THE "AROUND TOWN" IN-THE-HOOP BAG

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Looking for a bag to organize your essentials for running around on quick trips? Or how about a small bag to carry your passport, a bit of money, a tube of lip gloss and your cell phone? Then here it is!

Simple single zip bags are nice for organizing various essentials but seldom ideal for carrying the things you need for daily trips and errands. The "Around Town" bag solves that dilemma with three zippered compartments in the basic version.

While I show this bag with a simple strap, you could easily make an adjustable one to make the bag even more versatile. I added an extra long strap on the smaller bag to make it cross body and used a purchased leather handbag strap for the larger bag.

Make your bag in any combination of fabrics. You can dress it up or dress it down. The larger version is stitched with linen (beige) and doeskin (black) and shown with the additional designs on the front; there is also a plain version. The instructions tell you where you can insert your own designs.

As with most ITH projects, you'll notice many color changes but each of these bags was stitched in just one color. Choose your colors as desired but don't recolor in software because those color stops are necessary to stop the machine to perform various steps.

The Around Town bag is fully lined. There are no exposed seams on the two lower pockets but there are on the larger one. Each pocket is isolated from the others and extends to the bottom of the bag. This bag can be entirely completed in one hooping and with no need to finish any raw edges after turning (assuming premade straps and loops).

Due to the many layers of fabric required for all the pockets, there is no quilting or batting added to these designs.

Figure 1. My iPhone 6 fits nicely in the front lower pocket and my iPad will just slip into the back pocket (no case). A slightly larger bag would work better for toting a full-size iPad.

EASY ADDITIONS

On both bags, I've added a large, plain flat pocket on the back. I've top-stitched the top edge to give it a little structure and just that part does require a bit of sewing on your part. Also, I've added a single credit card size pocket to the small bag in the main bag area. The addition of a ribbon loop on this one gives a convenient spot to snap on my keys.
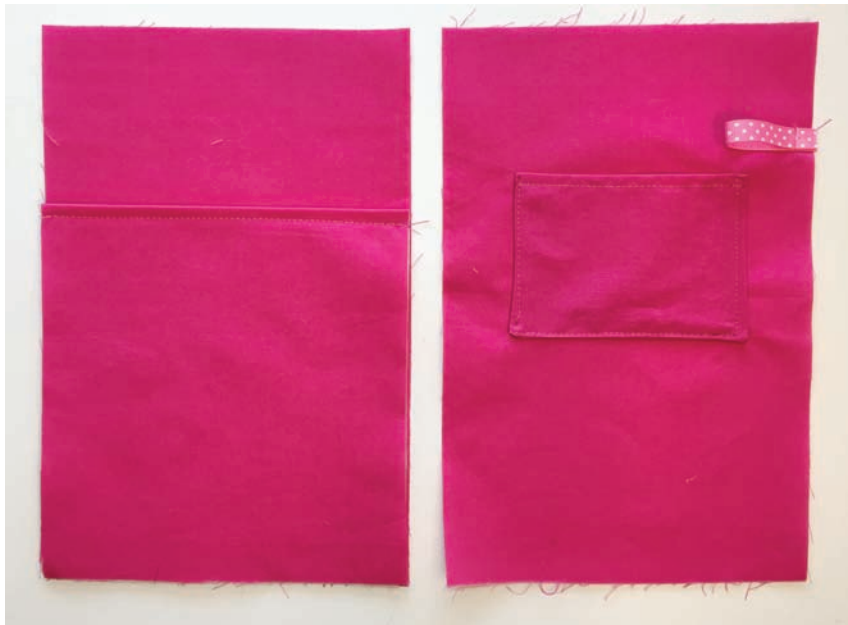
Figure 2. Easy add-ons include a small patch pocket and ribbon loop on the lining (right) and large, full width pocket on the back.

On the larger one, I've added a credit card size pocket to each of the smaller pockets on the front and a zippered pocket to the main area.

Figure 3. Zippered pocket in main lining of larger bag requires a little more work and adds security.

Figure 4. The larger bag has smaller pockets in each of the 3 zippered areas. Smaller patch pockets in the two outer pockets might hold business cards or earbuds. The zippered pocket in the main interior is more secure.

All these additions are done before the embroidery process starts so there's no other extra work later. If you're after an in-the-hoop only project, then skip the pockets and use purchase strapping materials and you'll still have a great bag with no other sewing required.

Also, on the small bag, I've added an inside ribbon loop and made a self fabric strap. I'm currently using a purchased leather bag strap for the larger bag.

As you can see by the two bags shown here, there are a lot of possibilities for customizing a bag for an upscale look or a fun and casual one.

Both bags are flat but if you know how to sew, you could make two of the zippered front panels up to the last two colors and then use those to sew and more complex bag with a strip of fabric to connect them to make a boxier style. It's on my "to do" list!

About These Designs

It's relatively easy to insert other designs into this bag design. In a design with multiple color stops like these, you'll simply add it between the appropriate color changes. By looking at the bag with the swirls, you can see where they belong.

Both sizes of the plain bag follow the same sewing sequence so the placement would be at the same point for each.

Check out this YouTube video that shows how to edit a redwork design into a new border and insert it into a plain version of this bag. **How to Extract & Edit a Design in Embrilliance Enthusiast**.

In that video, which goes along with the Echidna P.I.E. series of lessons, a basic plain ITH zippered bag was customized.

Skill Level
- Basic embroidery skills with the ability to follow directions!
- Basic sewing skills optional

What You'll Learn
- How to create a lined bag with 3 zippered pockets entirely in one hooping
- Some simple customizing options

What's Included in This Set
- 4 multi-format embroidery designs (1 plain + 1 embellished, each in 2 sizes)
- Color sequence PDF
- These instructions to complete the project

Requirements

These are large designs and require a suitable machine and hoop to stitch them. They are not intended for split hoops.

