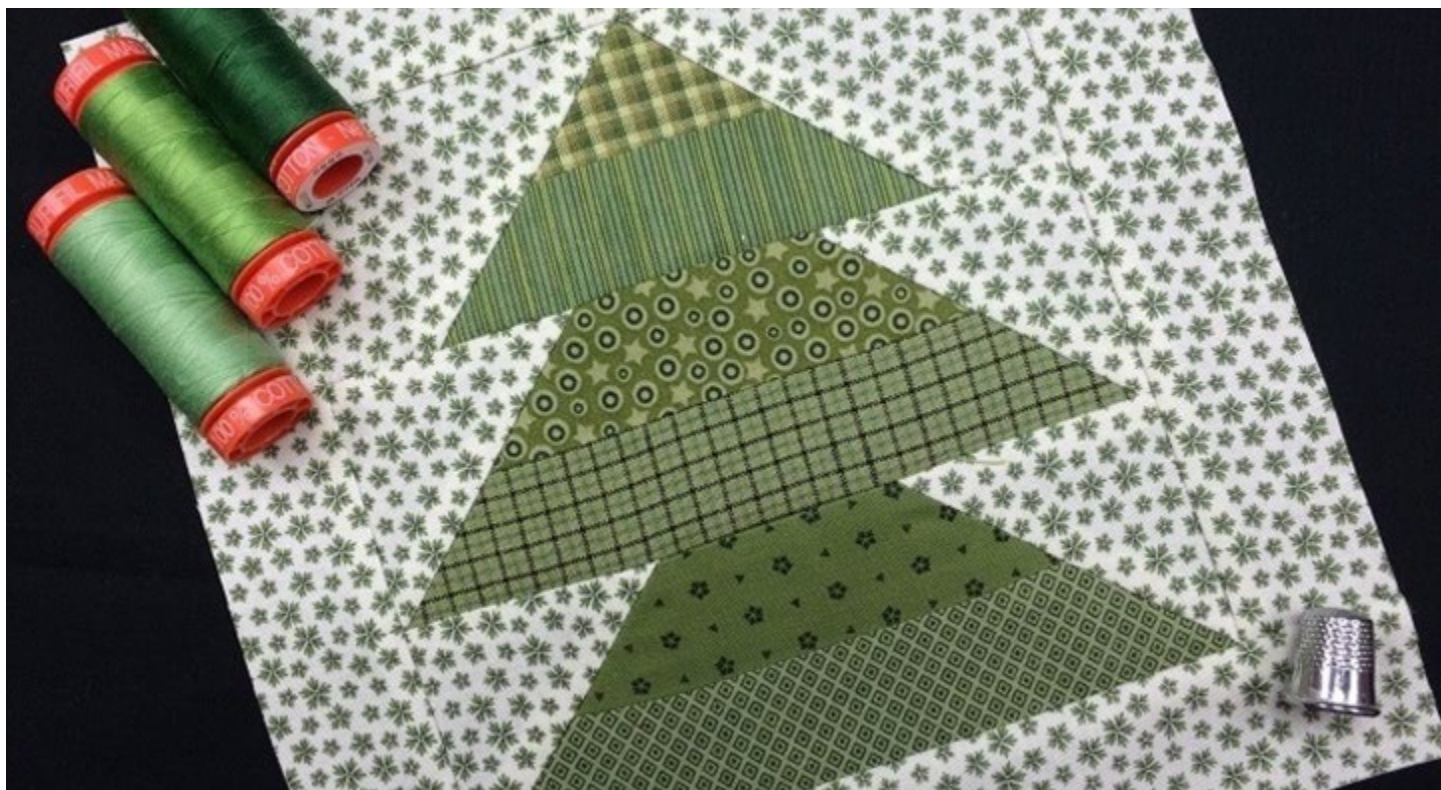
Sew around the outer edge to complete your skirt. Leave an opening of about 5", and use this to turn the piece right side out. Top stitch to seal your opening, press, and you're done!



### The Quilted Tree Skirt

Looking for a quick and easy stash-busting project that's perfect for holiday gifting? Look no further! Join designer Caroline Fairbanks-Critchfield and learn to sew a simple patchwork quilted tree skirt.





## Christmas Tree Quilt Block Tutorial

By Diane Knott

Grab your end-of-the-year scraps and add a little extra festivity to the house with an adorable Christmas quilt block. This design can be sewn into cute pillows or place mats, or you could pair 'em with other designs (like a modern Christmas block) to make an entire Christmas quilt. 'Tis the season to be merry!

### Size:

- 8½" square (unfinished)

### You will need the following:

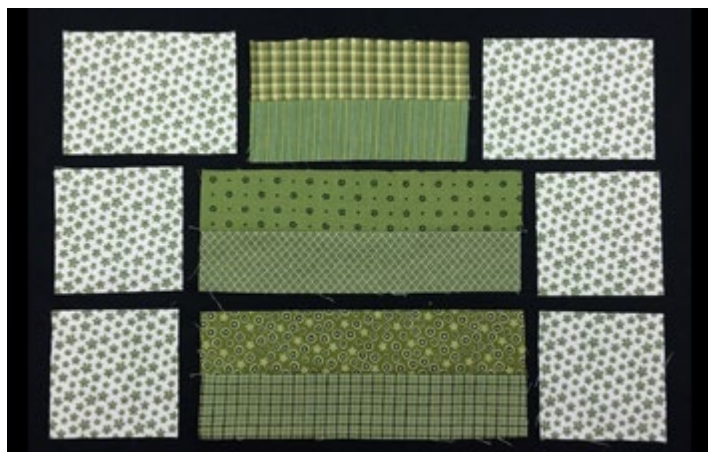
- Six green fabrics
- Background fabric
- Thread
- Ruler
- Rotary cutter
- Cutting mat
- Fabric marker
- Iron

### You will need the following:

- Four 1½" x 5½" green strips
- Two 1½" x 4½" green strips
- Two 1½" x 8½" strips of background fabric
- Two 1½" x 6½" strips of background fabric
- Two 2½" x 3½" rectangles of background fabric
- Four 2½" x 2½" squares of background fabric

## 1. Sew the Green Strips

Lay your green strips together in pairs and stitch with a ¼" seam allowance along one long side. Open and press the seam to one side. You'll now have three green units.

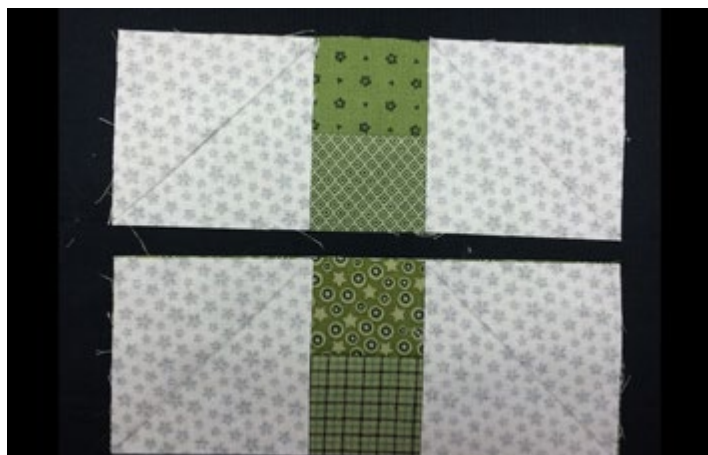


## 2. Lay Out the Block

Lay the pieces out to form your block as such:

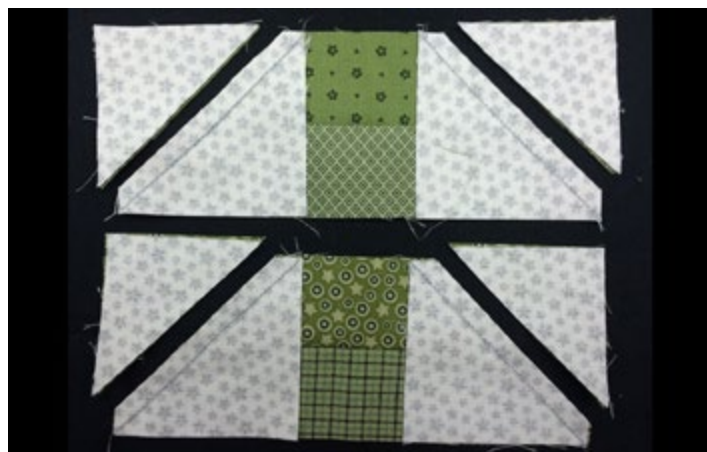
**Bottom and middle rows:** 2½" background square, one longer green strip; 2½" background square.

