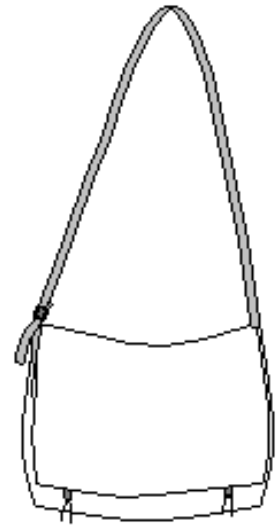
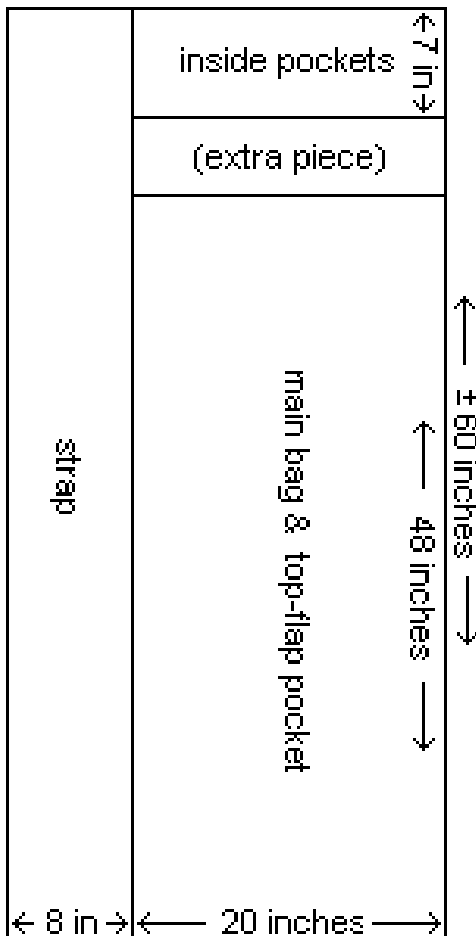


MAKING A SHOULDER BAG

This simple shoulder bag is not difficult or expensive to make. You will only need about one yard of canvas, three or five buttons, 24 or 40 inches of $\frac{1}{8}$ inch cord, a 2 inch "slider buckle" for the strap, and regular sewing equipment to make it. Shoulder bags work good for day hikes, and can also be used for overnight hikes in connection with a bedroll. The nice thing about using a shoulder bag is that it's possible to get things in and out of them without having to take them off, like you would have to do with a backpack. You can even get into them while walking down the trail!



We will make the shoulder bag described here from ordinary untreated canvas which is fairly inexpensive. This pattern is for 60 inch wide material, but other widths can also be easily used. To make this shoulder bag you only need 28 inches in "running length" of the 60 wide canvas material. But purchase at least one yard (36 inches) of canvas, as this type of canvas shrinks about 80% in "running length" which means the 36 inches will shrink down to about 28! For some reason the shrinkage in the width is negligible. Pre-wash the material before working with it to avoid problems later.



LAY-OUT

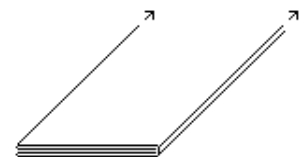
Lay the material out so you can measure, and cut or rip out: an 8 inch by 60 inch strip along the width of the material for the shoulder strap, a 20 by 48 inch piece for the main bag & top-flap pocket, and a 20 by 7 inch piece for the inside pockets. If possible one edge of the inside pockets piece should be along the selvedge edge. If not, make the piece 20 by 8 inches to allow for a hem.

SHOULDER STRAP

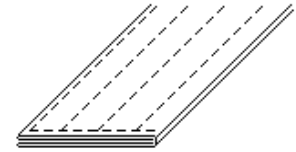
① Fold the 8 by 60 inch piece of material in half, and iron a crease down it's center. Be precise, as the material may have a tendency to "crawl" during ironing.

② Open, then fold each of the out-side edges into the center, ironing a crease along each of these folds. Again, be precise to avoid "crawling."

