

# Rockin' Retro Apron in Kitschy Cocktails & Plaid

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Fabric is from the Michael Miller Fabrics Kitschy Cocktails line (2020) and Cotton Couture



## FABRIC AND MATERIALS

### Preshrink all fabrics!



**FITTING NOTE:** Please read through ALL the instructions for FITTING NOTES before cutting, since you may wish to adjust the cut sizes to better suit your build. If you are larger or smaller than my average height and Medium-Large frame, you may wish to add a bit more yardage.

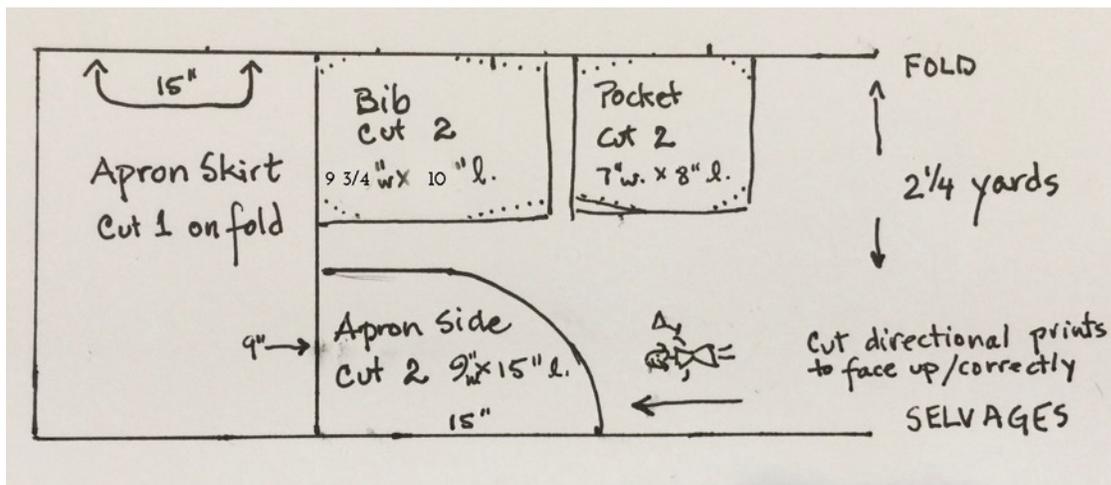
- o Focus Fabric 1: Kitschy Cocktails, blue 1 1/4 yard
- o Focus Fabric 2: Mad About Plaid, blue 1 yard
- o Accent: Cotton Couture Jet Black 1 yard
- o Matching thread (I used off-white and black)
- o Glue stick—washable! A school/craft glue stick is fine.
- o Spray starch

## FABRIC LAYOUT & Cutting

TIP: Use sticky notes, removable file folder labels or painter's tape to label pieces. Check each box as you have cut the pieces.

### Focus Fabric 1 / Kitschy Cocktails:

Be sure to cut pieces with the design facing the correct direction.



- Apron skirt front: Cut ONE on fold, 15" by 40-44" (width of fabric)
- Apron skirt sides: Cut TWO 9" wide by 15" tall
- Apron bib: Cut TWO 9" wide by 12" tall, see FITTING NOTES and instructions for shaping
- Apron pockets: Cut TWO 7" wide by 8" tall

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## Focus Fabric 2 / Plaid:

Cut on the bias:

- Hem ruffle: Cut THREE -- 4 ½" across the full width of fabric, about 45"
- Bib ruffle: Cut ONE -- 2 ½" by 24" long
- Pocket trim: Cut TWO -- 1 5/8" by 9" (will be trimmed later)
- Waistband: Cut ONE -- 1 5/8" by 30" (see FITTING NOTES above and below)
- Long ties: Cut TWO -- 1 5/8" across the full width of fabric, about 45"
- Neck band: Cut ONE -- 1 5/8" by 24" long (will be trimmed later)

## Accent / Michael Miller Jet Black:

Cut on **the straight grain before cutting bias strips:**

- Long ties: Cut TWO -- 3" by 40-45" (can be pieced if necessary; make shorter/longer ties as desired)

Next, cut on the **bias:**

- 1 1/8" strips for edging the skirt/ruffle edge, bib and outside pocket edges. You will need a total of about 180." Sew strips together as you would for a quilt binding. I used the 1 1/8" width strips to make turning the ¼" under easier and still have enough left to cover the bulk of the gathers and finish at about 3/8 - ½" on the apron-to-ruffle seam and the front of the bib.