**Top row:** 2½" x 3½" background rectangle; smaller green strip; 2½" x 3½" background rectangle.



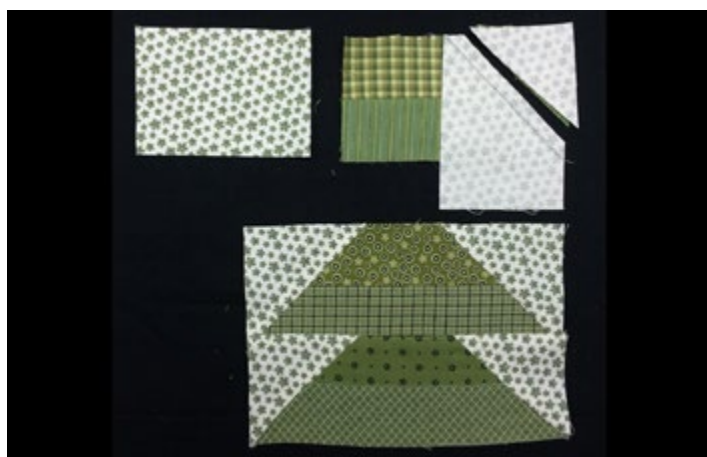
## 3. Sew Diagonals

Place a background square on each end of the two 6½" units, right sides together. Mark each square with a diagonal line from corner to corner. Sew down this line.



## 4. Trim

Using a ruler and rotary cutter, cut away the corners ¼" away from the sewn line. Open the squares and press them away from the green strips.



## 5. Create the Tree Top Unit

Layer one background rectangle on top of the short green strip unit and mark diagonally from corner to corner. Sew on the drawn line and trim ¼" away from sewn line. Press the seam away from the green strips. Repeat with the other side in the same manner.





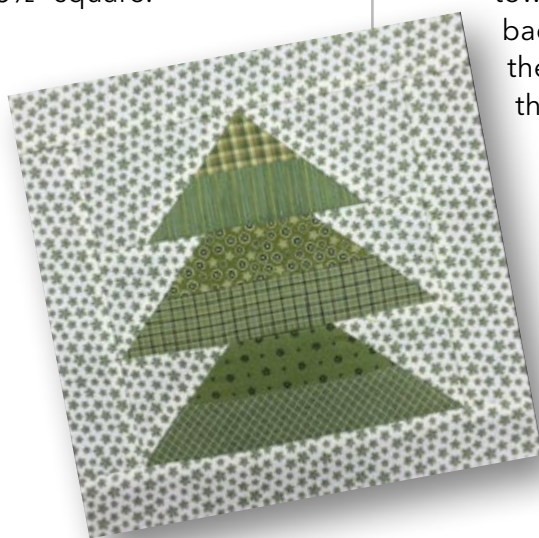
## 6. Sew the Rows Together

Arrange the three tree units as shown and sew them together. Press the seams toward the bottom unit. This tree unit will now be  $6\frac{1}{2}$ " square.



## 7. Add the Border

Sew the  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $6\frac{1}{2}$ " background strips to both sides of the tree unit and press the seam allowance toward the center. Sew the  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $8\frac{1}{2}$ " background strips to the top and bottom of the unit. Press the seam allowances toward the center as well.



*And you're done, just in time for the holidays!*



## Classic Quilted Stockings

Make the holidays extra special by stitching up personalized keepsakes that your loved ones will treasure year after year. Designer and author Kate Colleran guides you step by step to sew classic Christmas stockings that you can customize in a variety of ways.





## Learn How to Paint a Sweet Watercolor Snowman With Simple Steps

By Margie Moore

Winter and snowmen go hand-in-hand, so they make the perfect winter scene to paint! Grab your supplies and get ready to paint Frosty.

### **You will need the following:**

- Watercolor paper
- Watercolor paints
- Pencil
- Eraser
- White gouache paint
- Masking fluid



### **1. Create Your Composition**

Sketch your winter scene. The snowman is our focus, though it might not be for your picture, and we added a little [snow-covered tree](#) off to the side.

To create falling snowflakes, we added dots of [masking fluid](#). This will keep the flakes nice and white after painting.

**Pro Tip:** A little trick for making snowflakes look more realistic is to make them different sizes to create background and foreground in the scene – and don't make them all evenly white. The flakes further away always blend a little into the background. Try it! It will make the painting more interesting for you to work on, and make it more interesting to look at when you are done.



## 2. Add a Blue Wash

This is, of course, subject to the mood you want to create. [Using a wash](#) of your favorite blues will have a mild monochromatic effect and will simplify your work compared to painting each part and parcel separately. For a lot of your work after a wash is complete, simply finish by adding some shading in areas of your composition. This saves time for the areas that need more consideration.

No matter how you choose to execute your work, the desired result will be that you create pleasing art. There are many ways to get there. You can see we saturated our wash in varying amounts to differentiate the sky from the snow-covered land and also while the surface was wet, we were able to lay a base of the shadowing.



## 3. Paint the Snowman

Begin adding shadows to the recesses of your snowman to make it 3D. You want the rest of the snowman to have the light blue wash and no more – your shading will enhance the white snow.



Then paint the carrot nose, mittens, hat and whatever other accessories your snowman has. Remove the masking fluid, touch up a few flakes with white gouache, and you're done!



## How to Draw a Christmas Tree 4 Ways

By Jessie Oleson Moore

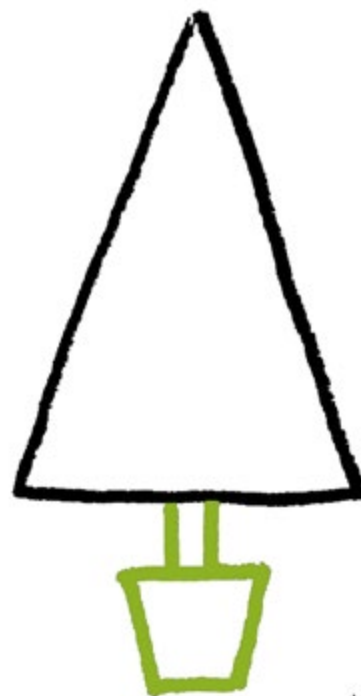
'Tis the season for some holly jolly artwork! As the snow piles up outside, stay in and practice [drawing your Christmas wonderland](#) – and no holiday scene is complete without a tree. Soon, you'll be a pro evergreen artist so you can [DIY homemade Christmas cards](#) with ease.

This tutorial will cover a few basic methods for drawing a cartoon Christmas tree. Try 'em out, then pick which one you like best! We used pen and ink to draw our trees, but you can use any medium.



### 1. The Basic Method

Draw the body of your tree – a tall, skinny triangle.



Draw two vertical lines at the base of your tree to create the trunk. Then draw the base – we did a kind of planter-style base, but you can shape it however you like, or even [draw a snowy ground](#) below.





Add a star on top, then detail the decorations. We made some simple round ornaments and curvy lines for garland.



Once you're done, color it in!



## 2. The Textured Tree

Draw the sides and bottom of your triangle with irregular, slightly downward-facing zigzag lines. This will offer the suggestion of the texture of an evergreen.



### 3. The Three-Tiered Tree

Instead of drawing a single triangle, draw a stack of three.



### 4. The Three-Tiered Textured Tree

Combine the two previous methods to create a three-tiered, shaggy tree. It's easy!



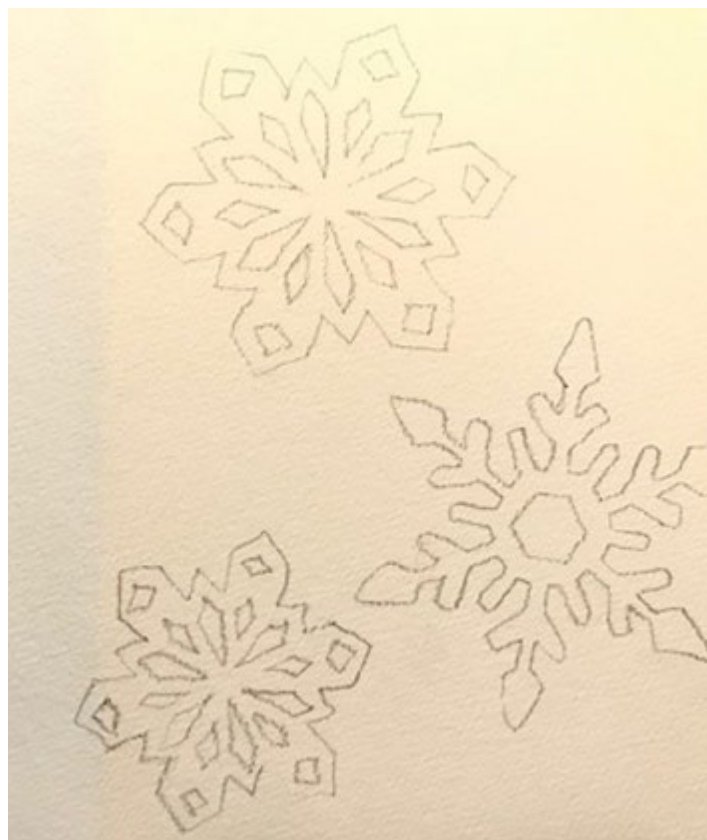
## Holiday Watercolor Snowflake Cards

By Kateri Ewing

For this year's holiday cards, flex your painting skills! These fancy snowflakes pop with color and are crazy simple to create, so you can whip up a custom version for everyone on your list. Grab your brushes, fill a cup with water and let's go!