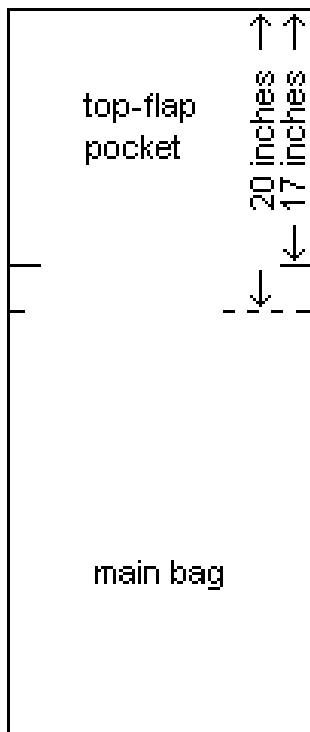
③ Fold the two sides together to make a strap that is four layers thick. Iron one last time if necessary to help keep it all together.



④ Sew along the edge of the opening along the long side first to help keep things together. Then turn and sew back down the center of the strap. Turn again and sew in between the first line of stitching and the center line of stitching. And finally turn and sew between the opposite edge and the center to end up with four lines of stitching along the length of the strap.



⑤ Cut about 6 inches from one of the selvedge ends from the finished strap, and about 46 inches from the other selvedge end. Discard the center piece of the strap.

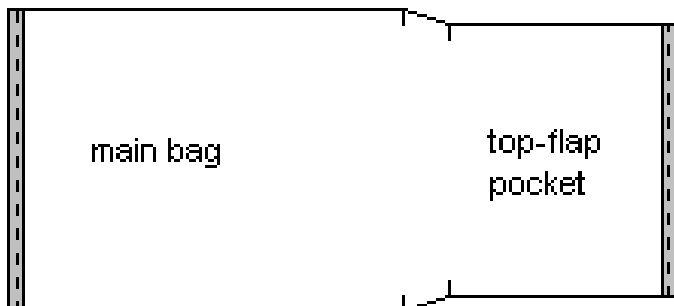
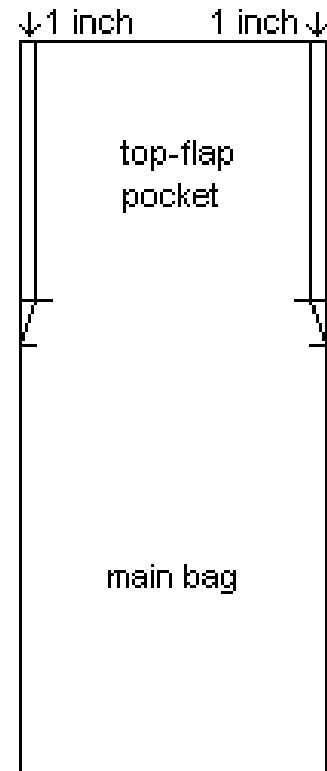


MAIN BAG & TOP-FLAP POCKET

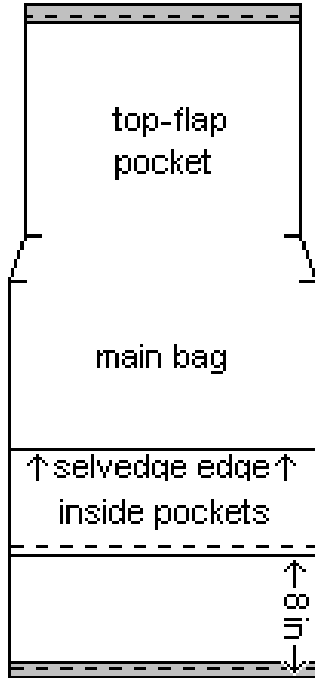
① Begin by making two marks, one 17 inches and another 20 inches up from one end, on each side of the main bag & top-flap pocket piece. This end will become the top-flap pocket.

② Mark 1 inch along both sides of material down to the 17 inch mark, and then diagonal over to the edge of the material at the 20 inch mark as shown. Cut this strip off.

③ Water-proof the shoulder bag by rubbing paraffin over the entire piece of material, on the opposite side of the marks. Rub as much paraffin as possible so that the material appears “frosted.” (This will become the “outside” of the shoulder bag.) Iron the material, to melt the paraffin into it. “Frost” and iron the material once more, to give it a second coat of paraffin. After this treatment, the material should be somewhat stiff, but not rigid.