Finally, cut on the **straight grain:**

- End of long ties: Cut TWO -- 1" x 5"
- Waistband: Cut ONE -- 2 ½" by 30" (adjust length to match desired size, see FITTING NOTES)
- Cut ONE -- 1" by 30" (ditto) for top edge of waistband
- Cut ONE -- 1 ¼" by 30" (ditto) for bottom edge of waistband
- Pockets: Cut ONE -- 1 5/8" by 9" for top edge of pocket trim
- Cut ONE -- ¾" by 9" for lower edge of pocket trim

NOTE: If you are using a print instead of a plaid or stripe, you can cut these on the cross-wise grain. You will need a bit less yardage overall.

NOTE: I had enough black in my stash to cut on the lengthwise grain which is more stable. You can just as easily cut the straight-grain pieces on the cross-grain so you don't need to buy as much fabric.

NOTE: **Seam allowances are either ¼" or 3/8."** Please follow instructions for each section.

NOTE: Ties were designed to be long enough to wrap around to the front. Depending on your measurements you may need to shorten/lengthen these ties, or you can cut them shorter and tie the bow in back. Figure out your waist, how much you need to wrap the ties to the front and, if needed, cut additional strips of black and of plaid.

## CONSTRUCTION:

I'll admit it...there are a lot of steps to this apron. Lay in a supply of nibbles and remember to take breaks to re-focus your eyes and move your body!

Check off each step/number as you work along so you can find your place after a break.

### Make the Apron Skirt

FITTING NOTE: This apron was designed to be about 28-30 inches along the waistband/top edge, which wraps most of the way around my body. Decide how long you want the top gathered edge to be and adjust accordingly (this comes into play when attaching the waistband in a later step). For those smaller than I am, just gather your skirt more or make the center panel narrower. For those who are larger, gather less; or you may (or may not) wish to make your side panels wider.

Length: With a ruffle that finishes at 3", this apron skirt is about 17" long. You may wish to adjust for your height and preferred length.

1. Sew apron skirt side panels to center panel. I created a mock flat-felled seam: sew wrong sides together with a 1/4" seam.

2. Press as stitched, then press open (photo near right).

3. Trim seam allowance on side panels to 1/8" (photo at right).

4. Fold other seam allowance in half so the raw edge nearly touches the seam. Apply glue stick to the 1/8" side. Press down; heat from iron will set and dry the glue—way easier than pins! Top right photo.

5. From the right side, stitch seam allowances in place. I prefer to use an edge stitch or quarter-inch-piecing foot with the blade in the ditch/lower side. Move your needle to the left so that it is towards the left side of the seam allowance. Stitch. See lower photo near right.

6. Hem lower edge of skirt ruffle-photo at lower far right.
  - o Fold a piece of copy paper in half lengthwise, or use a file folder or piece of poster board. Mark a line 1/4" from the long edge. Use this as a press guide to get a perfect 1/4" turn.
  - o Repeat so that raw edge is inside the hem. I call this a "turn-turn" hem.
  - o Stitch, again using an edge stitch foot and moving the needle to keep the sewing line a perfect distance from the edge.



- o For the ends, I retained the 45-degree angle and hemmed it the same way. You could also choose to round off the corner. Make sure the angles will curve / bend up to the gathered edge of the ruffle.

7. Gather hem ruffle:

- o Mark center of ruffle on the with a pin!!!! Do not sew over the pin! You can put the pin on the hemmed side.
- o Run two lines of basting stitches  $\frac{1}{4}$ " and  $\frac{1}{2}$ " from raw edge of ruffle with bobbin thread on the wrong side of the ruffle. If desired, loosen tension a bit to make the bobbin thread easier to pull.
- o Holding both ends of the bobbin threads, pull to gather. The gathers will be fairly dense, so you'll need to stop and move the gathers towards the center periodically. I worked the gathers from both ends.
- o Place the ruffle along the lower edge of the apron skirt and adjust gathering so that it fits.
- o Place a pin at either end and wind the bobbin thread tails around the pin in a figure 8 to secure them while you work.



8. Sew ruffle to skirt WRONG sides together with a  $\frac{3}{8}$ " seam, photo at right.

9. Black bias trim: Sew cut strips together as you would for a quilt binding, using a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance. Press seams as stitched, then press seams open.

10. Cut a length of black trim the length of the lower apron edge plus a couple inches just in case. Press under  $\frac{1}{4}$ " on one edge.

11. Sew the black trim to the seam that joined the ruffle to the skirt with a  $\frac{3}{8}$ " seam allowance. Photo at near right. The folded edge is on the left; when you turn the bias strip toward the skirt in the next step, the fold will be on the inside of the seam.



12. Press the seam as stitched. With the right side up, press the seam allowance and black bias strip toward the apron skirt.



13. Use your glue stick and iron to "pin" the black strip in place, covering the raw edges of the skirt/ruffle. Press The  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance turns to the inside. Photo at far right.