### **You will need the following:**

- Printed [snowflake templates](#)
- Craft store watercolors, with a range of blues, greens, purples and pinks
- No. 8 pointed round watercolor brush
- Watercolor notecards, or watercolor paper cut into notecard-sized sheets.
- No. 2 pencil
- Lightbox (optional)
- Kneaded eraser
- Paper towels



### **1. Draw the Snowflakes**

Print the snowflake templates and place them underneath your watercolor notecard. Use a lightbox to illuminate the paper so you can trace the snowflakes onto your card. If you don't have a lightbox, taping the templates and paper up to a sunny window works great, too. Or you can cut out the templates and trace around them – do what's easiest for you!

When you're done tracing, use a kneaded eraser to gently go over the graphite and lighten the pencil lines. That way, the lines won't be dark enough to show up through your painting.





## 2. Paint the First Snowflake

Using the very tip of your pointed round watercolor brush, [apply a water glaze](#) onto one section (NOT on the whole drawing!) of the snowflake. Be very careful when applying your glaze to not wet the areas that should remain white. This can be a little tricky, but don't worry – even if it's not perfect, we promise your snowflake will still be pretty.

After glazing each section, pick up a small amount of paint and drop it onto the water glaze. Again, just use the very tip of your brush. After you add a new section of color, pick up your paper and gently tilt it in all directions, letting the colors mix together.

Continue working around the snowflake: Add a glaze, drop in color, tilt, then glaze the next section.

Once your snowflake is covered in color, you're done!



## 3. Paint the Remaining Snowflakes

Repeat the process for each snowflake until all are filled with mingling color.

## 4. Clean It Up

When all the snowflakes on your card are totally dry, use your eraser to gently remove any remaining pencil marks.



## Variation: Use Watercolor Pencils

If you want your snowflakes to be **bold**, give this technique a try.



### 1. Trace With Watercolor Pencils

Trace the snowflake template onto your paper using watercolor pencils. They're a great tool because the pencils add to the colorful effect when you add water and watercolors. Plus, you won't have to go back and erase any pesky graphite lines later.



### 2. Drop in Color

Now just do what you did before – wet one area of the snowflake at a time, drop in some color and tilt the paper to blend.

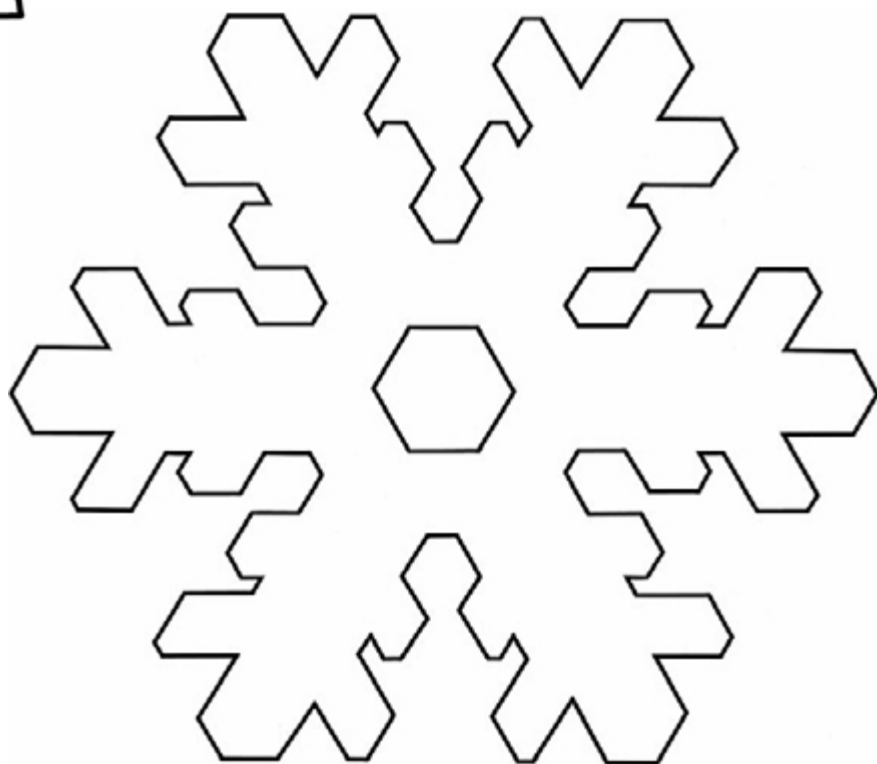
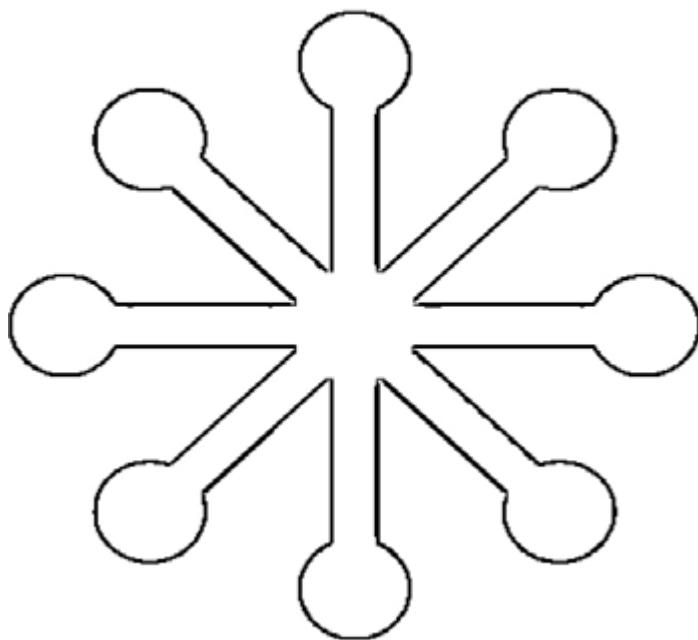
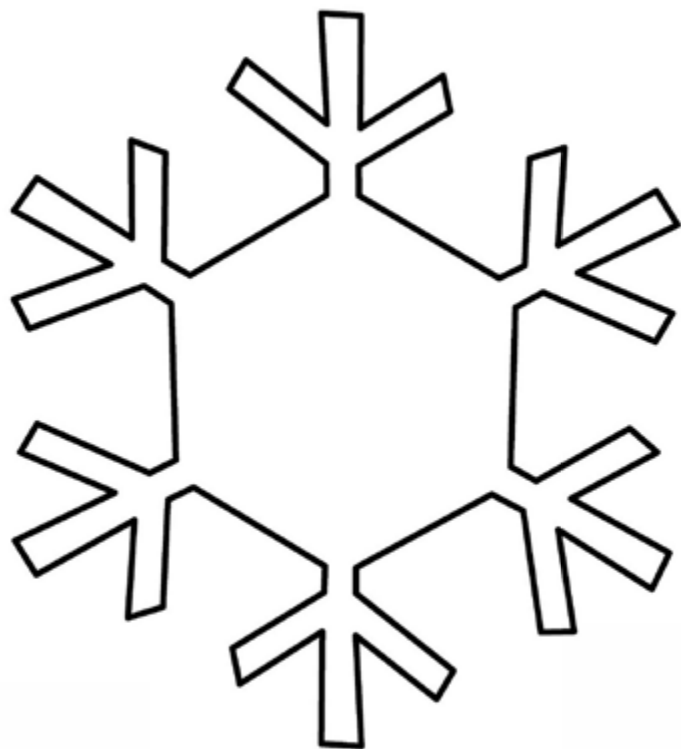


### Holiday-Ready Decor

Make this the season of making with these easy holiday craft ideas! From a super-chic wall hanging to a festive photo backdrop, our top DIY experts have got you covered.