Note About Links

In some cases, links to external web sites are included for more information on a technique or product. All the links were active at the time of writing but web sites can vanish and pages can change. If a link is no longer working, please let me know and then just use a search tool to see if the information can be found elsewhere. You may also find more info on this page: **LindeeGEmbroidery.com/resource-list/**

Around Town ITH 3-Zips Bag

> ✏️ *Please read through all instructions before starting your project! This project, while complex, is not really difficult because the embroidery takes care of all the construction. Cut and place carefully and you'll have a successful result!*

> ⚠️ *Resizing is not recommended!*

SUPPLIES

- I worked from my stash and mostly used remnants and fat quarters of various fabrics. Actual amounts depend on which bag you are making, how many different fabrics you're using, and what options you're adding. Use the list of fabric dimensions to determine your requirements.
- Fusible interfacing (I used **Pellon 950F ShirTailor**)
- 3 polyester or nylon zippers that coordinate with your fabric and are at least 2" longer than the bag's width. **DO NOT USE A METAL ZIPPER!**
  - If you add the optional zippered pocket in the lining, you'll need an additional zipper
- Wash-Away Tear Away or Wash-Away stabilizer; do not use cutaway. I used washaway tearaway; Hemingworth Wash-Away water soluble or Sulky Fabri Solvy also works. **DO NOT USE CUTAWAY. STABILIZER IS EXPOSED ON THE INSIDE AND NEEDS TO BE REMOVED**.
- Coordinating embroidery thread. Polyester embroidery thread is recommended over rayon for any seam stitching during the bag construction.

  Optional: You may wish to wind a matching bobbin for the designs but the back won't be that prominent unless you turn the bag inside out. I used a black bobbin on the larger bag and a white one on the smaller one (pink thread in needle).

- Cellophane tape or other tape that won't gum up the needle when sewn through (I used painter's tape for the photos)
- **Wonder Tape** (sew through, double stick washaway tape, optional)
- Elmer's School Glue sticks are also good (works better on tearaway than wash-away)
- Handle, or strap can be self-fabric, purchased webbing, or purchased bag handle
- **Hardware for the optional loop: D-ring, swivel hook or other**. Choose hardware size based on your strap width or adjust your strap to fit the hardware. Thinner less bulky hardware is best.

EQUIPMENT

- Embroidery machine with a minimum sewing field large enough for the design you've selected
- Steam iron

- Rotary cutter, ruler, mat
- Mini-iron

OTHER/OPTIONAL

- Narrow ribbon or constructed self-fabric strip for loop
- TESA (temporary embroidery spray adhesive)
- Decorative pull or tie for the zipper tab

A NOTE ABOUT STABILIZERS

The stabilizer will not be hidden between any layers in this project. However, it will only be visible on the inside back of the front panels. In other words, hardly visible. I used two types of temporary stabilizers for my samples.

For the smaller pink bag, I used wash-away tear-away. The advantages are that it's less expensive than wash-away water soluble fiber products, it's easier to tear out, it doesn't shrink when you apply heat (you will need to do some pressing), and it takes better to glue stick. The disadvantages are that you can't easily remove tape without tearing off layers of stabilizer, it's less resistant to pins, and the product doesn't tear cleanly.

For the larger bag, I used wash-away fiber. The advantages are that you can easily tape and remove it without damage. Also, since it's not a tear-away, it stands up to pinning much better. You can get a tighter hold with pins than tape and pins won't ravel out your fabric edges like tape can. The disadvantages of this stabilizer are higher cost, it must be removed by cutting or soaking, and it shrinks with pressing, which means you'll need to remove it before pressing.

What about no-show mesh? Sure, you can use that too but just remember it will be permanent but not all that visible unless you're looking for it on the inside back of the two lower pockets.

INSTRUCTIONS

Normally the best hoop size is one just larger than the design. If you have a larger hoop, you'll have more free space around the design to tape various elements to the stabilizer where the tape is outside the stitching area.

You may want to raise your presser foot height slightly to avoid "tripping" over various pieces and causing them to shift.

Figure 5. Pieces cut, folded, arranged, and labeled for reference.

GETTING STARTED

1. **Cut your fabrics.**

> 🖉 *It's smart to prewash and preshrink your fabrics beforehand. Also, to get rid of any washaway stabilizer, you'll likely have to soak or launder and dry your bag so consider that when choosing fabrics. If you can't wash out stabilizer for some reason, go with a no show mesh and just live the fact that it will still be inside the bag and not hidden (but not prominent).*

For 150x240mm hoop (6 x 9.5" bag) cut:

- Back panel: 6.75" x 10.25"
- Bag lining: 6.75" x 10.25"
- Top front panel: 6.75" x 3.5"
- Two middle front panels: 6.75" x 5.5" - **CUT AND FOLD THESE PRECISELY!**
- Bottom front panel: 6.75" x 6.75"
- Pocket lining middle: 6.75 x 6.5"
- Pocket lining bottom: 6.75 x 3.75"

For 200x300mm hoop (8 x 12" bag) cut:

- Back panel: 8.75" x 12.75"
- Bag lining: 8.75" x 12.75"
- Top front panel: 8.75" x 3.5"
- Two middle front panels: 8.75" x 6" - **CUT AND FOLD THESE PRECISELY!**
- Bottom front panel: 8.75" x 10.5"
- Pocket lining middle: 8.75 x 8.5"
- Pocket lining bottom: 8.75 x 5.5"

⚠ *IMPORTANT! The middle two panels must be cut, folded, and placed accurately and precisely to work out! Do not add a little extra for "fudge factor" unless your fabric is thicker and you know what you're doing.*

Most other pieces in this project can be cut slightly larger for comfort and they'll still be fine.

Loops for handles (if constructing & as needed for your hardware):

- 3" x 8" (what I used); determine width you need for your hardware (instructions follow)

Optional pockets

- Large back pocket: width of back panel by twice the height of your desired pocket + 1" for seam allowance. I made mine taller and then adjusted at placement time.
- Small pockets: 5" x 6" (or as desired); fabric will be folded in half to 3 x 5"
- Zippered pocket: two 5" x 6" pieces (or as desired) + a zipper (this is what I cut; you can make yours larger as long as it will fit within the seam allowances of the finished bag. Also, alternatively you can cut your pocket as one long piece and avoid a seam across the bottom.

2. **Press all fabrics and starch if desired, fold as needed.**

Starching isn't necessary but if you aren't interfacing your fabrics, it can give them a little more structure for stitching. Fold each of the front pieces in half horizontally, wrong sides together; press.

3. **Apply interfacing to the back panel.**

Interfacing can give your bag more structure and more durability. The downside is that this project will end up with a lot of layers of fabric, particularly at the bottom of the bag, which can make turning the bottom corners more difficult. If you add the back pocket, you're looking at 8 layers of fabric in the lower part of the bag.

The front panels get doubled over so unless your fabric is particularly thin and/or wimpy, you can skip the interfacing or maybe just interface the front half. I did interface all the layers on the pink bag and the linen panels of the large bag plus the main bag lining.

