

Felt applique reliquary bags

Materials list for the Felt Applique Reliquary Bags

Fabric for bags and for lining

Applique shapes

Thread for the applique, to stitch the bags, and to stitch the lining together (sewing machine if wanted to stitch the lining together)

Beads for embellishment

Needles for hand sewing, beading, and stitching the appliques

Choose Shape and Size

I chose rectangular. Mine were 6" by 7" when finished with a fold over closure in front that added 3" to the overall length. Your fabric choice might change the size and shape also.

Decide on fabric

I chose a wool blend felt sold by the yard. This is a bit pricey. There are acrylic felt options by the yard or by the craft square. These are less expensive options. The craft square will change options for construction.

Choose the applique for decoration

I chose simple shapes. Geometric shapes lend themselves well. I would suggest using shapes that aren't complicated as the blanket stitching around the edges is an issue. I also suggest using felt for the applique design.



Choose how you will close the bag

I found inexpensive broaches and giant pins on the internet. I also used a toggle type closure with a large “pearl” button and a bit of inkle weaving.





Decide on the thread and beading for embellishment

I used a blanket stitch for the applique and the edges of the bags. I also used a blanket stitch for attaching the lining to the bag. For this stitching, I used two types of silk thread: one that had several strands or was plyed, and one that was 20/2 silk. You could also use embroidery floss or tatting thread for a less expensive option. The thicker threads will require different needles than regular sewing needles. You can also use metallic thread for embellishment.

I used various sizes of beads. Smaller beads will require beading needles. These can be a challenge to thread. I used thread to match the beads. I found that Sewology and Gutermann both make a metallic thread thin enough to fit the beading needles. I was not happy with the Sulky metallic thread, but it would work for embellishment. Regular sewing thread was sometimes too thick for the beading needles.



Decide on the lining

You really do want to line the bags. It makes for a much nicer finished product and hides all the stitching from beading and applique. I used linen and silk (shantung and dupioni), but you can use what pleases you. I would suggest a plain fabric as opposed to one with a design or a pattern. I think a cotton type fabric would be best. To do the lining you will basically make another bag and stitch it into the felt bag.

