



Zig Zag Bag – More Info

Left Opening Braids

Instructor:
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Rug Braiders International

The Zig Zag Bag is a simple pattern that produces a complex and beautiful design. By braiding and lacing two braids at once in a spiral, a repeating zig zag pattern results, with no need for the tiresome row-by-row color changes that would be necessary when working with one braid only.

The Zig Zag Bag can be made into a purse size or a larger tote bag.



It can be made with a round or oval bottom, although only an oval bottom will be illustrated here. For a tote, I recommend ending the braids with a decorative fringe; for a small purse, I thought the fringe distracted from the pattern and chose to pull the ends to the inside of the bag.

Skills Needed for this Class: Must have made at least one oval rug or chair pad, and understand the terms: length of center line, lacing, e-lacing OR shoe-lacing, increasing/skipping.

Supplies

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| 2 Braidkin lacing needles, OR 1 Braidkin and a tapestry needle, for lacing | Scissors |
| 2 Contrasting fabrics | 2 Braid-end clamps (clothespins) |
| Ruler | Tapestry needle for splicing, if needed |
| Lacing thread | Hemostat or needle-nose pliers |
| Straight pin & safety pins | |
| Needle & thread, or sewing machine | |
| If desired: large button and elastic hair band for closure (see photo upper left) | |

Fabrics

The bag is only effective if the two fabrics used for the braids have a lot of contrast – not just in color, but in value. One color should be pale, the other should be dark. Examples: black and white. Pale yellow with eggplant purple. Chartreuse with navy or black or maroon. Pale peach with dark brown.

It is not necessary to have the same texture for both fabrics. A loopy bouclé, for example, looks good paired with a flat weave.... or a fluffy wool with a tight gabardine twill.

This is the time to pull out your wool blend fabrics containing a little more polyester or nylon than you would ordinarily like to braid with. The polyester and nylon are lighter in weight than wool, so your bag when is braided up, it will be lighter to carry around. Thin fabrics will make narrow braids and require more braided rows. (The lightest bags braid up nicely with polyester fleece... but I hate the dry plasticky feel of fake fleece after working with it for awhile... If you can get over this feeling, polyester fleece is a great fabric for bags.)

Patterned Fabric: In general, large patterns in the fabric distract from the zigzag design that is sought with this tote/purse. If choosing patterned fabrics, make sure the pattern is small and will not detract from the zigzag.

How much fabric? The answer will vary with your tote size, fabric, braiding tension, etc.

A. Purse: at least $\frac{3}{4}$ yard dark and $\frac{3}{4}$ yard light fabrics for the purse.

B. Tote: 2 yards of light and 2 yards of dark fabric.



ZigZag Bag made by Marjorie Corrow has a button/hair band clasp and purchased, sewn-on handles



ZigZag Bag made by Carol Rota has braided handles and a shank button/hair band clasp



ZigZag Bag with wood handles and leather straps, by Hanna Gritton



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Rose learned to braid from classes at Dorr Mill in 2006. Since then, she has taught rug braiding locally in her home, at community centers, and at braiding conferences. She has an Etsy shop, Idlewild Wool, where she sells recycled wool from used clothing. In addition to braiding, Rose is a seamstress, doll-maker, gardener, and enjoys smocking. She runs a bed and breakfast – Lucinda's House -- from her historic property near Nashville.