

# Bag of the Month

## September: drawstring shoulder bag

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*The first bag in Handwoven's Bag of the Month series is one of the many simple bags we enjoy designing and weaving at Estúdio 56 in São Paulo, Brazil (see Handwoven, September/October, pages 32–33 for more about us!). Most of us enjoy weaving on very simple looms, finding great pleasure in making beautiful objects to wear and use. This bag is woven on a rectangular frame loom with pegs. Peg looms like this one have an advantage, over a loom with shafts or a rigid heddle: You can weave a fabric with a selvedge on all four sides.*

To make a bag the way this one is made, you'll need a peg loom like the loom shown here. Pegs or nails hold the warp in place and the weaving is done with a needle. There are some excellent peg looms you can purchase (see Resources), but none of them are the specific size used for this bag. You can make a peg loom by purchasing a sturdy picture frame  $8\frac{1}{2}'' \times 11''$ . On each of the long sides, sink twenty-eight  $\frac{3}{4}''$  nails with smooth round heads  $\frac{3}{8}''$  apart and  $\frac{1}{4}''$  deep.

### Weaving on a peg loom

The warp for a peg loom is a continuous thread. Tied to the first peg on one side, it is wound from peg to peg across the loom until the desired width is reached.

The weaving is done with a needle. Threaded with the weft, the needle passes over and under pairs of warp threads, single warp threads, or even in some other arrangement, such as a twill. When the structure is plain weave, the needle returns by passing over the threads it went under and under the threads it went over in the previous row.

The weft is then pulled through the shed in an arc to accommodate weft take-up. To achieve the desired weft sett, a tapestry comb presses the weft into place. It must be pressed very firmly for weft-faced weaves like the one used for this bag.



**Tools for the bag: peg loom with 28 pegs on each side, tapestry comb, tapestry needles.**

At the top of the weaving, extra weft is pressed in for the last few picks so that when the fabric is lifted off the pegs there is enough weft to spread into the spaces formerly occupied by the pegs.

After the fabric is removed, the weft can be gently moved toward the bottom and top to fill in the spaces left by the pegs. The result is a perfect woven rec-

tangle with four secure selvages.

### Resources for peg looms

Harrisville Designs (Peg Looms): [www.harrisville.com](http://www.harrisville.com)

Hazel Rose Looms (Square Looms): [www.hazelroselooms.com](http://www.hazelroselooms.com)

Schacht Spindle Co. (the Mini Loom), [www.schachtspindle.com](http://www.schachtspindle.com)



## STEPS FOR WEAVING AND SEWING THE BAG

**Step 1** Wind the warp from the starting peg to the corresponding peg on the other side of the frame and back again until 28 pegs on both sides are included. Knot the end of the warp around the frame or the last peg. (On a shaft loom, wind a warp of 55 ends  $1\frac{1}{2}$  yd long. Sley an 8-dent reed with 1 doubled end/dent alternating with 2 empty dents except sley the last 3 ends on one side and the last 4 ends on the other side singly, in every other dent. Thread the shafts so that the ends that were sleyed singly are 1/heddle and those sleyed double are 2/heddle.)

**Step 2** Weave the fabric using the natural cotton weft in plain weave (see page 1) at about 24 picks per inch (or as close as possible for the thickness of your weft). Weave over and under pairs of warp threads throughout except for 3 single ends on one side and 4 single ends on the other (this will strengthen the edges). After  $1\frac{1}{4}$ ", inlay the first chenille stripe: Beginning on the selvedge with 3 single ends, take the chenille weft 4" into the warp and back out (2 picks of chenille). Weave  $1\frac{1}{4}$ " natural and then inlay 4 picks of chenille  $5\frac{1}{2}$ " into the warp for the second chenille stripe. Weave  $1\frac{1}{4}$ " natural and then inlay 8 picks of chenille

$6\frac{1}{2}$ " into the warp for the third stripe. Repeat the first two stripes in reverse order separated by  $1\frac{1}{4}$ " natural (you'll have five stripes of chenille; see page 2). Let the chenille weft tails dangle from the back side. (If you are using a shaft loom, repeat the chenille stripes after  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " of natural.)

