

A LINED BASKET



Woven baskets are some of the oldest man-made containers. They were made and used by Neolithic tribes in Europe; they have survived as grave goods from Middle Kingdom Egypt (2050-1652 BCE). In The Iliad, Homer talks of grapes harvested from vineyards and carried away in woven baskets (217). Rectangular drawstring bags were a common utility item in the Middle Ages, as evidenced by their appearances in many illuminated manuscripts: the 13th C Book of Games of King Alfonso X of Spain and the 14th C Manesse Codex are but two such. Hundreds of examples of various bags survive to this day in historical collections. Creating a lining with a drawstring closure not only makes a woven basket a more secure container, it also can hide modern accessories while recreating the look of two quintessentially Society-period items: A drawstring bag inside a woven basket.

Baskets are used widely within the SCA, often in place of purses and other more modern-style personal bags. Many common ones don't have lids, and so their contents are open to view, plus, you run the risk of items falling out. Covering your basket with a cloth will help with the first problem, but will not prevent the second. Lining your basket with fabric that has a drawstring closure will address both issues. Elftrudis, a member of my household, gave me a rather large

interwoven basket for Easter. At the time it was filled with some lovely yellow daffodils, but when those were gone, I decided to use it for this project. The basket is quite roomy and not only holds my feast gear, it also contains the odd sewing project. Here's how I made mine, and how you can too! Adapt the directions to your particular basket.

GETTING STARTED: CHOOSE FABRIC, MEASURE, AND CUT

I used about a yard of sturdy linen. Canvas is another good option. The type of fabric doesn't matter so much as long as it is sturdy, so even a thick wool is an option. One of my wooden feast gear plates became a template for the bottom panel of the basket lining; it happened to fit perfectly. If you don't have a similar lucky match to your preferred basket among your feast gear, you can make a template out of cardboard. Using a fabric chalk, I drew around the plate and then added a 1.5 cm (1/2" - 3/4") seam allowance. Then I cut out the fabric.

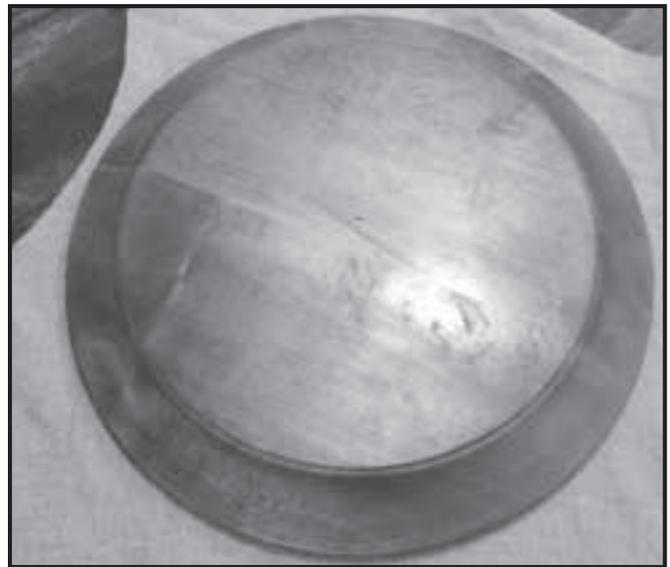


Figure 1: Plate on fabric.

After cutting the fabric and hemming the seam allowance, I ironed the hem all the way around to create a nice finish. I put the fabric bottom piece in the basket to see if it needed adjusting. (see photo next page)

Remember to iron your fabric. Do not skip this step, especially if you are using linen, which can be very wrinkly,

