

Beach Towel Tote

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Turn a beach towel or bath sheet into a temporary tote for your sunscreen and supplies. When you get to your destination, just unzip the tote and it's ready to protect you from the sand as you lie in the sun.

Materials

These instructions are for a tote that finishes 12" x 12" x 6", made from a 36" x 72" beach towel. You can adapt the proportions of your tote to work with towels of different dimensions, and even change the zipper lengths to create a wider tote if you prefer.

1 beach towel, 36" x 72"

[4 coordinating Coats® zippers](#), 12" long

1 yard of 1"-wide twill tape or grosgrain ribbon

Zipper Tip

Metal zippers and those with decorative tapes are great for an exposed-zipper project like this one, but they may not be available in the length you need. Remember that polyester-coil zippers – the all-purpose workhorse of our sewing rooms – can be shortened easily, so any coil zippers 12" or longer will work for this project. Trim the upper ends of the *open* zipper 1/2" beyond the towel's edge and turn the raw edges under before stitching the zipper in place.

Instructions

1. Fold the towel in half lengthwise and widthwise and mark the centerlines with pins or basting stitches. Measure along one long edge of the towel and mark the point 3" from the centerline.

2. Open a zipper and lay it on the towel with its teeth pointing away from the centerline and its top stop on the edge of the towel at the 3" mark. Pin the zipper tape to the towel, keeping it parallel to the centerline all the way to the bottom stop.
3. Position the second zipper tape at right angles to the first and pin it to the towel. The teeth will be 12" from the long edge of the towel. A pleat will form at the bottom of the zipper; that's normal. *If you are using a longer zipper, close it and mark both zipper tapes 12" from the bottom stop, then unzip.*
4. Fold the ends of the zipper tapes to the wrong side and stitch the zippers to the towel. Use matching thread to topstitch through the center of the zipper tape. *Optional:* Accent the exposed zipper tapes with decorative stitches from your machine.
5. Position and attach the other three zippers to form a cross on the towel. The space between the bottom zipper stops will measure 6" x 12"; this will be the bottom of the tote when it's folded and zipped.
6. Cut the ribbon in half and press 1/2" to the wrong side on each end. Stitch one piece to each side of the tote as a handle, with the handle ends about 4" apart and 1 1/2" below the tote's upper edge when zipped. Be sure to attach the handle through only one layer of the towel.

To use the tote, close the four zippers and fold the ends of the towel in thirds. Fold and tuck the ends into the zippered portion.

Inspirations

- Center an appliquéd or embroidered design on the part of the towel that will be the front of the tote.
- Instead of a towel, use a yard of fleece (about 36" x 60"). Simply serge or blanket stitch the edges and you'll have a tote for football and hockey games or other cold-weather activities.
- Make the bag from an oilcloth tablecloth and it will be a wonderful picnic mat when unzipped.

Thanks to Mary Mulari for the zipper inspirations!