**Step 3** When you reach the end of the fabric and are weaving close to the nails, press the last weft threads in as closely as possible, cut the weft and weave in the tail, and gently lift the woven rectangle off of the pegs. Weave a second rectangle of fabric in the same way as the first. (If you are using a shaft loom, when you have woven 16" with two sets of chenille stripes remove the warp from the loom allowing about 5" fringe at each end. On each end, with a tapestry needle take the warp threads down into the cloth: Take one thread of each pair down along the adjacent warp thread on one side of the pair and the other thread down along the adjacent warp thread on the other side.)

**Step 4** To construct the bag, place the two rectangles wrong sides together (the sides with the chenille weft tails) and use a figure-eight stitch to sew three sides together. The bottom of the bag

is formed by the two selvages where the 3 ends were woven singly and from which the chenille ends were entered. (If you wove the fabric on a shaft loom, fold it in half joining the two raw edges and stitch them and the selvages with 3 single threads together using a figure-eight stitch.

**Step 5** Cut the lining fabric 9" x 20". Fold it in half and sew side seams with a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance. Fold and press the top edge  $\frac{1}{2}$ " to the outside and place the lining in the bag (wrong sides together). Sew the lining to the bag around the top by hand, using an invisible stitch. The edge of the lining will be about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " below the top edge of the bag. Attach a patch pocket to the right side of the lining if desired before placing it in the bag.

**Step 6** Create a strap by threading the 80" length of cording in the darning needle and lacing it through the woven fabric about  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " from the top edge taking 1" stitches about 1" apart. Start on one side  $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the center of the bag and bring the needle out of the last stitch 1" from where you started stitching. Tie the ends in a bow. Slide the cording so that the loops are even on both sides to use as straps.

### PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

**Weave structure for bag fabric**  
Plain weave.

#### Equipment

$8\frac{1}{2}$ " x 11" peg loom with 28 pegs or nails  $\frac{3}{8}$ " apart on each of the 11" sides; tapestry comb; tapestry needle; long darning needle or a 6" bent Navajo sacking needle (see photo, page 1). You can also weave the bag on a 2-shaft or 4-shaft loom with 11" weaving width; 8-dent reed; 2 shuttles.

#### Yarns

Warp: 8/4 cotton carpet warp (1,680 yd/lb), natural, 27 yd for a frame loom, 83 yd for a 2-shaft or 4-shaft loom.  
Weft: worsted-weight cotton yarn (400–1,000 yd/lb), 50–100 yd depending on thickness; the finer the

yarn the more yarn you'll need. (Choose from Peaches & Cream worsted weight at 840 yd/lb, Peaches and Cream double worsted weight at 400 yd/lb, Tahki Classic cable cotton at 1,000 yd/lb, or other thick natural cotton yarn.)

Accent weft: rayon chenille, 1,450 yd/lb, Wild Grape Combo (space dyed in purples, dark reds, and blues), 5 yd.

#### Yarn sources

Worsted-weight cotton yarns are available from most yarn retailers, space-dyed rayon chenille from Webs, 6" bent Navajo sacking needle from Halcyon Yarn.

#### Notions and other materials

Unbleached cotton lining fabric 9" x 20", 80" length of leather or plastic cording for strap, matching sewing thread.

#### Warp order and length

55 ends (for 31 working warp threads) wound on a frame loom to equal 8" length each. 55 ends (for 31 working warp threads)  $1\frac{1}{2}$  yd long if you are using a shaft loom (allows 30" loom waste).

#### Warp and weft spacing

Warp:  $2\frac{2}{3}$  epi (1 doubled end in every third dent of an 8-dent reed on a shaft loom; sley the last 3 single ends on one side and the last 4 single ends on the other side 1-0. Width in the reed:  $10\frac{2}{3}$ ".  
Weft: 20–30 ppi. Woven length: 8" per bag face; 16" for woven fabric on a shaft loom measured under tension.

#### Finished dimensions

Amounts produce one bag 8" x 10" with a corded drawstring and strap.