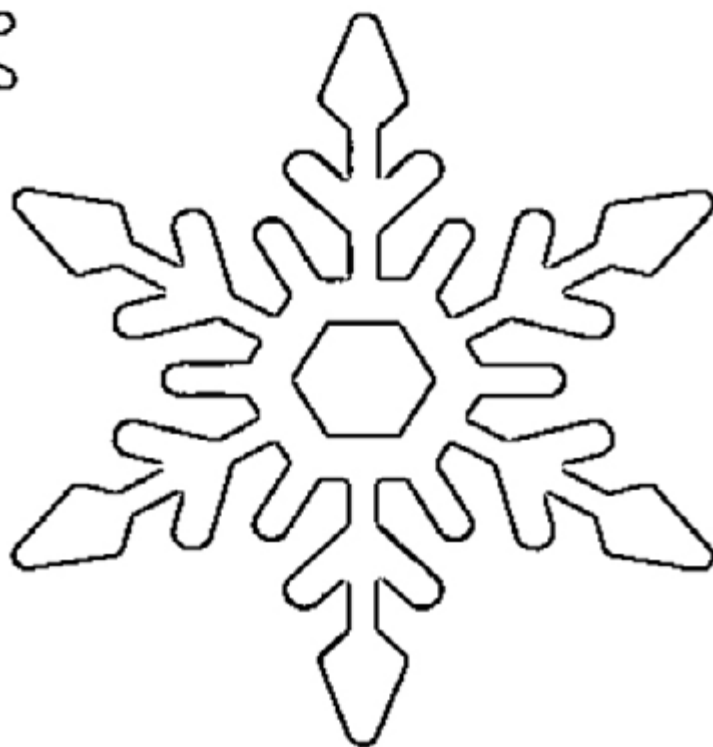
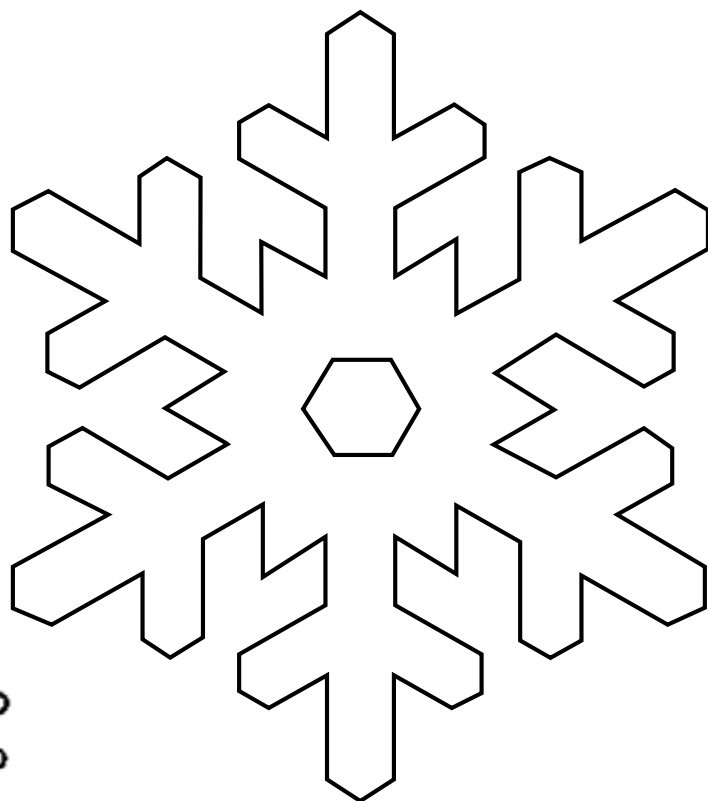
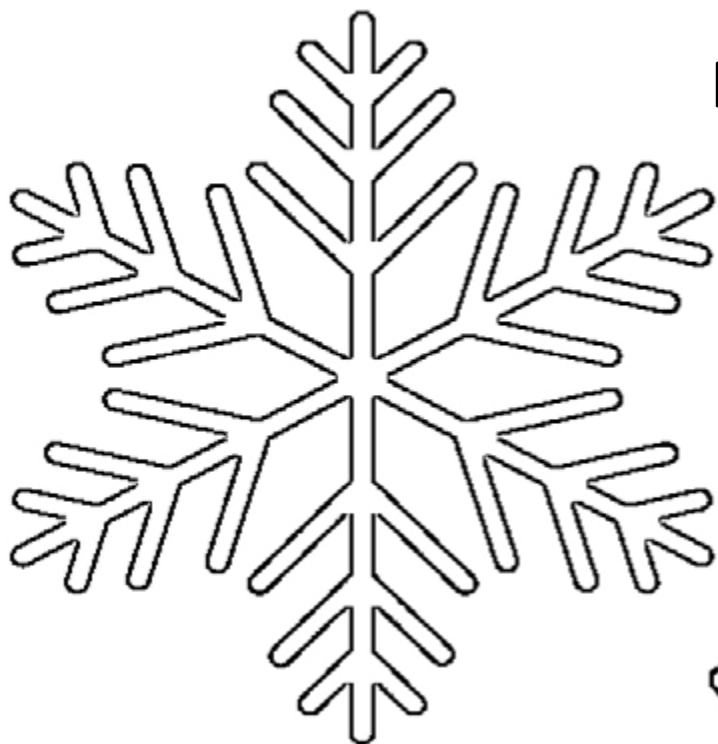
## Holiday Watercolor Snowflake Cards Patterns (1 of 2)







## Holiday Watercolor Snowflake Cards Patterns (2 of 2)





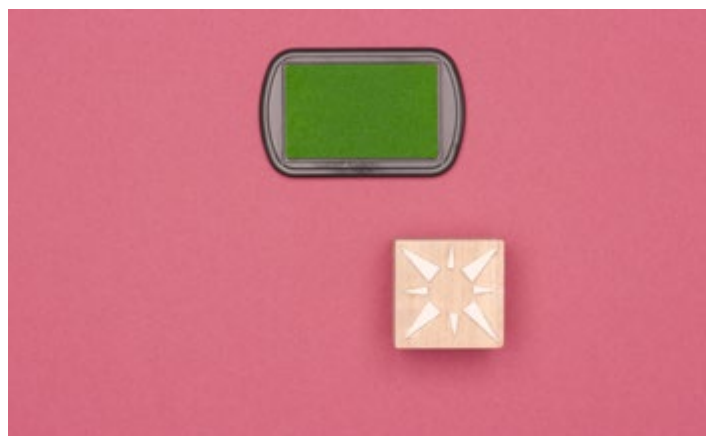
## Holiday Tea Towel

By Craftsy Editors

This sweet, simple project checks all the boxes for a perfect holiday gift: festive, personalized and something they'll actually use. Plus, it's so easy to make you can whip up enough for all your friends and family.

### **You will need the following:**

- 1"×1" wood block
- Foam sheet
- Two ink pads, one green and one gold
- Tea towel
- Pencil
- Marker
- Hot glue gun
- Scissors



### **1. Make Your Stamp**

Use your scissors to cut out the foam design. Once all the pieces are formed, stick them onto your wood block with hot glue.



## 2. Stamp It Out

Use a stamp pad to coat your foam pieces with ink. Then stamp the pattern onto a plain tea towel. Make sure to press firmly and don't let the stamp slide around and smudge your design.



You can stamp in a pattern or go crazy with placement. There's no wrong way to style your towel.



## 3. Give a Golden Touch

When your tea towel is stamped to your liking, go back and add some easy detail. Take a pencil and press the eraser into a gold ink pad, then stamp that circle into the center of your pattern.



Don't stress about getting the circle exactly in the center – like with any DIY project, imperfection just makes it cuter.



## 4. Add a Personal Note

Find a corner of your towel to write a holiday message and sign your name. Fold it into an envelope and put it in the mail – you're done!





## 10 Steps to a Stress-Free Holiday Crafting Season

By Kathryn Vercillo

Crafting for the holidays is supposed to be fun – but so often our yarn balls turn into stress balls as we try to meet deadlines and get everything done. But with a little planning, you can keep yourself happily making as the holidays approach. Sounds magical, right?

### 1. Begin With an Intention

Intention setting isn't just for yogis! Take a minute to ask yourself why you want to make handmade gifts for the holiday season. Make a list of the reasons, including ones that aren't so charming. ("Because I want to impress my family" or "Because it's what I've always done.") Be honest with yourself.

This list of "why" can reveal a lot. You may discover you're most inspired making holiday decor but don't like crafting gifts, or vice versa. That's all OK – you don't have to knit or sew anything you don't want to this year!