Likewise, you might skip interfacing the two smaller pocket linings. I recommend interfacing the main lining.

Interfacing adds some nice body to your bag and can give it a more polished look; it can also help control raveling. Don't go too heavy nor stiff with your interfacing or your bag will be more difficult to turn.

Be sure to fuse the interfacing securely so that it won't separate when turning the bag right side out.

Batting or foam products are not recommended for this project to avoid additional thickness.

4. **Make hardware loops and optional strap.**

Both bags have a pair of loops with hardware for attaching a handle. I made the loops for both bags in the same manner. The pink bag also has a strap constructed the same way.

To determine the length, decide how long the loop should be, for example 2", double that and add ½" for the seam allowance. You'll need to make two loops. A little extra length is better and can be cut off later.

For a self fabric strap on the pink bag, I cut two strips 3″ wide and pieced them on the diagonal to avoid a thick seam. If your fabric is pretty sturdy, you can skip the interfacing because the handle will be 4 layers thick when done. I didn't interface this one but I think I should have.

When determining strap length, add ½" for the seam allowance on the ends plus 2-3" for looping through the hardware and securing. I made my strap long enough for a cross body style. You could get fancy and add hardware for making it adjustable. Also, instead of a permanent attachment, you could add swivel hooks to the strap ends. The choice is yours.

If you're using hardware, determine the width by measuring the opening. Your fabric width needs to be slightly less than four times that measurement to fill out the space.

Press the strip in half lengthwise. Then open the strip and press each long edge matching the raw edge to the center fold. Refold the piece and press well. Once again, starch is your friend!

For the strap, I pressed 1/4" in on each end and then refolded and pressed the original creases.
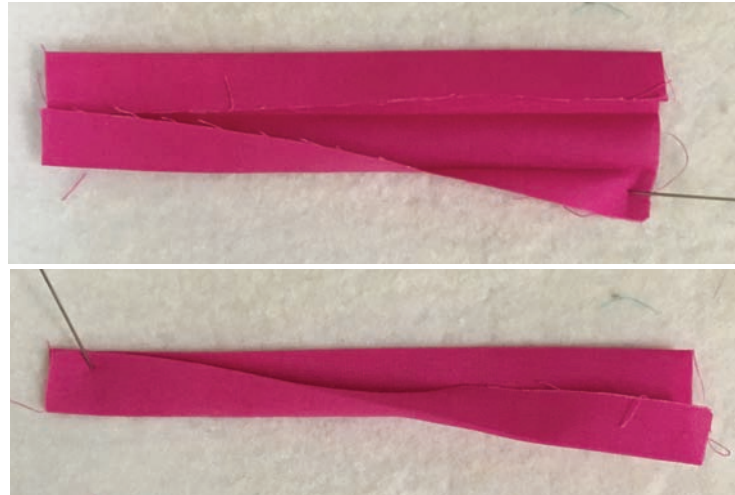
Figure 6. To make a no turn strap, press the strip in half along its length, then press each raw edge into the crease. The result is 4 layers of fabric with the raw edges folded in. Edge stitch along both edges.

Top stitch 1/8" from the edges starting on the side with the two folded edges.

If you're adding hardware, slide it on now, making sure the prettiest side of your top stitching will be on the outside when folded in half. Top stitch across the loop near the hardware to hold it in place.

I added the hardware to the loops that are sewn into the bag and attached the straps after the bag turned and finished.

Figure 7. Straps made in this manner can be very thick and when folded over for loops will be 8 layers of fabric. Consider distributing the thickness by shaping pieces that will be sewn into the seam in the hoop into "v."

5. **Prepare a back pocket.**

Basic pockets are easy additions. The back pocket is cut folded in half horizontally, wrong sides together. Top stitching along the folded edge is a nice touch and adds some stability. I interfaced the outer half plus 2" over the fold. By not interfacing all the way down, I reduced a bit of bulk in those bottom corners.

Figure 8. Make your back pocket to any height you like and top stitch the folded edge. The pocket will get attached in the hoop.

I made my pocket taller than I really needed so I could fine tune the placement at the hoop. Any excess will just hang off the bottom and be cut off.

6. **Add a patch pocket.**

Smaller inside patch pockets were made by folding over a small rectangle, stitching a 1/4" seam, leaving an opening for turning, turning right side out, and then edge stitching in place on the appropriate lining.

Figure 9. Fold rectangle in half, right sides together, stitch leaving an opening for turning. Turn right side out, press, and top stitch along top edge before stitching to your bag lining.

Edge stitch pocket in place reinforcing at the top edges.

Figure 10. Pocket is edge stitched in place. I aligned mine so it would fall below the top zipper a bit.
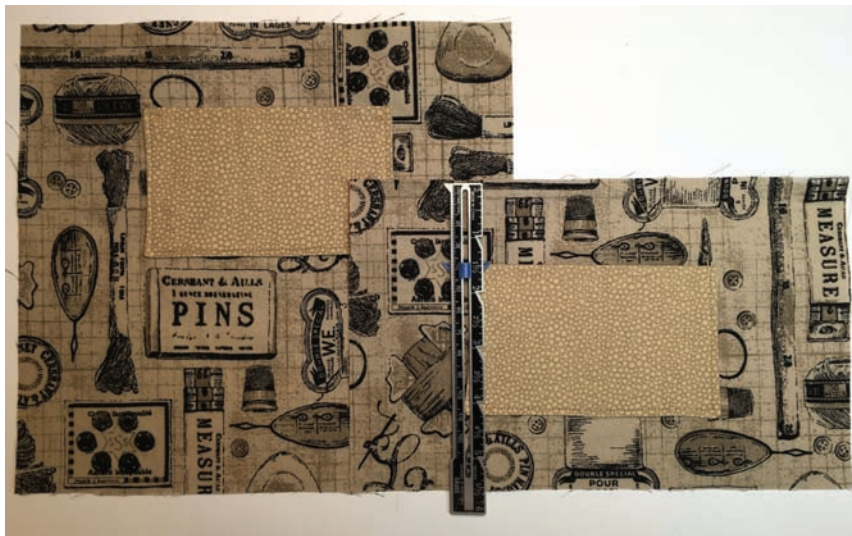

Figure 11. On the larger bag, I placed patch pockets on the linings for the two bottom pockets, positioning them 1½" down from the fabric's top edge.