14. Sew the black strip. I began using a narrow buttonhole stitch for my applique, but switched to a straight stitch which I think looks better. Again, the edge-stitch foot or quarter-inch foot is perfect for getting precise seams and stitching lines. Remove any visible basting/gathering thread.

## Make the Apron Ties and Neck Strap

15. Spray starch the bias-cut plaid for the ties and neck strap. Stiffening this fabric slightly will make the following steps less fiddly.

16. Sew an inch-wide strip of black to the short pointy end of each of the waist ties. Press as stitched, then press seam allowances toward the black.
17. Sew the plaid to the black apron ties and neck strap only. Do not sew the waist portion, which is handled differently.
18. Press as stitched. Press seam allowances toward the black. Turn straps/ties right side out. You can use a narrow pole/stick/curtain rod to make this easier: turn the first couple inches by hand, then slide onto the top of the curtain rod and gently coax the entire strap until it is all right side out.
19. Press, centering the plaid and coaxing the seam allowances toward the black. Because the black is cut wider than the plaid, it wraps to the front to create an accent edge. The seam allowances should be underneath this accent edge. Leave the square end open. On the pointy end, trim to 5/8" from where the short black piece is stitched to the plaid. Turn under about 3/8" and press. You can machine or hand stitch this opening.
20. Stitch on the edge of the black or in the ditch so the seam allowances stay where they are supposed to. This will help a lot once you start wearing and washing it—worth the extra effort!

## Make the Apron Bib

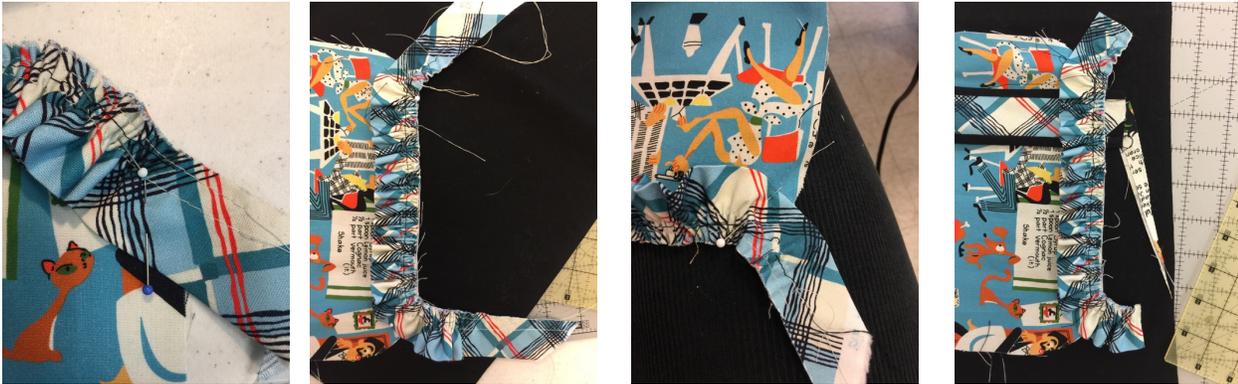
**FITTING NOTE:** Because of different body types, you will want to adjust the width of the bib and the length of the bib and strap to flatter your body. Cutting measurements are for my medium-sized build. I actually wish I had made the bib an inch shorter, so those with an average or larger bust size should be fine. Measure before you cut and before you sew.

21. Use something round to curve the top edges of the apron bib. I used the lid of my travel mug. Just draw a line around the curved edge, then trim off on both sides of the bib, near right photo.



22. Optional: taper the lower edge of the bib by trimming two skinny triangles off the lower edges. Mine were about 3/8" wide by just under 6" tall, center and right photos.
23. Gather bib ruffle. Fold fabric in half, wrong sides together. Sew basting lines at 1/4" and 1/2" and gather as before. This will be a very tight gather, which helps the ruffle stand upright. If yours is too long when gathered to your preference, trim as needed—see next steps.
24. Pin ruffle to the bib lining (inside piece).
  - o Curve the ends of the strip up, see second and third photos, below. Be careful (if this sort of thing bugs you) to make sure the curved ends are symmetrical. Ahem—guess which one I am

- Tuck one end of the neck strap between the ruffle and the bib lining, photo on right below. Be sure the plaid side of the strap is as pictured so that it will face the correct direction when the bib is completed.
- BASTE by machine.
- Turn up to make sure it looks good. Adjust if needed, especially on the ends.



