

Colourful Cup Coasters

Raw Edge Appliqué and Free-Machine Embroidery

By Tina Whiteley



Why not make your next morning or afternoon tea party extra special and create these colourful little shabby-chic style coasters. They are sized to fit perfectly under your favourite antique cups and saucers and are small enough that you could complete several in a day and even make some lovely little personalised gifts for your party guests.

You will need

- Cotton fabric 1 – Ground fabric (Cut two pieces of 6.5 inches x 6.5 inches for the top and bottom of the coaster)
- Cotton fabric 2 – Stabilizer (Cut 1 piece of 6 inches x 6 inches - this can be any thin cotton fabric, as it won't be seen)
- Batting – Stabilizer (Cut one piece of 6 inches x 6 inches)
- Various cotton fabric scraps for the appliqué designs
- Sewing Machine (with straight and free-motion feet)
- Machine sewing threads (colours of your choice) and needles (size 11, 12 or 14)
- Scissors
- Pencil or erasable pen for marking lines
- Vliesofix* or other similar adhesive fabric stabilizer

**Vliesofix is fusible both sides, but the paper backing protects it as you iron it to the first piece of fabric. To fuse, make sure the iron is not on steam setting, as you need a dry iron for this on a cotton setting. Place the Vliesofix, onto the fabric, fusible/gauze side down and paper side up. Use a pressing cloth or silicon mat to ensure no sticky residue comes off on your iron or ironing board. When ironed correctly, the*

paper backing should peel off easily, leaving the layer of adhesive on the wrong side of your fabric. If the paper doesn't come off cleanly, just keep applying the heat until it does. Peel off the paper backing just before you are ready to adhere the shape to another fabric and iron to fuse.

Step 1 – Print out the pattern templates

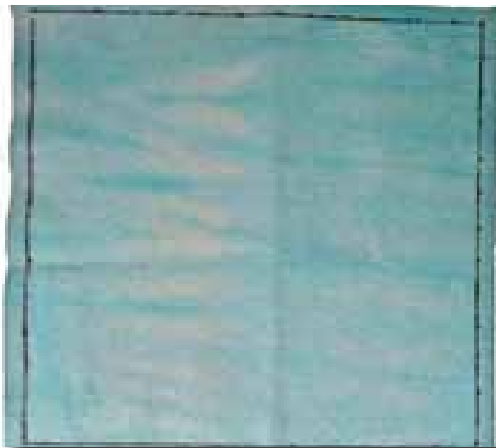
- Print out the two attached appliqué and coaster design A4 template PDFs. You can copy these templates and print them out as many times as you like. If the printed templates are not the correct size, check your printer settings to ensure there is no page scaling set.



Step 2 – Trace and cut out the pattern pieces

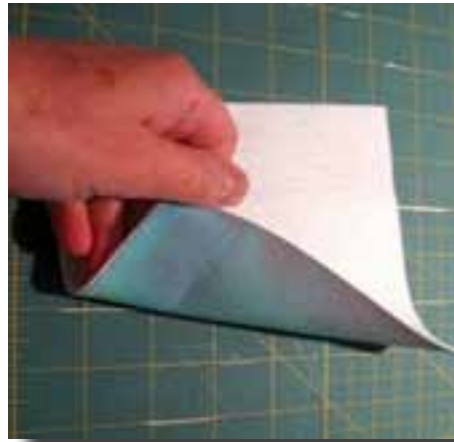
Top and bottom of the coaster

- Cut out the larger square coaster template and using an awl or sharp point, make holes in the dotted lines. This is to mark your sewing line. Your seam allowance is $\frac{1}{4}$ inch.
- Use the coaster template to draw around and cut out a top and bottom square from fabric 1. Alternatively you can rotary cut the coaster squares if you want to make several at a time.
- Using the holes in the coaster template, mark out the sewing line, as shown, on the wrong side of the bottom piece of fabric. Use an erasable marker, Frixion pen or soft pencil to mark out the dots and sewing line.



Stabilizing Fabrics

- For both the batting and the stabilizing fabric, trace around the 6 inch x 6 inch shape onto Vliesofix and roughly cut out the traced squares. Iron one piece onto the batting fabric and the other piece onto the stabilizing fabric and cut out both squares.