7. **Layer all your prepared pieces in the order they will stitch.**

Organizing all your pieces is a good final check to make sure you have everything and putting them in order makes the embroidery process go more smoothly. From top to bottom:

1. Zippers
2. Top front panel
3. Second front panel

4. Third front panel

5. Lower front panel

6. Bottom pocket lining

7. Middle pocket lining

8. Loops

9. Back pocket

10. Back panel

11. Main lining

Figure 12. All my pieces are organized and stacked in order of sewing.

How to Add a Zippered Pocket in the Lining

Adding a zippered pocket into a bag requires a few extra steps but it can add a nice couture touch to your project and a little extra security. I recommend only doing this on the larger version of the bag and inserting it into the main bag lining.

My main lining panel is interfaced but the pocket pieces aren't. If you're using this technique on a larger bag and the pocket will get a lot of use, interfacing will give it more durability. On an ITH flat bag like this, I want to minimize bulk. Even when done, this bag doesn't have a lot of expansion room and boxing the bottom corners is not an option with all the thickness going on.

Also I cut my pocket pieces as two separate rectangles but you could cut one long piece and fold it up so there's no seam across the bottom.

> 💡 *I've used a coordinating quilt-weight cotton print for my inset pocket. Consider using RFID fabric to protect your credit cards. This fabric is pricey and since it will block signals to/from your cell phone, you should use it only where you really need it. This zippered pocket is perfect!*

1. Mark the placement.

Place the pocket lining front right sides together with the lining. I placed mine so it will be somewhat below the first (top) zipper. Finished, the zipper is 2.5" down from the top seam.

Mark the placement of the zipper teeth. Place the zipper line at least 1" (25mm) below the top edge of the pocket lining. Mine is 4" wide.

Draw a line parallel on either side 1/4" (6mm) away and connect the ends to form a rectangle.
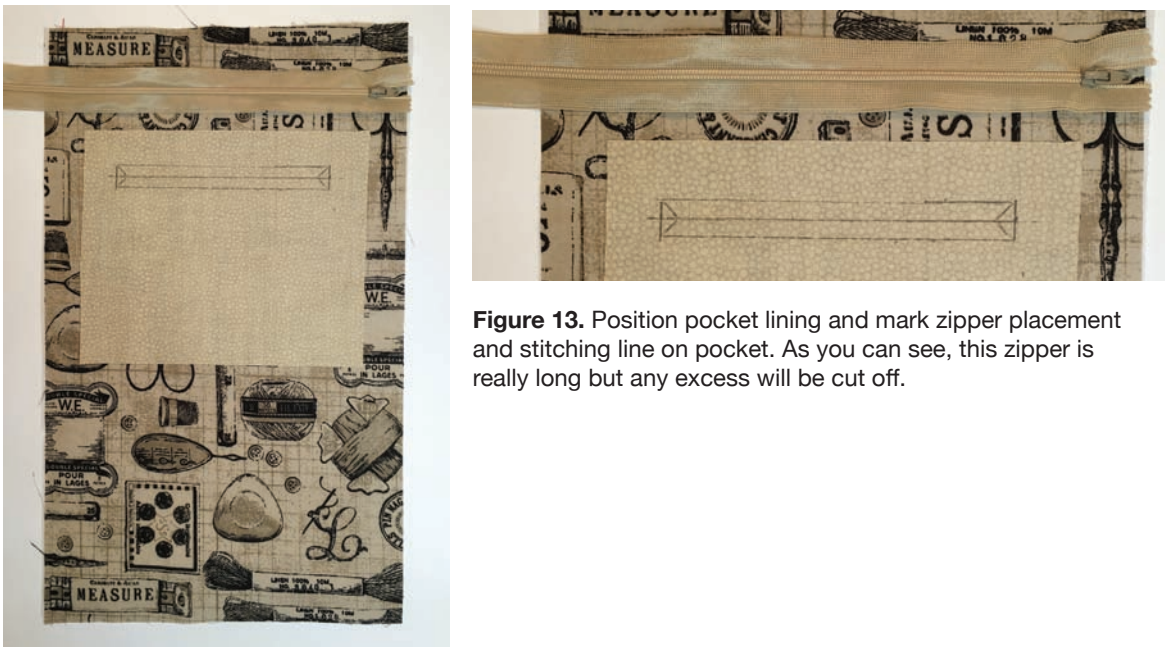

Figure 13. Position pocket lining and mark zipper placement and stitching line on pocket. As you can see, this zipper is really long but any excess will be cut off.

2. Stitch zipper opening and cut open.

Stitch on the outer marked line using a slight shorter stitch length. I used 1.5mm.

Cut open along the center line and to within 1/4" (6mm) of each end. Cut diagonally into each corner *cutting to, but not through* the stitching line.

Figure 14. Cut down the center line and then diagonally into the corner taking care not to cut through the stitching.

3. **Turn right side out.**

Pull lining through the opening to the back side and press smooth.

Figure 15. Turn lining through the opening.

Figure 16. Press well.

4. Attach zipper.

Making sure the zipper tab is within opening, position zipper over the pocket lining centering the teeth vertically within the space. I like Wonder Tape to secure it for stitching.

Figure 17. Position zipper inside the opening. Wonder Tape is very useful for holding it in place.

> ✏️ *You'll be stitching from the front so securing the pocket with a pin or two will prevent it from getting caught in the stitching.*

Top stitch the zipper in place from the front. Back stitch over the ends of the zipper tape taking care not to hit the bottom metal tab. Cut off excess zipper length.
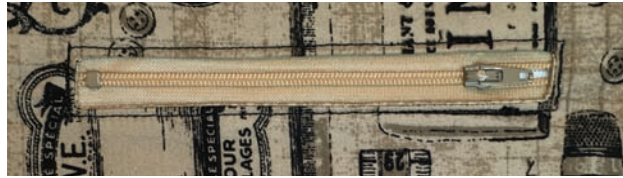
Figure 18. Zipper is top stitched in place.

5. **Attach the pocket lining**.