25. Prepare front of bib.
- Cut black bias the length of the outside edge of the front bib plus 1" just in case.
  - Press  $\frac{1}{4}$ " under along one long edge.
  - Pin to the right side of the bib front with the fold edge turning under towards the center of the bib.
  - Baste on outside edge.
  - Press towards the center, easing excess in the rounded corners.
  - Applique/stitch the black trim to the bib. I used glue stick to "pin" the black in place and sewed used the edge-stitch foot/quarter inch foot with the flange and a straight stitch.
26. Pin bib front and bib lining right sides together. Sew  $\frac{3}{8}$ " seam. You may wish to sew a basting stitch seam first to make sure everything at the top is correctly placed and the corners and ruffle turn nicely. If you do, adjust as necessary, then sew the final seam.

## Prepare the Pockets

27. Create plaid-and-black band for the pockets.
28. Sew a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " strip of black (straight of grain) to bottom edge of starched plaid strip. Left photo.
29. Sew a  $1\frac{1}{8}$ " strip of black to the top of the pocket. Left photo
30. Sew wide black strip to the back of the pocket with a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam. Press as stitched, then press seam allowances toward the top of the pocket.



31. Wrap the bias unit to the front and applique in place. Stitch in the ditch or on the edge of the black.
32. Press under  $\frac{1}{4}$ " on long side of  $1\frac{1}{8}$ " bias black edging that is long enough to go around the pocket, and extend about  $\frac{1}{4}$ " beyond the top edge. If making two pockets, repeat. Turn under top edge of black trim even with top edge of plaid section.
33. Sew to wrong side of pocket with  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam. Press as stitched. Turn to right side encasing the raw edge. Use glue stick to "pin" black in place.
34. Place pockets on front at desired location. Mine are 6" either side of the center of the apron skirt. Sew in place. I used the edge-stitch foot again and a straight line on both sides of the outside black trim. Photo at right.



### Sew the waistband and finish neckband

35. Administer chocolate or wine as needed—you're near the end!
36. Sew 1" strips of black to each side of the starched plaid waistband piece. Press seam as stitched, then press seams away from plaid. On top edge, wrap fabric around to the back and press. See photos below.

**FITTING NOTE:** this is where you get to alter the size to fit you. I wanted my apron to come around my hips to the back. This is your apron, so make yours the way you like best! It can come just to your sides, be almost all on the front, or wrap well around you. I'm messy, so far around was my choice!

37. Sandwich the lower edge of the bib between the back and front of the waistbands. Optional: baste the bib to the center of the solid black waistband (back side). Photo below left.
38. Pin the plaid waistband front and sew. In the right photo below, I aligned the right side of the presser foot with the edge of the seam and positioned my needle just below the seam edges.



39. Press seam as stitched, then press all fabrics away from the bib portion.



40. Pin apron skirt to black portion of waistband, wrong side of apron to the right side of the black leaving 1/2" extra on each end (see step 43). Distribute gathers as desired/evenly. You can use the tip of a pin to scrape the gathers into place, photo below right. Sew.



41. Sew apron skirt to black waistband back with a 3/8" seam. Use the pin to prevent tucks from forming as you stitch. You may wish to decrease the presser foot pressure so the bulk travels more smoothly under the presser foot. Remember to change it back when done.



42. Check to make sure you like the way it looks, then zigzag the edges, see right photo above. This will make the next two steps easier.

43. Fold in the 1/2" extension on the waistband. Tuck the square end of the waist band ties into either end of the waistband. Fold the waistband front over the seam you just stitched, being sure to cover the seam line. As best you can, get the skinny bits of black on the waistband and ties to line up. Photo at nearright.



44. Stitch on the edge of the black waistband front to secure the waistband to the top of the apron.

45. Stitch in the ditch or on the edge of the black of the waistband as well as along the ends where you tucked in the ties.

46. Tie the apron to your waist. With the unfinished end of the strap behind the bib, adjust the length of the neck strap to suit you. If it is long enough to pull over your head easily, trim with about an inch of extra length. Tuck the ends in and stitch closed. Pin the strap to the bib at the desired spot and machine stitch in the ditch next to the black trim near the top ruffle. If it's awkward to pull on and off, use Velcro or snaps instead.

47. **HALLELUJAH you're DONE!** Put it on, wear it with gusto! Grab some bubbly or mix yourself a Kitschy Cocktail and celebrate a party apron made with the finest of details and finishing—not a raw edge to be seen anywhere. (And if need be, give it a wash or wipe to remove any visible glue stick—it'll come out in the wash.)

**THANK YOU** for following along this intricate project. Yes, you could have overcast edges and make it faster, but this way you've learned some fine finishing techniques to apply to garment and home dec sewing AND made yourself a Rockin' Retro Apron!

And of course, Thank you to Michael Miller Fabrics for selecting me as a 2020 Brand Ambassador and to Janome America for having me as a Janome Artisan since 2003. I am honored, humbled and grateful for your support.