DISGUISES: A LINED BASKET

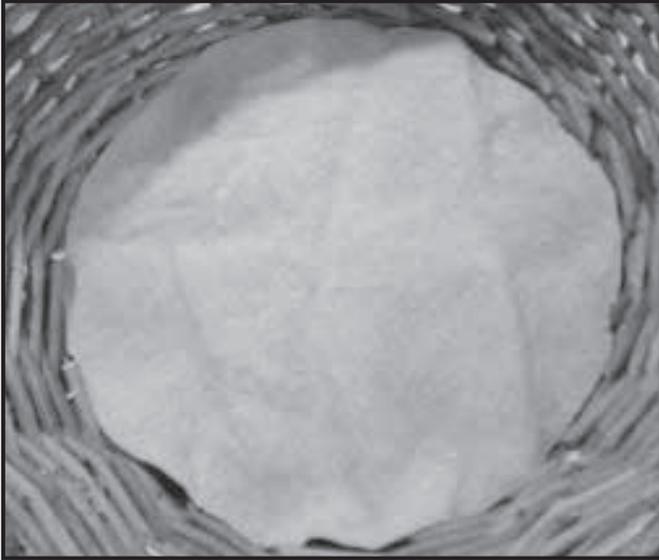


Figure 2: Fabric laid out in bottom of basket.

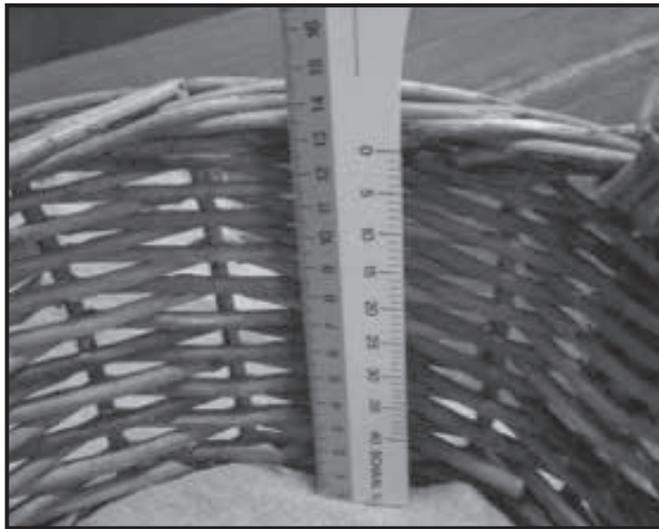


Figure 3: measuring basket side height.

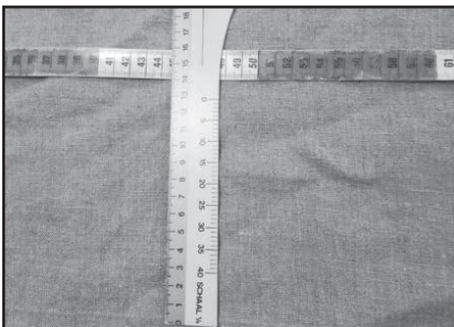


Figure 4: Two rulers.

so press, press, press! You want the lining to fit perfectly, and wrinkles in the fabric will not allow that.

After that, I measured the height of the basket, from the bottom all

the way up to the top point of the handle. Why do it this way? Because then items that are taller than the sides of your basket will still stay

inside when the lining closes over it, with that drawstring I mentioned!

My basket is 14cm (5 1/2") high at the sides. The height, or length, of the fabric is going to be 30cm (scant 12") because that

is how tall the basket is overall, including the handle. Once more measuring the circumference of the wooden plate gave me the width of the lining, 72cm (28"). Now, it was time to cut the fabric. I needed a piece measuring 30x72cm (scant 12"x28"), plus a 1.5cm (1/2" to 3/4") seam allowance to create a 'bag' that fitted the basket.



Figure 5: Fabric seam being ironed..

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

It is important to think your design through. For instance, in order to have a drawstring closure, the top edge of my fabric 'bag' needed to have a 'tunnel' through which the drawstring runs -- and if the 'bag' is attached to the basket before I create such a tunnel, I am going to have an incredibly difficult time creating one once it is in position, since fabric that is attached to a basket cannot be run through a sewing machine! So I ironed and stitched the tunnel before I sewed the rest of the bag.

I wanted some inner pockets too, for those little things that I can never find at the bottom of bags and baskets, keys... pens... phones.... you know the sorts of things that I mean.