Stitch pocket lining back to the pocket lining front, right sides together taking care not to stitch them to the bag lining. I reinforced the bottom corners slightly by back stitching. If you cut your pocket as one tall piece, simply fold up the bottom edge and stitch in place.
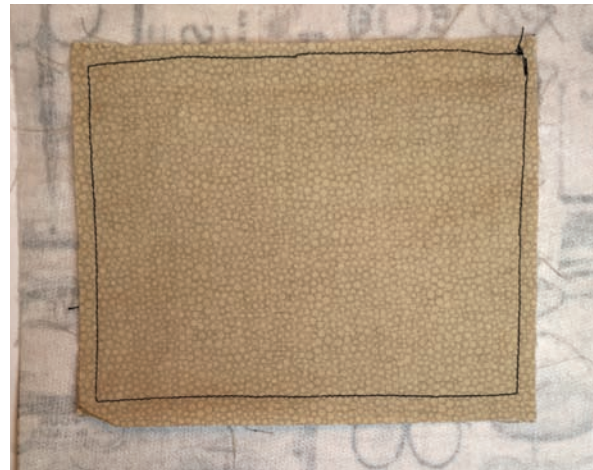

Figure 19. Stitch pocket back lining to pocket front lining without stitching into the bag lining.

EMBROIDERY

This bag is constructed in made in just one hooping! Don't underestimate the time it takes to complete it and don't rely on what your machine says for sewing time. You'll need to remove the hoop and place pieces multiple times. Take your time and place pieces carefully for a success-ful result.

A separate color sequence PDF is included and lists the steps in these designs. The plain versions are the same for either size. Do not try to recolor these designs to match what you might actually be stitching. All those color stops are vital to having the machine stop when it's time to do something. You really only need to change thread colors if you want to match a different area of your bag.

Both samples shown here were stitched in just one color: pink with a white bobbin for the smaller bag and black in both the needle and bobbin for the larger bag. Both bags were stitched with 40 wt. polyester embroidery thread in the needle and a 60 wt. prewound bobbin.

1. **Hoop stabilizer securely between the rings of your hoop.**

   Smaller hoops are generally more secure than larger ones with long straight sides. If your stabilizer slips during stitching, you'll experience problems. Take any necessary measures to prevent slippage.

   One way is with duct tape. Tear strips in half lengthwise, apply to the back of the stabilizer along the hoop edges and wrap up and around the sides of the hoop. (I do this a lot! It's better to be safe than sorry.)

Figure 20. I like to use duct tape to prevent slippage.

2. Stitch color 1 for placement lines.

Color 1 sews directly onto the stabilizer only. Small indents mark the horizontal and vertical centers for assisting with precise placement of patterned fabrics. The two registration marks at the top and bottom indicate the overall bag center and the center of the main body area. These can help you if you choose to edit in another design or align fabrics.
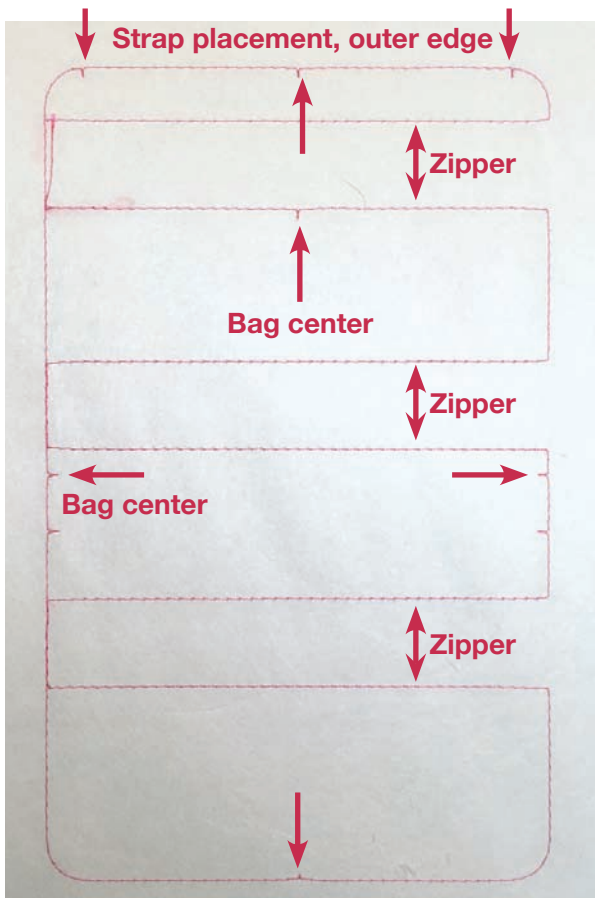

Figure 21. The placement stitching outlines the positions for the top and bottom areas and zipper placement. Additional "notches" mark centering guides and strap placements.

I placed the top end (opening end) on the open sided edge of the zipper placement guides. You could place them on the other side or even alternate them if desired.

Once you place your fabrics, these guides will no longer be visible so if you plan to use them, simply extend them onto the stabilizer with a pen. This stabilizer will be removed later so any marker will work.
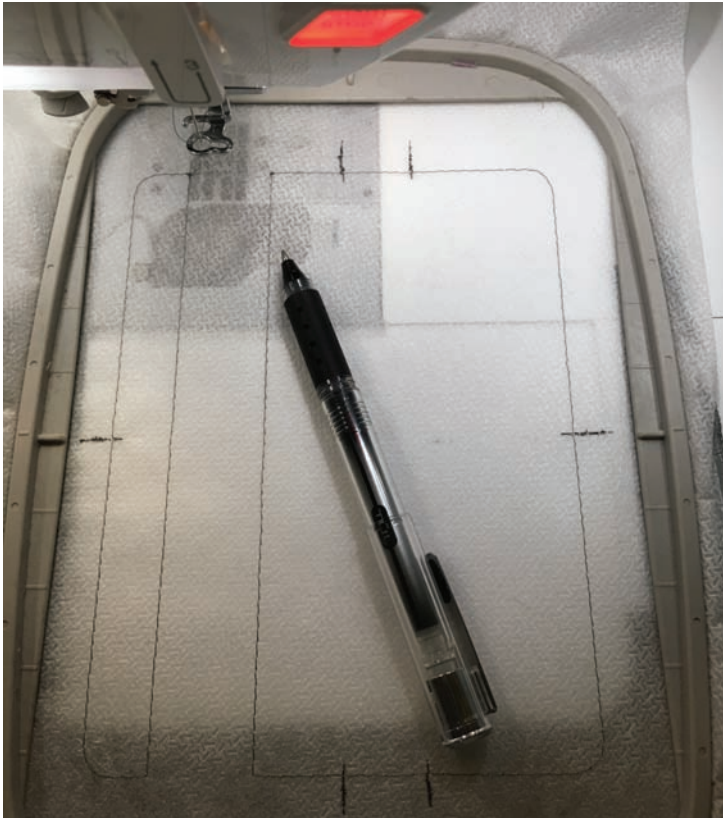
Figure 22. The guides will be covered up once you place the fabrics. If you need to reference any of the marks, extend them onto the stabilized with a marker.

