

Casserole Carrier

Summer days are just ahead, filled with parties, barbecues, and picnics. Tasty tidbits will go right from the kitchen into the great outdoors. But when you're out and about, how do you keep everything at the right temperature until it's time to eat?

This dilemma is easily solved when you make this handy carrier to keep the "hot dish" warm, or the cool dessert from melting away.

Supplies

Supplies needed:

1 yard of outer fabric

1 1/4 yard of lining fabric

1 yard of ribbon

1 yard of Insul-Bright batting (I found this at Joann's)

1/3 yard of muslin

3 cups uncooked rice

Set of 2 straight bamboo purse handles or a 1/2" wood dowel, 36" long



Steps To Complete

Cutting the pieces

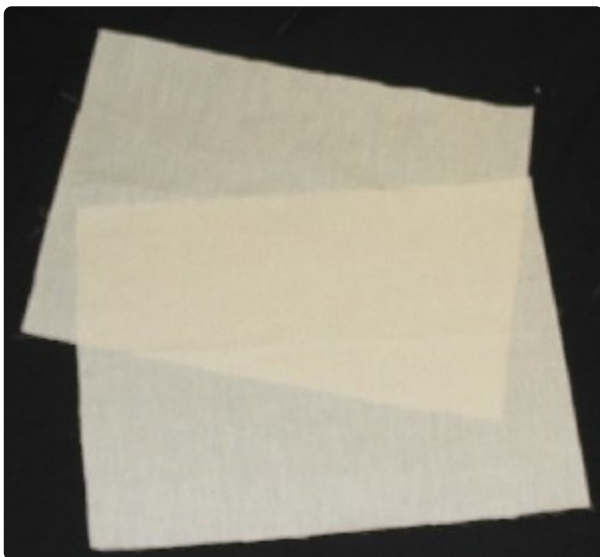


From the outer fabric, and the batting cut a 15" by 39" rectangle and two rectangles that are 11" by 13".

On one end of the large fabric rectangle, center the embroidery design 9" from the end, and sew it out.



From the lining fabric, cut out one 15" by 39" rectangle and two rectangles that are 11" by 13". Also cut out 2 rectangles that are 7" by 15".



From the muslin, cut out 2 rectangles that are 11" by 13". Set these aside for the rice bag.

Making the pocket for the hot/cold pack

Take the two 7 x 15 inch lining rectangles, and hem one of the long sides of each rectangle.

Place the large rectangle (cut from the lining fabric) right side up. Place the hemmed rectangles on that lining fabric, right sides down, each six inches from the short end of the large rectangle. The unhemmed edges should be facing towards the center.



Now we'll stitch the long unhemmed edges to the larger rectangle. Use a 1/2 inch seam allowance.

Fold the rectangles towards the center of the large rectangle. The hemmed edges will overlap an inch or two. Pin them together in the center to hold the pocket in place.



Sewing the carrier body Using all the large rectangle pieces, lay out the batting with the silver side up, then lay the outer fabric on top of it with the right side up. Lay the lining piece on the top with the right side down.



Mark the handle opening using a 5" circle template. (A plastic lid works nicely.) The edge of the marked circle should be right at the end of the large rectangle and centered on the short sides.



Cut out each handle opening, making a U-shaped cut, and using the circle as a guide around the curve.



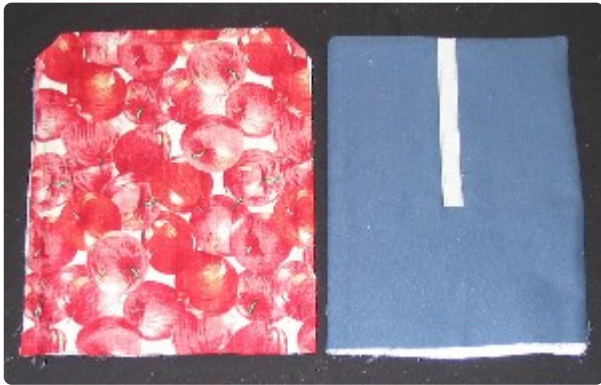
Stitch the layers of fabric together at the sides and around the curved handle openings. Leave an 11" opening on each long side between the stitching lines that you made for the lining flaps. This is where the side pieces will be inserted. On the short ends, where you have made the handle openings, the straight edges should also be left open.

When you are finished stitching, clip the curved areas, and turn the piece right side out.



Making the sides

Using the 11" by 13" rectangles, sew Velcro to each of the right sides of the outer and lining fabric pieces. The end of the Velcro should start 1/2" from the 11" side of the rectangles.



Place each rectangle with Velcro together with its outer/lining counterpart. The pieces should be right sides together. Lay the fabric pieces on top of the 11" by 13" batting pieces. There should be 2 stacks with a piece of outer fabric, lining fabric, and batting in each stack.

Use a 1/2" seam allowance to stitch 3 sides (the 2 long sides and the side closest to the Velcro piece) of each of the stacks. Turn the stitched rectangles right side out.



Insert the unfinished ends of each of the side pieces that you just stitched into the 11" openings that you left in each long side of the large body piece. Make sure that the fabrics correspond with each other. Pin into place so that the smaller pieces are inserted about 1/2" to 3/4" into the larger body of the carrier.

Stitch the 11" openings closed through all the layers, catching the smaller rectangles in the stitching, thereby attaching them to the body.



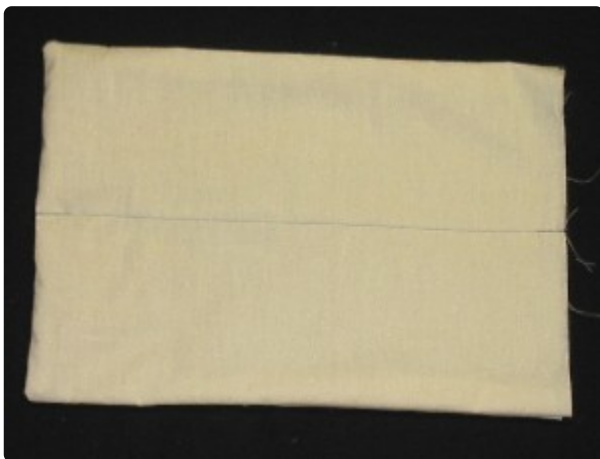
On each end of the carrier body, turn over the ends 2" to create a casing for the handles.

Insert the handles into the casings.

If you are using a wood dowel, cut the dowel into two 15" pieces and insert the pieces into the casings.



Cut the ribbon piece in half and attach each half to the body of the carrier so that you can attach a large spoon or fork, resting along side of the dish being carried. Make sure the ribbon is attached to the unembroidered side of the body. The ribbons should be about 6" apart.



Making the hot/cold pack

Using a 1/2" seam allowance, stitch the muslin rectangles together on 2 long sides and one short side. Turn the bag right side out and stitch a divider up the center of the bag.



Put 1/2 cup of rice in each opening, and stitch a divider about 1/3 of the way up the bag. Put another 1/2 cup of rice in each side, and stitch a divider about 2/3 of the way up the bag. Add another 1/2 cup to each side and turn a hem to seal the rice into the bag.



The rice bag insert can be heated in the microwave or frozen in the freezer to help keep the temperature of the dish just right.

Just insert the heated or chilled rice bag into the pocket flaps at the center of the carrier body where it can be in contact with your warm or cool dish.



At your next outdoor eat-fest, bring along your best dish. And, carry it in style!