Once you've decided what you truly want to make, set a conscious intention to guide your crafting approach this season. This might be something like "I'm crafting to connect with others" or "I'm crafting to spread joy" or "I'm crafting for me-time." There's no right or wrong here. (Anyone crafting to avoid their in-laws? We see you, and it's OK.) You don't have to actually write down your intention, but a little note tacked up in your crafting space can't hurt if you feel like it.



## 2. Make a Project List (and Check It Twice)

Now that you know why you want to make, it's time to decide the what. Make a list of all the projects you have in mind, and the intended recipient for each one. If you've got big plans for tons of projects, it can also help to break your list into gifts and decor.

Once your list is ready, it's time for some tough love. Review the lineup and look for anything you don't actually want to make but feel obligated to; anyone who won't actually appreciate your handmade gift; anything that stress you out. Pare down the list and eliminate anything that falls into those buckets. It can be hard, but it'll be worth it for all the joy that comes with focusing on projects you truly want to create.

## 3. Select Your Patterns

Choose a pattern for every project on your list. Do this now – not later. It's a bit of a pain, but you'll thank yourself come December. Print out all of your patterns and organize them how you best see fit, or create a document with links to all of the patterns in one place.

## 4. Comb Through Your Stash

Digging into those yarn and fabric leftovers isn't just smart, it's creatively rewarding. Look at what you already have on hand and let your imagination kick in. All those scraps could have a whole new life as mini quilts, pom-poms and [cute headbands](#)! Plus, stash-busting for the holidays gives you permission to treat yourself to fresh supplies come January. Bonus!



## 5. Order All of Your Supplies

Now that you're aware of what you have – and more importantly, don't have – it's time to stock up on anything else you need to complete your project list. Again, do this now before all the good stuff gets scooped up. A few things to keep in mind:

- Order all the yarn or fabric needed for every project, including each color in enough yardage. (If you can, order more than you think you'll need. You'll find a use for extra, and running out is the worst.)
- Make sure you have the hooks and needles you'll need.
- Check for extra notions or supplies, such as stuffing and toy eyes for [amigurumi](#), floss for cross-stitch and batting for quilting.
- Consider buying kits instead of stand-alone patterns, so you get everything you'll need all at once. (They can be a real time-saver.)
- Whether charm squares or fat quarters, using precuts will save you time on cutting. Plus, you get an assortment of fabrics that coordinate without ordering each separately.





## 6. Organize Your Supplies

Fact: You're way more likely to power through your project list if all your stuff is right at your fingertips. So put everything you need for one project in a bag – include all the yarn or fabric, hooks or needles, extra notions and pattern in there. (If you didn't print the pattern, write a note with its name and where to find it.) Make a bag for each project, then stash 'em in a safe – and visible! – place in your craft room so they're ready as soon as you are.



## 7. Set Deadlines On an Actual Calendar

Prioritize projects that need to be done first, like gifts that must be shipped or decorations you want to put up this season. Next come the projects you absolutely want to complete this year. Remember to build a little breathing room into your calendar, in case things take longer than expected or you find yourself needing a break. After all, you can always be ahead of schedule!

## 8. Get Social

Crafty friends are the best, and there's no better way to guarantee you'll hit your deadlines than by planning social crafting hours with friends. Plan a few group nights early in the season, before everyone's calendars fill up. Then cheer each other on through every hat, sock, sweater, scarf and quilt you make. Extra points if you include [Christmas cookies](#) and your favorite holiday tunes.

## 9. Plan a Selfish Post-Holiday Project

An important question: what are you going to make just for you once you get through making all those holiday gifts? Anticipating the fun of digging into a no-deadline project can be a good motivator when you're feeling buried under a mountain of giftables. Scroll through your pattern library and see what sparks the most excitement – then get to making once your calendar clears.

## 10. Make It a Judgment-Free Zone

For many crafters, putting on pressure to finish is practically a holiday tradition. But cut yourself a break this year and remember: projects you don't finish on time are not failures. They're a head start on Valentine's Day!





## Make a Winter White Yarn Wreath With Leftover Scraps

By Andrea Sanchez

Whether you're in the throes of the holiday season or Christmas has come and gone, there's nothing cuter than a monochromatic DIY to keep the festive spirit alive. Making a wreath out of fuzzy pom-poms adds warmth and texture to your space, making it an ultra cozy place to unwind. Pair different yarns and use up those leftovers from holiday gifts, then say hello to your new favorite piece of decor.

### **You will need the following:**

- Yarns of various weight and fiber content
- Scissors
- Wire wreath frame
- 4" pom-pom maker
- Scrap ribbon

**Pro Tip:** If you don't have a pom-pom maker, you can easily use a substitute, be it a piece of cardboard or a 4" wide book (which is what we used).



### **1. Wrap Your Yarn**

Hold together a few yarns of different weight and wrap them around your pom-pom maker 50-60 times. We used bulky yarn and worsted weight yarn for this first pom-pom, but if you're using lighter weight yarns you'll want to hold more than two strands together.



### **2. Remove the Yarn**

Cut the yarn, leaving a tail about 8" long. Carefully slide the yarn off whatever pom-pom maker you're using.



### 3. Make a Pom-Pom

Tie the yarn tightly around the wrapped yarn.



Use scissors to cut the loops and create the pom-pom's fringe. Shape it by trimming any wild pieces, but make sure to leave the long tails you used for tying intact.



### 4. Tie to the Frame

Tie the pom-pom onto the wire wreath frame using the long yarn tails. You want it to be tightly tied, but loose enough so you can slide them around and adjust as you add more.

**Pro Tip:** If you're using a wooden frame, use hot glue to secure your pom-poms.

### 5. Repeat

Repeat steps 1-4, creating enough pom-poms to fully cover your frame.



### 6. Hang It Up

When you've made and tied all your pom-poms to your wreath, you're ready to hang it up. We looped ribbon around the wire frame for the hanger, but you can use any method you like best.





## Color Block Your Way to the Hippest Winter Hat

By Stephanie White

Squishy, cozy and cool: this just might be the perfect hat. It knits up super quickly (thanks bulky yarn!), and you can make a million different color-blocked variations. Seriously, try to stop after knitting just one.

### **You will need the following:**

- Main color: 1 hank Cloudborn Superwash Merino Wool Bulky (shown in Black)
- Contrast color: 1 hank Cloudborn Superwash Merino Wool Bulky (shown in Ecru)
- Pom-pom color: 1 hank Cloudborn Merino Superwash Sock Twist Yarn (shown in Raspberry)
- US 10-1/2 (6.5 mm) 16" (40 cm) circular knitting needle OR size needed to get the correct gauge
- Detachable stitch marker
- Tapestry needle
- Pom-pom maker (optional)

### **Gauge**

4 sts = 1" in 2x2 ribbing (row gauge is not critical here; if you want your hat longer or shorter, knit more or fewer rounds)

### **Finished Size**

15" circumference; fits large-sized child to medium-sized woman (this hat is VERY stretchy, and the circumference is measured unstretched. It will get bigger!)

### **Abbreviations**

**CC** - contrast color  
**CO** - cast on  
**K** - knit  
**K2tog** - knit two together  
**MC** - main color  
**P** - purl  
**Rnd** - round  
**St(s)** - stitch(es)





## Instructions

With MC, CO 60 sts. Place a stitch marker to mark the beginning of your round, and join to work in the round.

**Rnds 1-34:** \*K2, p2; repeat from \* to end of round. Cut MC, leaving a 6" tail.

**Rnds 35-48:** With CC, \*k2, p2; repeat from \* to end of round.

**Rnd 49:** \*K1, k2tog; repeat from \* to end of round. (40 sts remain)

**Rnd 50:** Knit.

**Rnd 51:** \*K2tog; repeat from \* to end of round. (20 sts remain)

**Pro Tip:** Things might get a little tight here as you decrease. If you want to switch to double-pointed needles, you totally can. Or you can experiment with the [magic loop method](#). OR, it's only one round... make it work!

## Finishing

Cut the yarn, leaving an 8-inch tail. Thread the yarn onto your tapestry needle, and pull the the needle



through the stitches in the order they're on the needle. As you pass the tapestry needle through, slip each stitch off the knitting needle. Gently pull on the yarn to tighten the stitches, and thread your tapestry needle through a second time. Pull tightly to close up the hole, and thread the tail to the inside of the hat.

Weave in your ends to the inside of your hat, and trim them. [Block your hat](#) for the smoothest stitches.

Now, it's time to pom-pom. Use a pom-pom maker if you have one, or make your own pom-pom with cardboard. Use the long ends of the pom-pom to tie the pom to the top of your hat. Pompoms don't wash well, so tie the strings in a bow – that way you can take it off when it's time to wash the hat.