3. Place the zippers.

Align the closed zipper, right side up, with the zipper tab at the right of the design making sure the metal ends are well outside the stitch line. The zipper will perfectly fit within the blank area of the stitching guides.

I prefer to keep the long extension off the top end of the zipper instead of centering the zipper over the space. That way I can use the leftover bits for other decorative purposes.

> *On very long zippers, I like to unzip it so that I can see the zipper tab as a visual reminder to move it into the bag area when it's time!*

I often like to apply strips of water soluble fusible **Wonder Tape** within the zipper placement guides to secure the zipper for stitching. Wonder Tape will hold the zipper more securely and reduce shifting.

This time, I tried out a glue stick, which is more economical if a little messier. It works best when applied to the zipper tape. I also found it sticks better on the wash-away tear-away than the water soluble wash-away fiber.
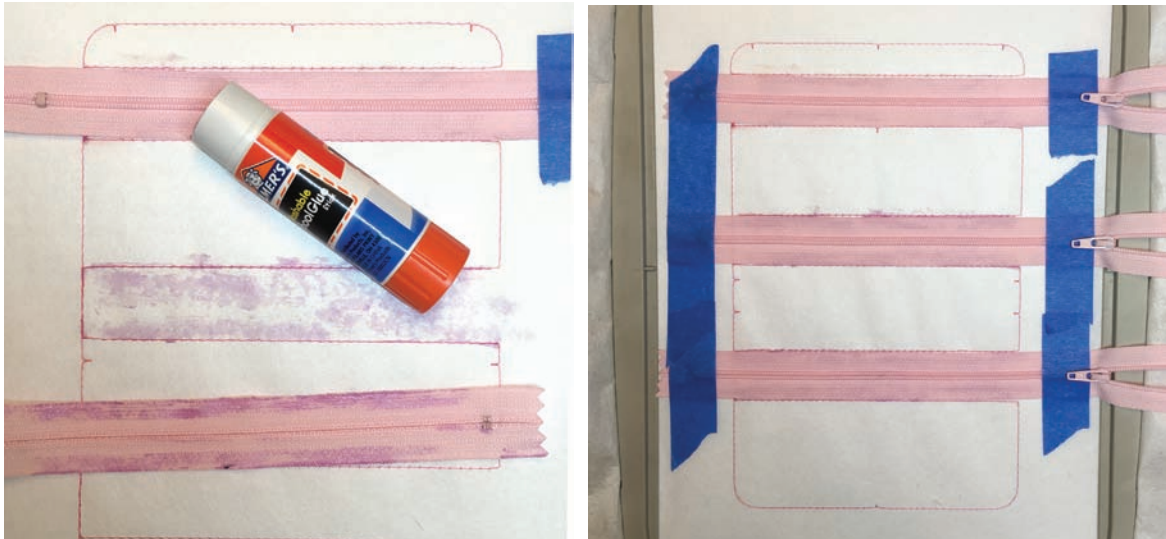
Figure 23. Secure zippers. If your hoop is large enough, place the tape outside the stitched guide. No stitches are sewn beyond this point and you can remove the tape after the project is completely sewn without having to pick it out of the stitches. Here the tape keeps my long zipper ends out of the way.

Alternatively, you can use painter's tape or invisible tape to hold the zipper in place. Neither one will gum up the needle; the invisible tape is easier to remove without tearing stitches. Tape is hard to peel off wash-away tear-away without damaging the stabilizer but works fine on wash-away fiber. Notice here the tape is outside the placement lines so I can leave it there throughout the embroidery process.

> *If your zipper isn't smooth, press it before taping.*

4.   Stitch the zippers to the stabilizer.

Return the hoop to the machine and sew color 2, which will stitch the zippers to the stabilizer. Remove the hoop from the machine and remove the tape that could get sewn in. Trim any jump stitches if your machine didn't trim them for you.

> *If you can remove the tape without disrupting the stabilizer, I recommend removing any tape that's no longer needed as you go to keep it from becoming embedded in the project.*

> *IMPORTANT! If your machine doesn't have auto-trimmers, be sure to clip jump threads not only on the top, but on the bottom. You'll need to remove the hoop to trim the bottom threads.*

5. **Place the front top fabric panel.**

Place the top front fabric panel right side down with the raw edges aligned along the zipper tape edge on the top edge of the zipper.

You can hold the fabric in place with more Wonder Tape, regular tape, glue stick, or pins. If you use pins, either remove them as you stitch to avoid sewing over them or make sure they are out of the range of the presser foot and needle.
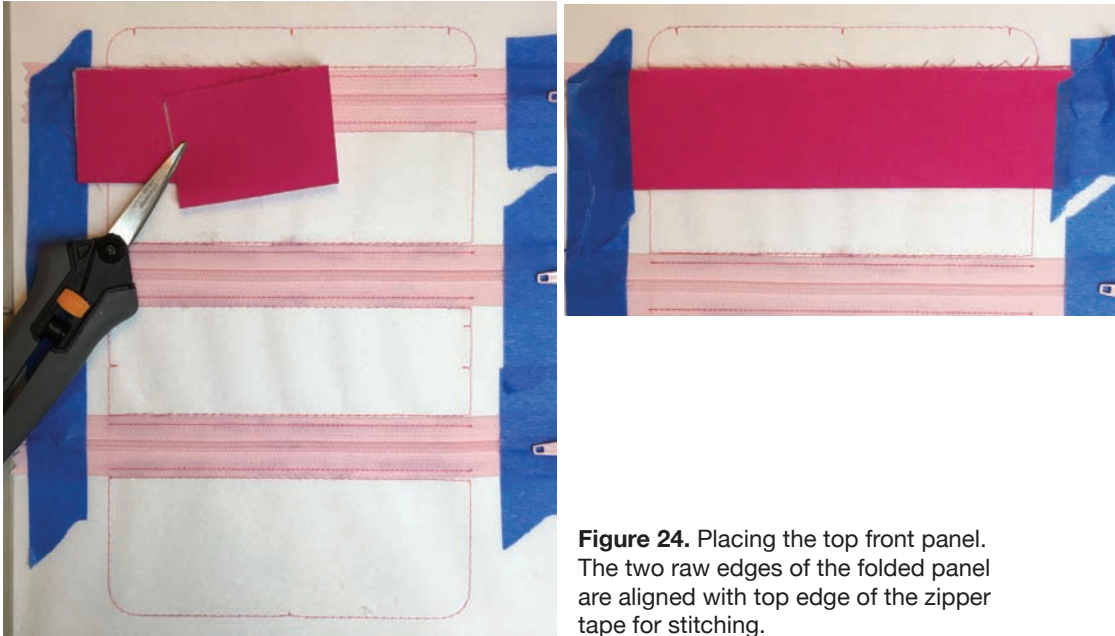

Figure 24. Placing the top front panel. The two raw edges of the folded panel are aligned with top edge of the zipper tape for stitching.

