

This is an excerpt from the book

Fabric Savvy
by Sandra Betzina

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Cotton Batiste

PRESHRINK

Hand-wash in Ivory flakes. Drip-dry.

LAYOUT

Check for permanent crease at foldline. Refold to avoid. "Without nap" layout, double thickness.

MARKING

Fabric markers or pencils.

CUTTING

Rotary cutter or scissors.

INTERFACING

Self-fabric.

THREAD

Fine cotton machine embroidery.

NEEDLE

60/8 H or 70/10 HM.



STITCH LENGTH

2.0 mm.

PRESSER FOOT

Use single-hole presser foot and small-hole throat plate or switch needle to the far left position for support on three sides. Loosen top tension and bottom tension one-eighth to one-quarter of a turn.



SEAM FINISH

French seams or 3-thread overlock with super-fine serger thread such as Janome overlock polyester thread #80. (See #4 on p. 174, #10 on p. 175.)

PRESSING

Cotton setting with steam. Use spray starch to crispen.

TOPSTITCHING

Close to finished edge. Use edge foot or edge-joining foot for accuracy.

CLOSURES

For buttonholes, use 60/8 H new needle and fine cotton machine embroidery thread to reduce bulk. (See #1 on p. 182.)

HEM

Hand-stitch, machine decorative, or lace. (See #12 on p. 188, #13 on p. 189.)

Cotton batiste

FABRIC FACT

Cotton batiste is often used as underlining or as backing for soft cotton quilts.

SUITABLE FOR

100% Swiss cotton batiste is preferred for heirloom sewing because the lace on the polyester blends does not lie as flat. When used as underlining, polyester blends are not quite as good because they do not breathe.

SEWING TIPS

Staystitching is very important.



Tip: WISTFUL by Springmaid, a cotton/polyester-blend batiste, makes an excellent underlining because it doesn't collapse in wearing. WISTFUL is a good substitute for 100% cotton batiste, which is expensive.

Cotton Damask

PRESHRINK

Machine-wash in warm water and machine-dry on regular temperature.

LAYOUT

“Without nap” layout, double thickness.

MARKING

Clo-Chalk, fabric marking pens, tracing paper.

CUTTING

Rotary cutter or sharp scissors.

INTERFACING

Fusible tricot.

THREAD

Good-quality cotton or polyester.

NEEDLE

80/12 H.



STITCH LENGTH

2.5 mm.

PRESSER FOOT

Standard.



SEAM FINISH

Flat fell. (See #9 on p. 175.)

PRESSING

Cotton setting with steam. No press cloth necessary.

TOPSTITCHING

¼ in. from edge with regular thread. (See #10 on p. 181.)

CLOSURES

Snaps, machine buttonholes. (See #1 on p. 182, #11 on p. 184.)

HEM

Double roll ½-in. hem, machine-stitch on blouse. (See #10 on p. 188.) Hand-hem on jacket, pants, or dress. (See #4 on p. 187.)

Cotton damask

FABRIC FACT

While fabric is usually all one color, shiny threads create print on a matte surface.

SUITABLE FOR

Jacket, blouse, tailored pants, straight or semi-full dress.

SEWING TIPS

Easy to sew and press.



Tip: Check the tension on your sewing machine. You don't know how to do that? Try this. Put a different color thread on the top than on the bobbin. Sew for a few inches. If the bobbin color shows on the top side of the fabric, loosen the upper tension by turning the tension knob to a lower number. If the top thread shows on the bottom of the fabric, tighten the tension by turning the tension knob to a higher number.

Cotton Piqué

PRESHRINK

Machine-wash in warm water and machine-dry on regular cycle. If using black piqué, hand-wash in cold water and air-dry. This will maintain the “black” and prevent graying.

LAYOUT

“Without nap” layout, double thickness.

MARKING

Clo-Chalk, tracing wheel, snips in seam allowance.

CUTTING

Rotary cutter or scissors.

INTERFACING

Fuse-Knit on a blouse, Suit Shape on a vest or jacket.

THREAD

Good-quality cotton or polyester.

NEEDLE

80/12 H.



STITCH LENGTH

2.5 mm.

PRESSER FOOT

Standard.



SEAM FINISH

Flat fell or sew with a straight seam, press open, and overlock each side of seam separately. No seam finish if lining. (See #3 on p. 174, #27 on p. 178.)

PRESSING

Cotton setting with steam.

TOPSTITCHING

Not recommended since it detracts from fabric’s surface.

CLOSURES

Buttonholes, snaps, and button loops. (See #1 on p. 182, #9 on p. 183, #11 on p. 184.)

HEM

Serge raw edge. Sew by hand or topstitch with double needle. (See #1 and #4 on p. 187.)

Cotton piqué

FABRIC FACT

Cotton piqué is medium-weight cotton with raised, pebbly weave, which looks almost like a small check.

SUITABLE FOR

Vests, jackets, fitted blouses.

SEWING TIPS

Easy to sew.



Tip: If you love a fabric but don't know how much to buy, 2½ yards gives you the option of making pants, a blouse, some skirts, or a simple jacket. Three yards is safer if you like to double fronts on blouses and jackets.

Cotton Shirting

PRESHRINK

Serge crossgrain ends to prevent excess raveling. Machine-wash in warm water and machine-dry on regular temperature. Remove while slightly damp. Iron-dry, stretching slightly in lengthwise direction only. This will prevent puckered seams.

LAYOUT

“Without nap” layout, double thickness.

MARKING

Fabric markers, tracing wheel, clips in seam allowance.