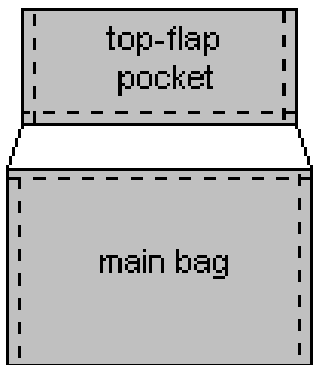
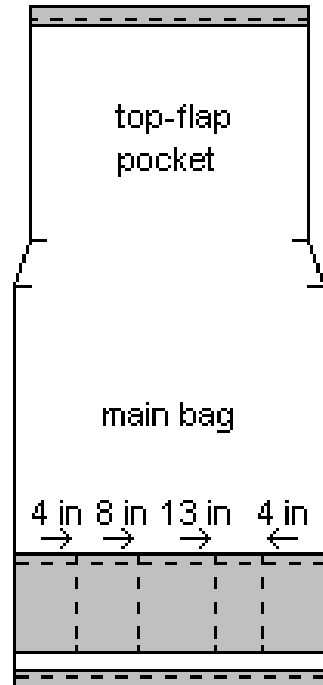


④ Hem both ends of the material. (The shading in the drawings represents the side of the material that will become the outside of the shoulder bag.)

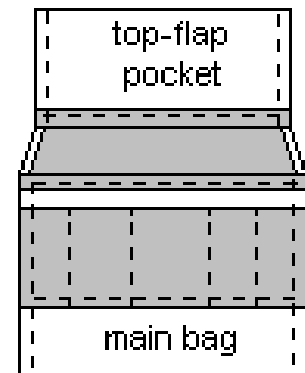


⑤ Make a line 8 inches up from the main bag end of the material. Lay the “inside pockets” piece along this line as shown with the selvedge edge toward the center of the main bag piece. Sew $\frac{3}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in from the edge parallel to the line.

⑥ Fold the inside pockets piece up along this seam and sew it down. To make the pockets themselves, measure in from the left side, top and bottom, and mark 4 inches, 8 inches, and 13 inches; and from the right side 4 inches. Draw lines to connect these marks if necessary and sew along these lines to make the pocket divisions.

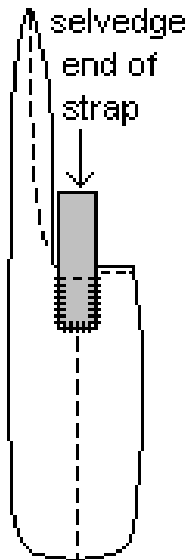


⑦ Fold the main bag end of the material to the 20 inch mark made in step ① to make the main bag, and the top-flap pocket end of the material to the 17 inch mark made in step ① to make the top-flap pocket. Sew $\frac{3}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch seams along both sides of the material. (Either use pins, or start at the marks and sew out to the corners to keep material from “crawling” and ending up in the wrong place at the end of the seam.)



⑧ Turn the main bag and top-flap pocket inside out and sew “french seams” to prevent the canvas material from unraveling.

⑨ Turn the bag right-side-out. Turn under and sew down the “flap” of material on the edges between the main bag and top-flap pocket. Sew buttons and attach ties to close the 5 inch wide, (the largest,) inside pocket, the top-flap pocket, and possibly the top-flap to the main bag.



SEWING THE STRAP ONTO THE BAG

Sew one piece of the shoulder strap to each side of the main bag. It is best to sew the cut end to the bag, leaving the selvedge edge for the loose end as it will not unravel. Center the end of the strap over the seam about 2½ inches down from the upper edge of the main bag as shown. It might be easier to hand sew this with heavy thread, rather than sew it with a machine, as the strap straddles the bulky french seam inside the bag. After the two sections of strap are sewn to the bag, they are joined with the 2 inch slider buckle so that the strap length can be adjusted.

USING THE SHOULDER BAG

Only pack flat items in the top-flap pocket or it simply won't lay right. Bulkier items should go into the main bag. Adjust the length of the strap after you have loaded the bag. Experiment with different strap lengths to find out what works best for you. The bag seems to be most comfortable riding in the hollow of the back, or slightly lower. This may seem higher than it should be, but if the bag is worn too low it swings with each step and can be most annoying! The shoulder bag can be worn a number of ways, so when one shoulder gets a little tired just experiment with a different position.