The next color will zigzag the raw edges of the fabric to the edge of the zipper tape and then sew the straight seam to attach the panel.

Figure 25. Raw edge is zigzagged to edge of zipper tape and then a straight seam attaches the panel to the zipper. This seam will be used as a fold line and the later top stitching will provide additional security.

Once this stitching is complete, remove the hoop from the machine, flip the fabric up and finger press along the seam line. I also used a mini-iron to press the seam flat. Secure the piece for stitching and stitch color 3 to top stitch the top panel next to the zipper and then tack the piece to the stabilizer.

Figure 26. Flip up fabric, finger press or use a mini iron to flatten the fold then sew the next color stop to top stitch and tack to stabilizer.

6.   **Partially attach the remaining 3 front fabric panels to bottom edge of zipper tape.**

The bottom 3 panels are placed similarly to the first step of placing the top panel, just on the other side of the zipper tape. Folding the pieces down, top stitching and attaching the panels will come later.

Working from top to bottom and one panel at a time, place each panel, right side down with the raw edges matching the bottom edge of the zipper tape and stitch in place. Each of these three panels is placed and stitched individually one color stop at a time to avoid catching the previous pocket lining one. (Next three color stops.)

Figure 27. For the next three front panels, align the panel right side down with the raw edges matching the edge of the zipper tape. Sew the next color to zigzag the raw edge and tack the panel to the zipper tape. Do not fold the fabrics down at this point.

⚠️ *IMPORTANT! The middle two panels must be cut, folded, and placed accurately and precisely to work out! Do not add a little extra for "fudge factor" unless your fabric is thicker and you know what you're doing.*

Most other pieces in this project can be cut slightly larger for comfort and they'll still be fine.

7. **Attach the pocket lining for the bottom two pockets and stitch down the remaining 3 front panels.**

    Process Overview: For this step, you'll be working from the *bottom of the bag and up*. Fold down the front panel, top stitch and tack to the stabilizer. If there is decorative design on the front panel, it gets stitched at this point. Then secure the corresponding lining piece to the back of the hoop and zigzag in place. Repeat for the next panel up. For the second panel from the top, you won't be doing the lining step at this time.

    • Fold down the front bottom panel along the stitching line and finger press or mini-iron press the seam next to the zipper flat. Secure the panel in place for stitching (tape, pins, glue, etc.). Sew the next color to top stitch next to the zipper and then tack the rest of the panel to the stabilizer.

Figure 28. Working from the bottom of the hoop, fold down the bottom panel, pressing the folded edge flat. Secure with tape or pins and sew the next color to top stitch next to the zipper and then tack the panel to the stabilizer.
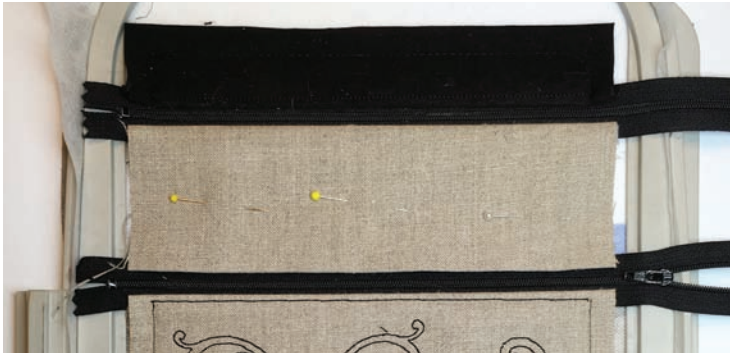
Figure 29. Pins can be better at holding fabric firmly in place, especially if the fabric doesn't hold a crease well, like this linen.

• If the bag is embellished, the design for the bottom panel sews here.

Figure 30. Any front panel embellishment stitch immediately after the panel is stitched down.

• Remove the hoop from the machine and place it face down on a table. Tape the bottom pocket lining face down matching the top edge of the pocket lining to the top edge of the zipper tape. Return the hoop to the machine and sew the next color to zigzag the lining's raw edge to the edge of the zipper tape.
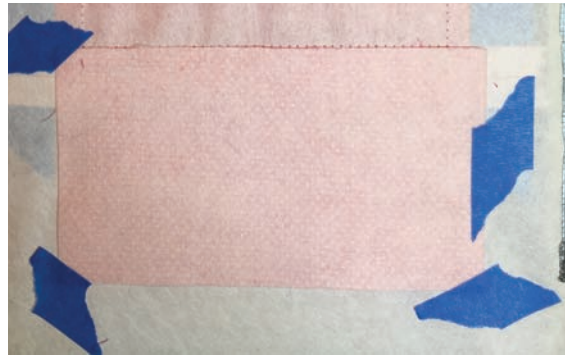
Figure 31. The two smaller pocket linings are placed on the back, face down with the top edge matching the top edge of the corresponding zipper.

- Moving up to the next pocket panel (the one below the middle zipper), repeat the process: fold down the front panel, stitch, and then add the corresponding pocket lining and zigzag. If this panel has any added designs, they get stitched before adding the lining. (Refer to your color sequences.)

Figure 32. Fold down the next front panel (3rd front panel), stitch, apply pocket lining to the back, stitch.

The pocket panel under the first (top) zipper is likewise folded down and stitched. The lining will be added in a later step.

8.   **VERY IMPORTANT!!! Move the zipper tabs to within the design.**

Figure 33. Move the zipper into the bag area.

The zipper pulls are currently beyond the outside seam. If you continue without moving the zipper pulls within the bag, you won't be able to open your bag! Pull the zipper tabs to somewhere to about 1" from the opposite seam.

This project will be turned right side out through the top zipper opening.