## Hat Knitting 101

If you've mastered the knit stitch and the purl stitch, you're ready to knit a hat! In this class, knitting expert Jen Lucas takes you step-by-step through the process of knitting a basic beanie. Along the way she'll share her tips and tricks on how to make your hat knitting as easy as possible.

# A Knitter's Holiday Project Planner



Project Name \_\_\_\_\_

Who it's for \_\_\_\_\_

Finish by \_\_\_\_\_

Notes \_\_\_\_\_



Yarn Weight & Yardage

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

☐

in my stash

☐

need to order



Needles & Notions Needed

☐☐☐☐

Project Name \_\_\_\_\_

Who it's for \_\_\_\_\_

Finish by \_\_\_\_\_

Notes \_\_\_\_\_



Yarn Weight & Yardage

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

☐

in my stash

☐

need to order



Needles & Notions Needed

☐☐☐☐

Project Name \_\_\_\_\_

Who it's for \_\_\_\_\_

Finish by \_\_\_\_\_

Notes \_\_\_\_\_



Yarn Weight & Yardage

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

☐

in my stash

☐

need to order



Needles & Notions Needed

☐☐☐☐



Crop marks are provided for cutting accuracy and not part of the design.





## These Gingerbread Men Are Totally Cute — and Gluten-Free

By Stephanie White

It's not Christmas without gingerbread. Whether you decide to [build](#) and [decorate an entire mansion](#), or just stick to quick-and-simple (but still adorable) cookies, it's a must-make for the holiday.

And while most [gingerbread cookie recipes](#) contain wheat flour, we've come up with a tasty version that's completely gluten-free!

**Yield:** about 24 cookies

### **You will need the following ingredients:**

- 2½ cups gluten-free all-purpose flour mix
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves

- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg
- ½ cup butter, room temperature
- ½ cup light brown sugar
- ½ cup molasses
- ¼ cup water

### **Instructions:**

1. In a medium bowl, sift together flour, salt, baking soda and spices.
2. In a large bowl, cream together butter and sugar until light. Beat in molasses and water, then gradually blend in the flour mixture until a smooth dough forms. Dough will be slightly sticky.
3. Divide dough into two or three pieces, cover with plastic wrap or place in small plastic bags, then refrigerate for at least 2 hours, until firm.



**Good to Know:** The dough can be gathered up and re-rolled several times. After rolling it out once or twice, however, the dough may start to become a bit soft, especially if your kitchen is warm. Pop the dough back into the refrigerator or freezer for a few minutes to firm it up, if necessary.

6. Bake for 9 - 12 minutes, depending on size of cookie cutter, until cookies are firm around the edges.



Allow cookies to cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely. When cooled, they're ready to [decorate](#)!

4. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
5. On a lightly gluten free-floured surface, roll out dough to just under ¼" thick. Use cookie cutters of your choice (3" - 4" gingerbread cookies are a good size) to cut dough.



### Celebrate With Cookies: 19 Favorite Designs

Spend less time decorating cookies and more time making memories! Learn timesaving techniques and stunning designs for sweets that show just how much you care.





## Gingerbread Cupcakes to Sweeten the Holidays

By Felicity and Krystle

Stockings are hung and snow is falling, which can only mean one thing: it's gingerbread season! You've probably [built a gingerbread house](#) and [baked little gingerbread men](#), but for true gingerbread-lovers, take things up a notch this year and bake your own gingerbread cupcakes.

**Yield:** about 10-12 cupcakes

**You will need the following ingredients:**

- ½ cup softened unsalted butter
- ½ cup light brown sugar
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- ½ cup milk (full fat)
- ½ cup molasses or treacle
- 1 cups all-purpose flour
- 1½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon allspice or mixed spice
- 2 pinches of salt
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- Pre-made [buttercream](#) or cream cheese frosting





## Instructions:

1. Pre-heat your oven to 350°F and prepare your pan with cupcake liners.
2. Cream softened butter with light brown sugar. Don't over-mix, as this will add too much air to the batter. The butter mixture should be mixed until just combined. Scrape creamed butter down from the sides of the bowl.
3. Add egg, milk, molasses and spices (allspice, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg) along with flour, salt, baking soda and baking powder. Beat until combined.
4. Fill your cupcake liners until they're  $\frac{3}{4}$  full and bake for 20-25 minutes, or until a cake tester comes out clean.

Remove your cupcakes from the warm cupcake pan and place on a rack to cool.

**Good to Know:** If you want to amp up the gingerbread flavor, top your cupcakes with an allspice-and-cinnamon flavored buttercream and decorate with baked gingerbread cookies. You can also top the cupcakes with [white chocolate buttercream](#) and drizzle them with [caramel sauce](#).



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## Homemade Holiday Breads

The holidays are all about breaking bread, and sharing a home-baked treat around the dinner table makes this time extra special. Join award-winning pastry chef Jenny McCoy as she guides you to make an array of classic holiday breads, including a braided challah wreath, bakery-worthy panettone, homemade dinner rolls and more.



## This Classic Potato Latke Recipe Is a Hanukkah Favorite

By Nicole Weston

[Fried latkes](#) are the food of Hanukkah – and they just so happen to be super easy to cook. This recipe uses only a handful of ingredients and a few simple steps. Cook 'em fast and serve 'em warm before digging into some cute [dreidel cupcakes](#).

**Good to Know:** The most time consuming part of making latkes is shredding up all those potatoes. You can do this by hand using a cheese grater. However, if you have a food processor with a grater blade, you can have all your prep work done in less than two minutes.

**Yield:** 20-24 latkes, or 4-6 servings

### You will need the following:

- 1½-2 pounds baking potatoes
- 1 small, sweet onion
- 1 large egg
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- Salt and pepper, to taste (approx. ½ teaspoon salt)
- 3 tablespoons all purpose flour or matzoh
- Canola or vegetable oil, for frying



**1.** With a cheese grater or with a food processor fitted with a grater attachment, shred the potatoes and onions into fine strands. Place in a colander and press down with a spatula to squeeze out some of the excess moisture. Allow mixture to sit for 5-10 minutes.



**2.** Add egg, baking powder, flour, salt and pepper to the shredded potato mixture and form into small, flat pancakes about 3" across and no more than ½" thick. Thicker pancakes may not cook evenly.





**3.** Fill a frying pan with about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " of oil and turn the heat to medium-high. Drop a strand of the potato mixture into the oil to test it. When the potato sizzles and begins to turn brown, the oil is hot enough. Transfer the latkes into the pan 2 or 3 at a time. Cook until pancakes are dark golden, about 4 minutes, then flip and cook the second side until it is also a dark golden brown.



**4.** Place finished latkes on a paper towel-lined plate or cooling rack to drain any excess oil. Serve immediately, with applesauce and sour cream.





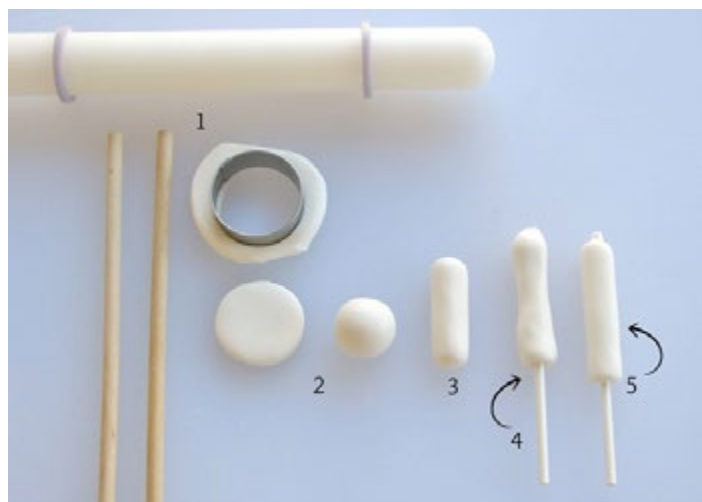
## Hanukkah Menorah Cupcakes Tutorial

By Lynlee North Beckett

The Jewish holiday of Hanukkah lasts for eight days, with the lighting of the menorah on each successive day. There are several fun Hanukkah cupcake ideas out there, but here is a fun fondant topper for cupcakes that are perfect for this year's Festival of Lights!

### **You will need the following:**

- White, light blue and yellow fondant
- Water/edible glue and brush
- Medium round circle cutter (approx. 1 ½")
- Round tip
- Fondant rolling pin with ⅛" guide rings
- ¼" wooden dowels
- Rolling pastry cutter
- Knife tool
- Precision knife
- Vegetable shortening to soften your fondant
- Powdered sugar/dusting pouch for your work surface
- Small and large lollipop sticks



### **Step 1:**

Roll out white fondant ¼" thick with the rolling pin and wooden dowels as guides on your work surface.