- Take the backing paper off the stabilizing fabric and fuse to the batting first. Then take the backing paper off the batting and fuse it to the top coaster fabric so that all fabrics are aligned centrally, as shown below.



- By fusing the stabilizing pieces, it gives the stitching more support and it is much easier to sew the seams if the stabilizers are fused in the correct position and don't move during the stitching. It also gives a neater edge when you turn the coaster through to the right side. Set both the top and bottom coaster pieces aside for the moment.

Appliqué Pieces

- Draw around your template shapes onto Vliesofix. If you want the same orientation as the template, then trace the shapes in reverse, so they will be the right way round when you iron them onto the coaster fabric. Once you have traced out the shapes onto the Vliesofix, cut roughly around them and iron them onto the wrong side of your chosen appliqué design fabrics. Cut out the shapes and set them aside.



- If you want to add any little design touches, such as steam coming from a cup, tea from the teapot, or any words, just draw those in with your erasable markers or very lightly with a pencil and stitch over them. Leave enough space around the edges, so your design doesn't disappear into the seams when turned the right side out.

Step 3 – Prepare the coaster sandwich for sewing

- Iron your chosen appliqué shapes on to the right side of the top coaster fabric. Make sure that you place the bottom-most appliqué shape first and then iron the next layered shape on top.



- Pin the layers together, in the corners away from your design, so that you can sew without catching the pins. You should now have the design fused to the top coaster fabric, which is also fused to the batting and stabilizing fabric underneath. Now you're ready to sew the design.

Step 4 – Sewing your coaster design

- Set up your sewing machine for free machine embroidery as per your instruction manual. Select a straight stitch (with 0 length).

Practise First

- If you want to check your placement first before ironing it straight onto the fabric, place your shapes in the correct order on a non-stick silicon mat and iron them together so they appear in the right order. Then place the fused shape onto the fabric and iron it on as a whole, as shown.

- Practise on a spare piece of appliqué with some sketched lines to get the hang of the stitching. Start stitching slowly at first until you're happy with moving the fabric under the needle. Ideally, you want to stitch just inside

the edge of the fabric, and you can go round the edges several times if you like. If you go outside the lines, don't worry, it all adds to the "sketchy" feel, which is perfect for these designs. Remember to start and end with a locking stitch, or reverse sew to ensure the stitching doesn't come undone down the track.

Go for Gold!

- Once you've got the hang of following the shapes on your practice piece, then start stitching your coaster. Try out different colours on the same design or keep the stitching the same colour, as you prefer. Black is a good colour to use for sketching, as it has a lovely spontaneous quality to it. Grey or sepia brown thread are also good options. Experiment to see what works best for your fabrics. Follow your drawn lines to start with and then, if you're feeling brave, stitch some lines freehand. If you're feeling even more adventurous you can use metallic thread and satin stitch (size 14 top stitch needle is advised) for the cup and saucer edges to give an "antique china" look.

Step 5 – Putting it all together

- When you've finished embroidering your design, carefully trim off all the loose threads front and back and remove the pins if you haven't already done so while sewing. The stabilizing fabrics should still be central underneath the coaster fabric, as shown below.



- Place the bottom piece of coaster fabric on top of the sewn design fabric, right sides together, so you've got the marked out sewing line uppermost and make sure that they are lined up correctly. The edges of the batting and stabilizing fabric should line up with the seam allowance so that you can just miss them when you sew around the seams. They will stay put, as

they are now firmly attached with embroidery.



- Starting $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way down towards the bottom right corner, stitch along the marked seam line around all the sides of the square, but leave at least a 2 inch gap open at the end so you can turn the coaster to the right side. Reinforce your stitching at the beginning and the end with reverse motion stitch, so that it doesn't come apart when you pull it inside out.



- Carefully trim the corners diagonally and turn right sides out.
- Once turned to the right side, press to make sure the coaster sits flat and the opening is evenly matched top and bottom. Top stitch around the whole square as close to the edge as you can to give it a nice crisp look. The opening will be secured and neaten with your top stitching.

Now your coaster is finished and ready to use and you're probably ready to go and put the kettle on for a nice cuppa!