

Travelogue Tuffet



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Creative Machine Needlearts

Travels over, put your feet up and show off your great photo memories at the same time. The tuffet is surprisingly simple to make, so you can lavish your time on printing special fabric and placing accent stitches just so. As a bonus, embroider places and dates on the underside of the tuffet to keep your recollections fresh.

Materials

Tuffet kit and pattern from <http://tuffetsource.com>

Custom-printed fabric from <http://www.spoonflower.com/>

1 yard of coordinating quilter's cotton

Coats Dual Duty XP All Purpose and Heavy threads

RNK Micro Thread

Size 90/14 Topstitch needle

Size 75/11 Embroidery needle

Size 80/12 Universal needle

12" upholstery needle

About the tuffet kit: You'll have several choices for your tuffet's materials, including whether to make your own kit or buy one from The Tuffet Source. I recommend buying a kit, especially for your first tuffet; it contains everything you need, including a button form and cords for gathering the cover and attaching the button.

Instructions

1. In photo editing software, add a narrow border (20 pixels, white) around your snapshots. This band of white separates the images and helps to create the appearance of a stack of photographs. Arrange the photos to fill the space needed for the tuffet panels.

- For the simplest arrangement, fill an area 36" x 42" with photos. You'll cut the necessary pieces later.
- To engineer your photos for the tuffet, create an object the size and shape of the tuffet pattern piece and use it to crop your virtual photo stack. For the sample tuffet, I knew I wanted to cover only six of the eight strip sections in each tuffet panel, so I altered my virtual pattern piece accordingly. Remember that you'll use 3/4" along the sides, about 1 1/2" at the top, and as much as 3"-4" at the bottom in seams, and cluster your favorite photos near the center of each panel to ensure their visibility in the finished project.

2. Go to Spoonflower's web site and upload your file. Be sure to read their instructions and requirements; for example, your file should be 150 dpi (dots per inch) to preserve the correct sizing when it's printed. One yard of 45"-wide cotton fabric is enough for a tuffet like mine; I chose the Kona cotton. Order your fabric and – this is the hard part – wait a few days for your printed fabric to arrive.

3. Carefully read and follow the instructions from The Tuffet Source to construct your tuffet, with these variations.

a. Position your printed fabric on the foundation so that it covers the left edge of the foundation (viewed from the right side) and the first six strips. Pin and/or baste the fabric to the foundation.

b. Cut your strips of coordinating fabric 4" x 21". Lay a coordinating strip on the printed fabric, right sides together, positioning the edges at least 1/4" beyond the guideline on the foundation. Curve the coordinating fabric gently around the bend in the seamline and use plenty of pins to secure the layers. Turn the panel so that the foundation is on top and stitch along the printed line. Trim and press the pieces as instructed in the pattern. You'll have covered the entire panel foundation with just these two fabrics. Make eight panels

Note: Although the fabric is cut on the straight grain, it will ease around the curve in the seam. Be sure you don't introduce any pleats or gathers as you sew and press. The foundation may not lie flat after you attach the coordinating strip; that's okay. Think of it as making a dart so that your fabric fits the 3D tuffet.

c. Install a 90/14 Topstitch needle on your machine. Thread the needle with Heavy thread; use All Purpose thread in the bobbin. Set the stitch length to 3.0 mm and reduce the tension slightly. Sew two parallel rows of topstitching along the panel seam, sewing on the coordinating fabric.

d. As you join the assembled panels, add one additional row of topstitching with Heavy thread along the new seam. It's easier to topstitch as you go rather than waiting until all eight panels are joined, but it does necessitate a lot of needle and thread changes.

e. Fuse a scrap of interfacing to the wrong side of a 9" square of coordinating fabric. Choose an embroidery design less than 2 1/4" in diameter and stitch it at the center of the prepared fabric. Use the embroidered fabric to create your covered button. The design on the sample was digitized in PE Design Next, using the Create Floral Pattern feature.

f. Before attaching the large circle to the bottom of your tuffet, embroider places and dates that identify your photos. Micro Thread is a perfect choice for small lettering.

More Ideas

- Make a memory tuffet with old photos for a graduate or wedding couple.
- Take photos of locations in your town to make a keepsake for someone moving away.
- If you prefer not to make your own fabric, there are many novelty prints on the market and you'll probably find one that expresses your theme: travel, hobby, occupation, etc.

