



two-hour peasant skirt

Add some fun to your wardrobe with this tiered, flowing skirt

One of fashion's hottest trends continues to be the tiered peasant skirt. It's perfect for summer and couldn't be easier—or faster—to sew. I've always loved this loose, flowing configuration of tiers, and recently figured out a way to create them from simple rectangles, to accommodate any hip size. Drafting the pattern takes 30 minutes, cutting the fabric 30 minutes, and sewing and finishing a mere 60 minutes. In total, this flattering skirt is ready to wear in the time it takes to watch a movie! And, best of all, the very nature of this skirt makes it easy to customize with fabric and trim. In fact, I urge you to tap into your inner bohemian. This season, funky, fun-to-twirl-in skirts are on the fashion menu.

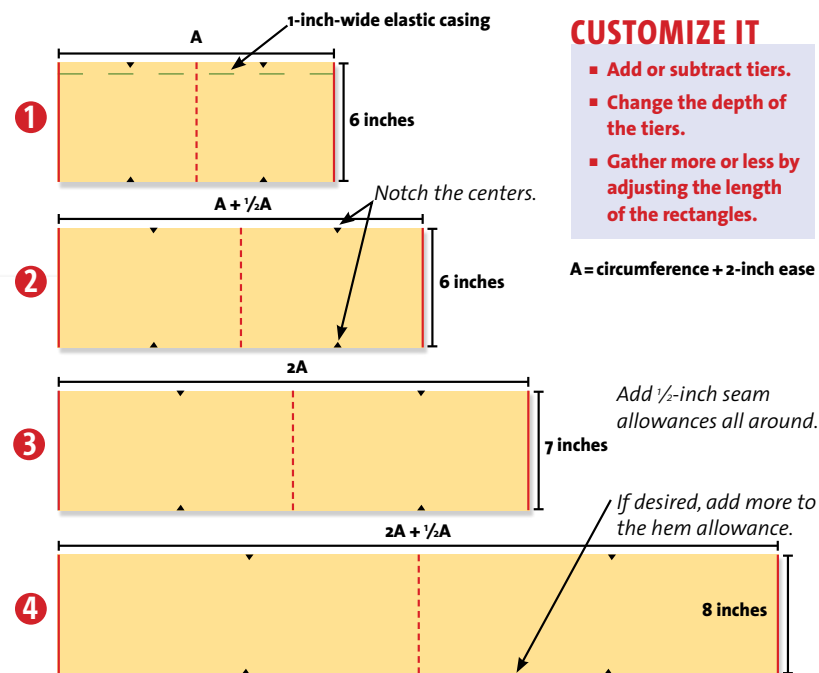
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1 draft four rectangles



Wrap a measuring tape around your middle, taking a few measurements from waist down to midhigh. Use the largest circumference in the formula at right. The total finished length of the skirt is 26 inches.

Divide and mark each panel in quadrants to help align during construction. Depending on your hip measurement and fabric width, you may need to piece the panels.



CUSTOMIZE IT

- Add or subtract tiers.
- Change the depth of the tiers.
- Gather more or less by adjusting the length of the rectangles.

2 cut your fabric in a single layer



For a full, stiff silhouette, use fun cotton shirtings, dupioni, velvets, and even lightweight wools. For soft, floating versions, select sheers, gauze, or charmeuse. To mix and match fabrics, just make sure all are the same weight and have a similar drape.

- YARDAGE NEEDED**
You will need 2 yards of 45-inch-wide fabric. If your hip measurement is larger than 40 inches, you will need more fabric—3 to 3 1/2 yards.
- PLAY WITH GRAIN**
Align the rectangle's short sides on the lengthwise grain. If the fabric is stable lengthwise and crosswise, you can cut the rectangles on either grain.
- NO BREATHING ROOM, PLEASE**
Smooth your fabric out in a single layer, then lay out the pattern pieces. About the edges—this will save you cutting time and fabric.

Exposed seams add to the boho look.



3 piece, gather, and sew



I rarely finish the seam allowances, unless the fabric ravel excessively, but you can add that step if desired. See "Seam It like a Pro" on p. 52 for ideas.

- PIECE**
Sew the pieces in each tier together, forming a ring. Press the seam allowances open.
- GATHER**
Machine-baste the top edge of each tier. Start and stop at the seams, and don't back-tack. Pull the bobbin threads to gather the fabric. **TIP:** Use a strong silk or polyester thread, and tug gently to ensure that the thread doesn't break.
- SEW**
Pin the tiers together, matching edges. Evenly distribute the gathers, using the notches and seams as midpoint guides. Sew along the basting lines. **TIP:** To remove bulk in the seam allowances, press the gathers flat. Press both allowances in one direction, then topstitch if desired.



Gather the edge.

4 finish the top and bottom



Complete the skirt with a simple elastic waist and quick hem. Also create a lining if desired: Draft and sew a column using "A" from the drafting instructions on the facing page. Leave a slit at the seam for movement, and attach the lining to the skirt's elastic waist.

- CREATE AN ELASTIC WAIST**
Press down a casing. Sew, leaving a 1-inch opening. To figure out how much 3/4-inch elastic you need, wrap it snugly around your waist. Insert it into the opening with a safety pin. Join the elastic ends, and sew the opening closed. **TIP:** To prevent the elastic from twisting in the casing, stitch across the elastic at the sides of the skirt.
- TURN UP A FAST HEM**
Serge or zigzag-stitch the raw edge to prevent raveling. Then press up the hem allowance, and topstitch.



Insert the elastic.