✏️ *If you forgot to clip the jump stitches as noted previously, you'll have trouble pulling the zippers into the center area.*

9. **Place the loops and optional back pocket.**

Using the guides on the placement stitching, align your loops right side down with the raw edges toward the seam line. Tape them down over the seam line. This will provide a "ramp" for the presser foot and reduce the chances of it tripping on the extra thickness as long as your loops aren't excessively thick.

Tape the back pocket in place, right sides together (face down) with the front panel once again applying the tape to prevent the foot from catching on the pocket edge.

Add any other optional loops, face down, raw edges extending into the seam allowances and taping to allow smooth travel by the presser foot.

Figure 34. Place the back pocket face down. I like to have the top edge between zipper areas to even out the bulk as much as possible. Place the top loops making sure they are even with each other.

Sew the next to last color, which will stay stitch everything together, making a double pass around the entire circumference.

10. **Attach the back panel and lining pieces.**

On the top side of the hoop, layer the back panel face and the lining panel face up making sure the tops of each piece match the top of the front. Tape, pin, etc. I find that pins will secure the fabric more snugly than tape at this point.

Figure 35. Place the back panel face down (far left) and then layer the lining face up.

Figure 36. Apply tape over areas that could trip the foot to create a "ramp" the presser foot can glide over.

> ✏️ *Pay careful attention to where the fabrics go and make sure they are in the right orientation!*

11. Sew the final (outer) seam.

Return the hoop to the machine and stitch the final color to attach all the pieces together. This seam is a double pass, which should be secure enough with polyester embroidery thread.

Figure 37. Notice the pocket it taped closed. This is to keep the presser foot from catching on it when it returns to center at the end of the design.

I used tape on this version but on the larger bag, I used pins. I found I can get more tension on the fabric with pins than tape.

✏️ *Here's a good place to switch to construction thread in the needle and bobbin, especially if your fabrics are thick or heavy. Even though the seam is double stitched, it can tend to pull apart and "ladder," which is likely due to the thread tensions in embroidery mode.*

FINISHING THE BAG

1. **Unhoop the design and trim off excess.**

    If you used a tearaway, carefully tear away excess stabilizer along seam allowance before trimming off seam allowances and excess zipper tape.

Trim or tear out the stabilizer that's visible on the back, which is only the upper zipper panel.
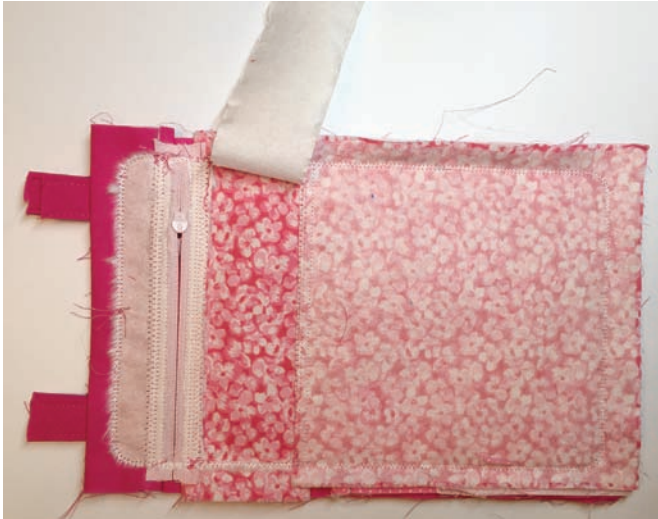

Figure 38. Remove exposed stabilizer.

Trim around the rest of the bag leaving about a 1/4" seam allowance. Using pinking shears around the corners can help reduce bulk and make them easier to turn.

> *If your fabrics are thick, grading the seams can improve the appearance.*

> *The seam allowances are exposed on the inside of the largest (main) pocket. I didn't do anything to the raw seams on this bag but on the larger one, I zigzagged around the seams to overcast them (on my sewing machine). I used linen on that bag and it was a bit ravelly.*

2. **Turn the bag right side out through the top zipper opening.**

Reach inside the opening between the back lining and the rest of the bag with your thumb and pinch one of the far corners between your thumb and finger and turn it right side out through the top zipper opening.

If you added the back pocket, this is a preliminary turn and you'll be turning it to get the pocket on the back.

Figure 39. Don't panic if your back pocket initially shows up on the front of your bag. You just need to turn it to the back.

Although the seams are double stitched and quite sturdy, be gentle so as not to rip any stitches. Thicker and/or stiffer fabrics can take some time. You can use a tool to help push out the corners. I found the blunt end (the non-working end) of my tweezers worked well.

Remove any remaining tape as you work.

3. Free the other two zippers.

Tear or cut away the stabilizer behind the other 2 zippers. Carefully remove the stabilizer inside the smaller pocket. This will be relatively easy if you used wash-away tear-away and stitched the plain bag.

4. Press.

The drawback of wash-away fiber is that it will shrink when you do the final pressing so you must remove it before pressing. The drawback of wash-away tear-away is that it doesn't tear away cleanly and the fibers can jam up the zippers. In either case, a trip through the washer and dryer will get rid of the stabilizer.

5. Attach the strap.

If you're not using a purchased strap, slip an end through each loop on the bag making sure your strap is not twisted. Fold up about an inch, stitch around the edge in a rectangle and then stitch an X in the middle. A zipper foot will help you get close to the edge.

Figure 40. Securely attach strap to hardware.

6.   **Optional: Add a zipper pull.**

Add a ribbon, tie or decorative pull to the zipper tab.

MAKE ANOTHER ONE!

Once you've made your first bag, you'll have the process down and you can start experiment-ing. Try swapping in other designs. Use different fabrics. Try adding pockets or trim. Have fun!!!

GIVE IT A GO!

In-the-hoop projects are popular and can range from very simple to highly complex. These bags are more sophisticated than the basic single-zip ones are perfect for running around town, trav-eling, and also make excellent gifts. By adding on some of the single zip bags, you can further organize your belongings.

Now that you've learned the basics, check out other, more advanced projects. Would you be-lieve that this owl mini-reader bag can be made in the same size hoop we used for this project? Yes, it requires more hoopings, more steps, and more hand finishing, but your embroidery ma-chine does most of the work! See: **Whoo's Got Your Reader? Mini-Reader Owl Project**.

Check out all the in-the-hoop projects here.

Figure 41. These owl bags are other in-the-hoop projects that can be made in a 130 x 180mm hoop. **Whoo's Got Your Reader Mini Reader** Owl Embroidery Project.

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