### **Step 2:**

Cut out a circle from the fondant with the medium round cutter and roll it into a ball.

### **Step 3:**

On your work surface, begin to roll the fondant into a sausage shape, but not all the way so you can easily add the lollipop stick.



### Step 4:

Insert a small lollipop stick into the bottom center of the fondant and slowly twist upward until it protrudes a bit from the top.

### Step 5:

Utilize your fingers to smooth out the fondant around the lollipop stick to properly form the candle base, making sure the bottom is flat and the shape is uniform.



### Step 6:

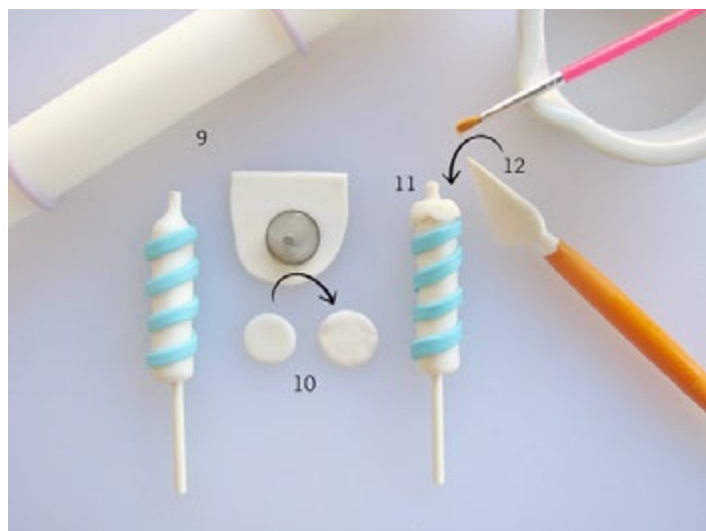
Roll out light blue fondant  $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick with the rolling pin and guide rings. With the rolling pastry cutter, cut a strip approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide and 7" long.

### Step 7:

Glue one end of the light blue fondant strip to the back of the candle at the very bottom. Begin to twist it around the candle all the way to the top, gluing as necessary along the way. Adjust the strip to ensure the diagonal lines are equidistant from each other.

### Step 8:

Cut off any excess with the precision knife and glue the end securely to the back of the candle.



### Step 9:

Roll out white fondant  $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick with the rolling pin and guide rings.

### Step 10:

Cut out a circle with the bottom end of a round tip and use your fingers to flatten out the perimeter, pulling it gently in a few spots. Utilize vegetable shortening spread over the fondant to avoid tearing.

### Step 11:

Insert the top of the lollipop stick and candle through the center of the small circle and begin to press it down along the top and sides to glue it in place.

### Step 12:

Use the knife tool to flatten out the top of the candle and create small indentations to resemble melted wax dripping down.



### Step 13:

Roll out yellow fondant  $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick with the rolling pin and wooden dowels and cut out a circle with the bottom of the round tip. If you need help removing the fondant from the tip, utilize the precision knife to pull it out.

### Step 14:

Roll the yellow fondant circle into a ball, then shape it into a teardrop shape for the candle flame. Form the very tip of the flame to lean toward the side to add a playful touch, changing it up a bit with every candle.

### Step 15:

Insert the bottom of the flame over the protruding lollipop stick and glue it over the candle, securing it in place.

### Step 16:

Repeat the steps above to produce seven additional candles. For the center candle of the menorah, use the larger lollipop stick and increase the size of the shapes (candle, decorative strip and flame) accordingly. Allow the candles to dry thoroughly.

### Step 17:

Once dry, insert the lollipop sticks in the center of iced cupcakes and create your presentation by displaying them in the shape of a menorah.



### Optional steps:

- Add a glossy finish to the candle flames.
- Cut out fondant circles to cover the cupcakes, making sure to add a thin layer of icing in between for a smooth surface.





## Hanukkah Surprise Cookies

By Felicity and Krystle

Dreidel, dreidel, dreidel I made you out of... cookies! (That's how the song goes, right?!) No matter, these surprise-inside treats are the perfect way to get your whole crew excited for the Festival of Lights. Make 'em together, then dig in post-lattes.

### **You will need the following:**

- A batch of [sugar-cookie dough](#)
- Light blue fondant (buy it or [make your own](#))
- Blue-and-white striped paper straws
- Small gold candies or sprinkles
- Royal icing
- Rectangle cookie cutter
- Small circle cookie cutter
- Light corn syrup
- Piping tip and bag



### **1. Roll and Cut Your Dough**

Roll out dough to about 3-4 mm, then cut out 3 rectangles per dreidel. Use a knife to cut away two angled sections at the bottom of each rectangle, creating a triangular shape at one end.

Take one of your dreidel-shaped cookies and cut out a circle in the center, which is where your gold candy or sprinkles will go (more on that later). Bake cookies according to the recipe, and let cool.



### 2. Stack and Fill 'Em Up

Take one of the full dreidel cookies (without the hole cut-out) and pipe royal icing around the perimeter.



Top with the cookie with the hole in the center, and lightly press down.



Pour your golden candy or sprinkles into the circle! (We used tiny golden nonpareils and gold dusted chocolate candy beans.)



### 3. Attach the Handle

Before adding the last layer of cookie, cut down a paper straw to 2-3 inches and flatten one end.



Attach the flattened end to the top of your stacked cookies with icing.



Add more icing around the perimeter before pressing on the top cookie layer.



#### 4. Add Fondant

Roll out light blue fondant and cut to the same size as your cookies. Attach it to your top cookie with light corn syrup, then let set for 20 minutes.



#### 5. Decorate

Finally, jazz up your dreidel cookie however you like. (We splattered on some gold flecks with a paint brush, and added a white bow.)



### Sweet & Savory Food Gifts

Discover an array of homemade food gift ideas from best-selling author Diane Morgan, and give the gift of time well spent in the kitchen! You'll enjoy these techniques to transform six delicious recipes into memorable handmade gifts for any occasion!





## Gingerbread House Cake Pops Tutorial

By Kris Galicia Brown

The only thing cuter than a full-blown [gingerbread house](#) that's [decorated with candy](#)? A mini version! These cake pops will bring smiles and holiday cheer to faces wherever they go, so make a whole batch and serve 'em with your [Christmas cakes](#).

### **You will need the following:**

- Cake pop dough
- Lollipop sticks
- Brown and white candy melts
- Ziploc baggie for piping
- Decorative sprinkles
- Wax paper
- Scissors
- Cake Pop stand or styrofoam block



### **1. Shape the Dough**

Cover your work space in wax paper and roll a portion of the cake pop dough into a smooth ball. Press the sphere onto your work space to create a cube. Then press two sides at an angle to create a gabled roof. Repeat for all cake pops, then place them in the refrigerator for at least 5 minutes.

**Pro Tip:** To make your gingerbread house cake pops all the same size, use a cookie scoop to portion out the dough.



### **2. Melt the Candy Coating**

While your dough is chilling, melt the [brown candy melts](#).



### 3. Dip

Remove the houses from the fridge. Dip a lollipop stick, about  $\frac{1}{3}$ " into the melted coating, then push it in until it's about halfway into the bottom side of the house. Repeat this step for the remaining cake houses.

Once all the sticks have been inserted, [dip the houses into brown candy coating](#), let the excess drip off and use toothpicks to carefully puncture any bubbles you may see. Place on the cake pop stand or Styrofoam block and let dry completely.

If these cake pops will be decorated at a later time, arrange cake pops in large airtight containers in flat layers with a paper towel between each layer and refrigerate. Remove from the refrigerator at least 1-2 hours before decorating. Do not open the containers – leave them on a counter in room temperature without touching, opening or any kind of handling. This is so the condensation will gather and dry on the outside of the container rather than on the cake pops. Otherwise, you'll have sticky cake pops.



### 4. Decorate

The best thing about this project: there's no wrong way to decorate your cake pops.

Begin by melting the white candy melts, then putting the candy coating into a plastic bag. Cut a tiny hole into the corner of the bag – presto, you've just created a DIY piping bag.

Pipe details onto your gingerbread house cake pops, add candy to the wet coating and let them dry.

*Now all you have to do is dig in!*



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### Let's Decorate: Gingerbread House

Take a break from the holiday chaos with a fun and festive project that the whole family can get in on! Expert cookie artist Stephanie Kappel guides you step by step to create a homemade gingerbread house with piped door frames, window panes and more.



