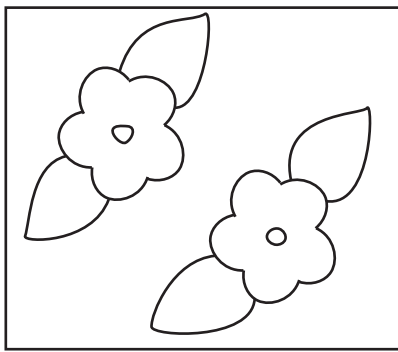


DROP-BY TIVAIVAI

Tivaivai (meaning patchwork) are treasured quilts made by women in the Cook Islands that are presented as prestigious gifts or decoration. They are often adorned with bright and vibrant motifs like plants or flowers that reflect the natural environment.

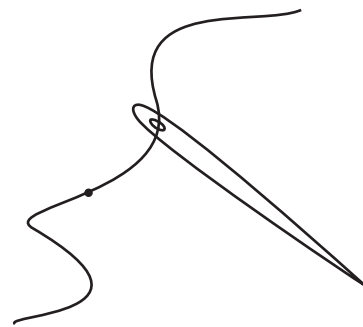
Follow the steps below to create your own Tivaivai patch!

Step 1:



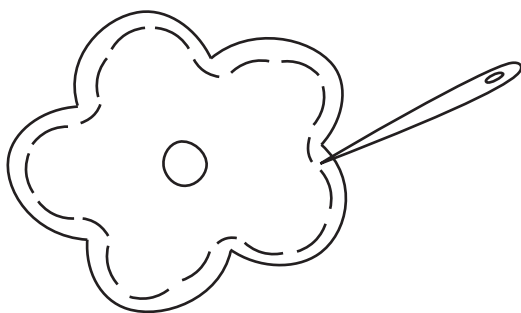
Draw and cut out the shapes you want to use for your pattern and pin them to a square fabric background.

Step 2:

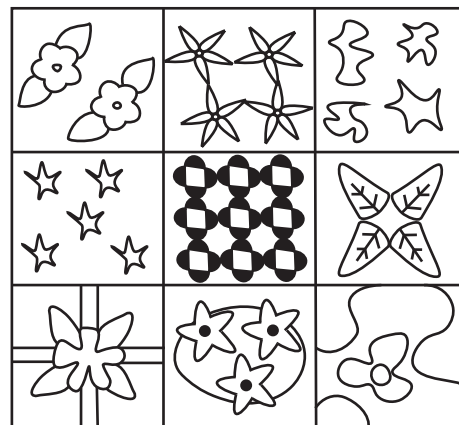


Thread your needle and tie a knot at one end.

Step 3:



Step 4:



Sew your pattern onto the background.

You can find detailed instructions on different stitching methods in the folder on the table.

Use safety pins or fabric glue to add your patch to the wall.

About

Tivaevae (or Tivaivai) are treasured quilts made by women in the Cook Islands. Tivaevae are made from brightly coloured fabrics, and designs can include geometric shapes, flower and animal designs - though animal or bird shapes are considered unlucky on a bedspread. While tivaevae serve a practical purpose, they are used as decorations and, more importantly, presented as gifts at important occasions such as weddings, funerals, pakoti'anga rauru (boy's haircutting ceremonies), receptions for church ministers and, among New Zealand Cook Islanders, 21st birthday parties, gifts to VIPs and dearly loved people in the family and the community.

Traditional Tivaevae take years to make. A design is first created and each woman in the sewing group has a specific part of the pattern to complete. Cutting and matching of the shapes is done before sewing can begin under the watchful eye of the designer.

The word is as Polynesian in flavour as the exotic names of the Pacific places it belongs to: the Cook Islands of Rarotonga, Aitutaki, Mangaia, and Atiu. A visit to any of these Islands is a visit to paradise. To translate the word tivaevae risks losing its meaning and poetry. The 'loose' translation – Polynesian bed cover – is inadequate, while the literal alternative – to patch repeatedly- is too narrow. To simplify matters, tivaevae is a term that is now used to refer to all applique and piecework fabrics from the islands of Polynesia.

Tivaevae are believed to have been introduced to the Cook Islands by the wives of early European missionaries, who taught quilting and needlework. It is thought that patchwork quilts came first, and appliqué and embroidered quilts later. It did not take long for this imported art form to take on a uniquely Cook Island appearance, with bright, vibrant tivaevae motifs such as flowers and plants reflecting the natural environment of the Cook Islands.

When making Tivaevae, while some women work alone, many work together to sew their quilts in women's groups called va'ine tini, which meet to share ideas and sing as they work. They are similar to the Tongan koka'anga and other women's work parties found throughout the Pacific Islands. There are four main kinds of tivaevae. Tivaevae ta'orei (patchwork), have a large number of small patches sewn together to form a pattern. Tivaevae manu (appliqué) and Tivaevae tataura (embroidered appliqué), have designs sewn to a backing cloth. Tivaevae tuiauri are sewn on the sewing machine.

Sources: Te Papa online collections, <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/789273> and Tivaevae Collectables history, <https://tivaevaecollectables.com/history>.

How to: Double twisted blanket stitch

1. Before starting your blanket stitch, make sure the edges of the fabric cutout are folded over. This will ensure there are no frayed threads exposed.
2. Bring the needle to the middle of the two layers of fabric and push it through the top layer. This will make sure the knot is concealed.
3. Bring the needle to the bottom layer and then push it up through the same hole the thread first came through.
4. Push the needle through from the bottom layer, about three centimetres away from your starting point. Do not pull all the way through yet.
5. Twist the thread around the needle two times anti-clockwise, then pull the needle all the way through to secure your stitch.
6. Repeat step five until you have gone all the way around your cutout, or until you are about to run out of thread.
7. To secure the stitch, push your needle from the top of the first layer and back through the hole that you just made. Work backwards and push the needle from the back and through another hole that you had made.
8. Repeat step 7 two more times to make sure the thread does not come undone. Cut off any excess thread still attached to the needle.

How to: Invisible stitch

1. Thread your needle with either a single thread or double thread in a color matching the fabric. I prefer double thread for sewing a ladder stitch by hand. Once you thread the needle, tie a knot at the end.
2. With your project turned right side out (the same way as you'll be using it), fold the hem opening inward. Ideally, press, but finger-pressing will do too. You'll start where the machine stitch ended (or where the tear is no longer visible if mending a tear): Insert your needle from the inside of the opening, on the very right, and guide it up and out from the inside. This way, you'll hide the knot in the seam. See how the thread is appearing from the inside of the project?
3. Now take a small stitch on one side of the fabric parallel to the edge. The seam should be short, only an eighth of an inch long (3 mm) or so. It can be shorter but not longer, to prevent puckering: Take another stitch on the other side of the fabric, parallel to the edge.
4. Continue repeating stitches on alternate sides of the opening. Every here and then, pull the stitches tight (er) and you'll see the thread will start disappearing, making this small 'thread ladder' into an invisible stitch. (Hence the name!)
5. When you pull the stitches together to close the hole, go slowly and don't pull too hard. Just pull enough to bring the two sides of your fabric together. If you pull too hard on the thread, it could make the fabric gather and pucker – and we never want that.
6. How do you secure the ladder stitch? Secure the end of the seam by bringing your needle back underneath the stitches or by looping it. This will secure the stitches.
7. Alternatively, you can wind the thread around the needle several times and then pull the knot close to the fabric. Finally, push the needle through the fabric as if you're taking one more stitch.
8. When you bring the needle out, cut the end of the thread close to the fabric. The tail will get buried into the fabric and should not be visible.