CUTTING

Rotary cutter or scissors.

INTERFACING

Shirttailor or Durapress. Interface both layers of collar and cuffs.

THREAD

Good-quality cotton.

NEEDLE

70/10 H.



STITCH LENGTH

2.5 mm straight stitch for seams, 1.8 mm for collar points and curves.

PRESSER FOOT

Standard or felling foot.



SEAM FINISH

Flat fell or French. (See #9 and #10 on p. 175.)

PRESSING

Steam iron on cotton setting. For crisp details use spray starch.

TOPSTITCHING

Close to the edge with edge foot or edge-joining foot using a 70/10 HJ needle. (See #3 on p. 180.)

CLOSURES

For buttonholes, use 70/10 HJ with extra-fine thread. (See #1 on p. 182.)

HEM

¼-in. double-fold hem with topstitching. (See #10 on p. 188.) Ease-stitch on curves. (See #8 on p. 188.)



Cotton shirting

FABRIC FACT

Look for very fine weaves in 100% cotton shirting for the most luxurious to wear and finest quality.

SUITABLE FOR

Tailored shirts and pajamas.

SEWING TIPS

Easy to sew.

Tip: Edge stitching is different than topstitching. Edge stitching is used to control an edge. It should be very close to the edge, in matching non-decorative thread, and in a medium stitch length. Edge stitching should not be very visible, unlike topstitching.

Cotton Voile

PRESHRINK

Hand-wash in Ivory flakes. Drip-dry.

LAYOUT

“Without nap” layout, double thickness using new, fine glass-head pins.

MARKING

Fabric markers, pencils, tailor tacks.

CUTTING

Rotary cutter or scissors.

INTERFACING

Self-fabric.

THREAD

Fine machine embroidery cotton.

NEEDLE

60/8 H or 65/9 H.



STITCH LENGTH

2.0 mm straight stitch.

PRESSER FOOT

Use single-hole presser foot and single-hole throat plate or switch needle to the far left position for support on three sides. Loosen top tension one-eighth to one-quarter of a turn.



SEAM FINISH

French seams. (See #10 on p. 175.)

PRESSING

Cotton setting with steam. For crispness, use spray starch.

TOPSTITCHING

Close to finished edge. Use edge foot or edge-joining foot for accuracy. (See #3 on p. 180.)

CLOSURES

For buttonholes, use 60/8 H new needle and fine cotton machine embroidery thread to reduce bulk. (See #1 on p. 182.)

HEM

Narrow rolled hem on the serger is a good finish for ruffles. (See #16 on p. 189.) Set cutting width wider to roll more fabric into the stitch. Hand stitches or machine decorative stitches also work well on the hem.

Cotton voile

FABRIC FACT

Cotton voile is slightly crisper than batiste and is used for heirloom dresses or underlining where some crispness is desired.

SUITABLE FOR

Heirloom sewing and underlining. 100% Swiss cotton is preferred on heirloom work because the lace does not lie as flat on the polyester blends and underlining because it breathes.

SEWING TIPS

Staystitching is very important. Do not backstitch. Begin and end with a machine knot or tie threads.



Tip: Interface both sides of a stand-up collar with medium-weight interfacing. Cut all four layers on the bias.

Crinkle Cotton

PRESHRINK

Machine-wash in warm water and permanent press dryer cycle. After preshrinking fabric gets very narrow and very pleated. Press slightly to remove some of the pleating so that it looks more like it did when you bought it. No matter how much you are tempted not to preshrink, do it anyway. This fabric loses a lot of length after the first washing or dry cleaning. Using the fabric after preshrinking and *not* pressing (if you like the tiny pleats) is a bad idea. Garment is very heavy and pleats release in places of stress (knee, seat, tummy) at the first wearing—most unattractive!

LAYOUT

“Without nap” layout, double thickness. Use pattern weights instead of pins.

MARKING

Clo-Chalk or fabric markers.

CUTTING

Scissors or rotary cutter.

INTERFACING

Fuse-Knit or French Fuse on facings only.

THREAD

Good-quality cotton or polyester.

NEEDLE

80/12 H.



STITCH LENGTH

Tiny zigzag (0.5 mm width, 2.5 mm length).

PRESSER FOOT

Walking foot.



SEAM FINISH

Sew seam with tiny zigzag, then serge with a 3-thread overlock stitch. (See #21 on p. 177.)

PRESSING

Dry iron, cotton setting. Steam removes too many crinkles.

TOPSTITCHING

Not recommended.

CLOSURES

Button loops, button openings in a seam, frog closures, and snaps. (See #9 and #10 on p. 183, #12 on p. 184.)

HEM

Serge raw edge using differential feed, or push behind presser foot in easing. Turn up 1 in. Hand-hem, knotting every fourth stitch. (See #4 on p. 187.)

Crinkle cotton

FABRIC FACT


Available in 100% cotton and cotton blends, crinkles are formed by tightening the fabric weft and heat setting. Crinkles tend to seat out but can be restored with steam.

SUITABLE FOR

Medium-width pull-on pants and unstructured shirts. Good for traveling.

SEWING TIPS

Before you cut out facings, press pleated fabric as flat as possible. Interface with Fuse-Knit. For all seams, push fabric into the presser foot as you sew. Do not pull fabric from front or back. Stay-tape neck and shoulders with stay-tape lengths cut using the pattern as a guide.



Tip: Since beeswaxed thread on a hem makes the hem too visible, run your thread through Thread Heaven, a conditioner that prevents tangling.