## Make Peppermint Buttercream Frosting for the Ultimate Holiday Cupcakes

By Felicity and Krystle

Not all holiday treats need to be big and elaborate. This easy-to-make buttercream is packed with holiday flavor, making it perfect for all your Christmas cakes and cupcakes.

### Peppermint Frosting

#### *You will need the following:*

- 2 cups butter, softened and at room temperature
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- Peppermint extract

#### *Instructions:*

1. In the bowl of your stand mixer, cream the softened butter until silky.
  2. Sift the powdered sugar in with the creamed butter. Mix until creamy.
- Good to Know:** Don't skip sifting! It might be a bit time consuming, but if you just dump the sugar into your bowl you'll be left with unsightly lumps.
3. Add 2-3 drops of peppermint extract to the mixture, then taste test to see if you want to add more to get the right flavor for you. (Typically, about six drops creates a nice flavor.)

### Candy Cane Cupcakes

Now that you have your peppermint buttercream whipped up, it's time to decorate!

#### *You will need the following:*

- Piping bags
- Piping tip of your choice
- Crushed candy canes
- Pink, red or green food color gel

#### *Instructions:*



#### **1. Color the Buttercream**

Separate your peppermint buttercream into two bowls and set one aside. Add some food coloring to the other half, stirring in a few drops at a time until you get the perfect color. We made a bright bubblegum pink, but you can use red, deep green or even a pale mint green.





## 2. Fill a Piping Bag

Fit a piping bag with the piping tip you'd like to use. You can use any kind, from ruffles to stars, for different effects. For simple swirls, we used a plain round tip.

Spoon the uncolored buttercream into one side of your piping bag, then add the dyed buttercream into the other side.

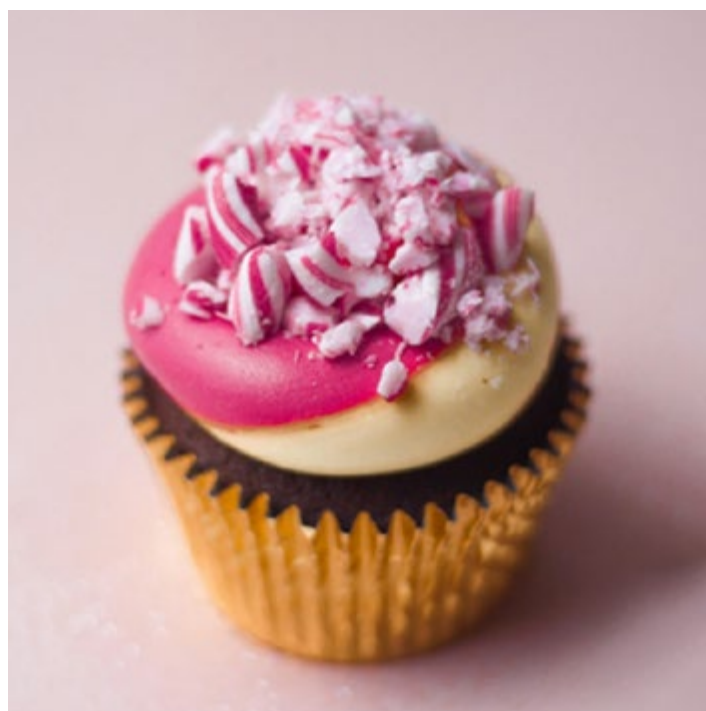
**Pro Tip:** To make your bag easier to fill, place it in a tall glass with the bag hanging over the lip.

Shake your bag so the buttercream goes down to the tip. This gets it ready to pipe and helps remove air bubbles.



## 3. Pipe

Pipe a small dot in the center of the cupcake. Use this blob as a guide for the rest of your piping as you add a swirl.



## 4. Add the Candy

Sprinkle or dip the cupcake to coat it with crushed candy cane pieces. You're done!



## Pipe Buttercream Poinsettias for a Festive Holiday Treat

By Erin Gardner

Fact: the best flowers are buttercream flowers, and the same is true for poinsettias. This holiday design is beautiful, festive and totally deserves a spot on your dessert table.

### **You will need the following:**

- Buttercream ([Swiss meringue](#) or [American buttercream](#) work great)
- Leaf piping tips, small and large
- Small round piping tip
- Piping bags
- Red, yellow and green food gel coloring
- Icing bag stand (optional)

**Good to Know:** The red parts of a poinsettia are not petals; they're actually called bracts. The tiny yellow center is technically the flower.

### **1. Prep Your Buttercream**

Make a batch of your favorite buttercream recipe. We used American buttercream in this tutorial, but Swiss meringue works just as well.

Divide the batch into three small bowls and color your buttercream red, green and yellow. You'll want a large amount of green and red, so only set aside a small portion for yellow.



## 2. Pipe the Leaves

Spoon the green buttercream into a piping bag fitted with a large leaf tip. Pipe big, fluffy leaves, starting at the center of the cupcake and working out. To create the ruffles, pipe slowly and use lots of pressure. (It might help to practice on parchment paper first.)

The rest of your poinsettia will be built on top of this foundation, so completely cover the top of your cupcake. Or, if you're piping onto a [Christmas cake](#), go big with your leaves!



## 3. Pipe the Red Bracts

Spoon the red buttercream into another piping bag fitted with a small leaf tip. Begin piping about 1/2" away from where you'd like the center of the flower to be. Unlike with the green leaves, release your pressure halfway through your bract to achieve this flatter leaf-like look.

Work in a circle, leaving room in the center for a second layer of bracts.



## 4. Add the Second Layer

Pipe smaller, shorter bracts in the center of your larger ones. Stagger your design so the smaller ones overlap where two larger bracts meet.



## 5. Finish the Flower

Spoon yellow buttercream into a piping bag fitted with a small round tip. Pipe a cluster of small dots in the center to form the flowers.



Design these beauties on holiday cupcakes, cakes, cookies or any other dessert you want to make more festive.





## 3 Orange-Cranberry Cocktails to Put You in a Festive Mood

By Nicole Weston

### Orange-Cranberry Cosmo

Any cosmo lover can tell you this classic drink already incorporates orange and cranberry flavors, so using the infused vodka is a no-brainer. The flavors end up being even more intense and more delicious than normal. And while a cosmo is typically served in a martini glass, you could always go with a coupe glass and a cranberry garnish for a festive touch.

**Yield:** 1 cocktail

**You will need the following ingredients:**

- 2 ounces orange-cranberry vodka
- ½ ounce cointreau or triple sec
- ½ ounce cranberry juice
- ½ ounce fresh lime juice



#### Instructions:

In a shaker, combine all ingredients. Fill with ice and shake vigorously for about 20 seconds, or until cold. Strain into a coupe or martini glass and garnish with a whole cranberry to serve.



## Winter Sangria

Sangria is usually a boozy fruit punch served in the summer, but why wouldn't you enjoy it all year 'round? This winter version has warm citrus flavors that are just

right for sippin' in front of a cozy fireplace. Orange bitters are the secret ingredient – pick 'em up at your local liquor store.

**Yield:** 1 cocktail

**You will need the following ingredients:**

- 1 ounce orange-cranberry vodka
- 1½ ounce red wine
- ¾ ounce cointreau or triple sec
- ½ ounce fresh lime juice
- 2 dashes orange bitters

**Instructions:**

In a shaker, combine all ingredients. Fill with ice and shake vigorously for about 20 seconds, or until cold. Strain into a stemless wine glass and garnish with an orange wedge to serve.



## Cranberry Moscow Mule

If you love the bright, spicy flavor of a good ginger beer, this cocktail's for you. Adding cranberry-infused

vodka to the mix gives this mule a hint of berry flavor and a deep red color that is totally party-ready. Skip the traditional copper mugs and go for clear glassware to let that color shine.

**Yield:** 1 cocktail

**You will need the following ingredients:**

- 1½ ounces orange-cranberry vodka
- ½ ounce fresh lime juice
- 3-4 ounces ginger beer

**Instructions:**

Fill a tall glass with ice. Pour in vodka and lime juice and stir to combine. Top with ginger beer. Garnish with fresh cranberries and a lime wedge. Serve with a straw.

### Substitutions:

These drinks all call for orange-cranberry infused vodka. But if you don't have time to make any, substitute regular vodka with a few modifications:

- Cranberry Orange Cosmo: Reduce vodka to 1½ oz and add an additional ½ oz cranberry juice
- Winter Sangria: Add in ½ oz cranberry juice without changing any other quantities
- Cranberry Moscow Mule: Add in 1 oz cranberry juice and ¼ oz cointreau or triple sec without changing any other quantities