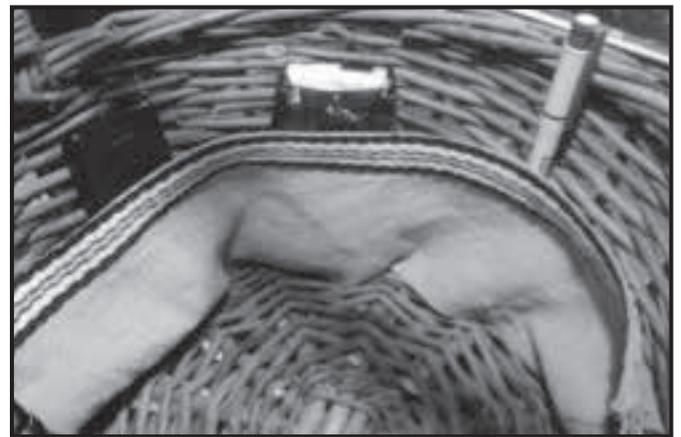


Figure 6: Basket with fabric laid on insides.

ADDING POCKETS

I first measured about half of the inside of the basket, to create four inside pockets, roughly 35 cm (scant 14"). The height of the pockets is 9cm (3 1/2"). I added some left-over

continued on page 16

DISGUISES: A LINED BASKET



Figure 7: Round fabric piece with pins in

trim, so that I could find said pockets by touch, in badly-lit places, as well... I might even add a flashlight...

Sew the pockets to the bottom end of your 'bag'. This long piece of fabric must then be folded, sewn and then you can baste in the round bottom. Finish by stitching.

You are going to need a very long needle to sew the 'bag' to the basket, because you must sew all the way through both



Figure 8: Needle and ruler.

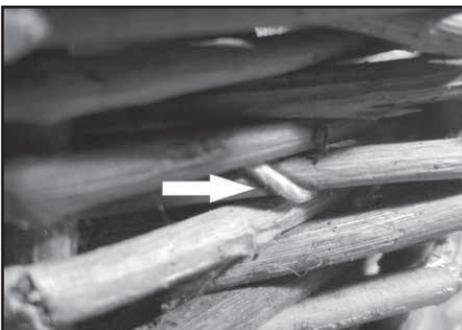
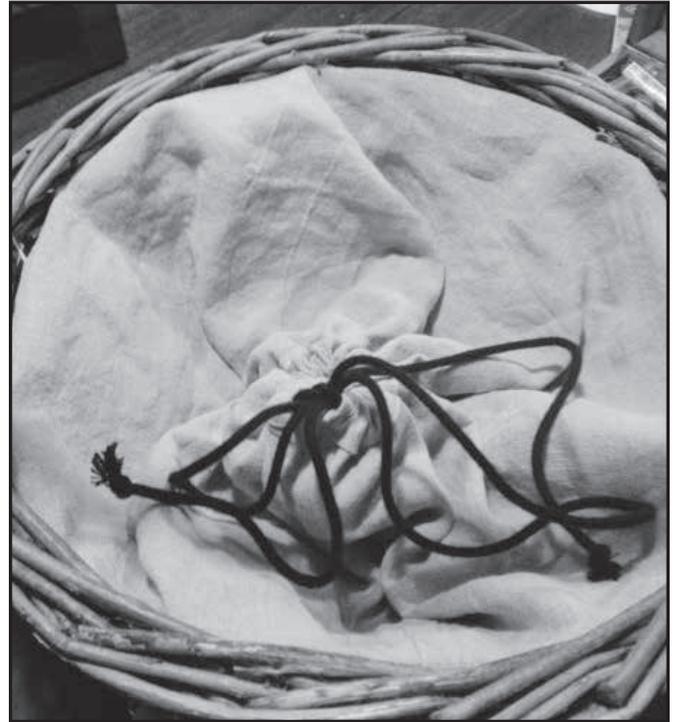


Figure 9: Stitching around basket weave.

And you're done!

I hope this was helpful. Please send me some photos of your lined basket! I hope you will enjoy carrying your feast gear and other items to events without losing them! 🍀



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Homer. *Iliad*. Edited by R. B. Rutherford, Book XVIII, Cambridge University Press, 2019.

AUTHOR

SANDRA KLERKS is a family person, a business owner and an independent estate researcher. Her friends say she is loyal, hardworking and has a dry sense of humor. She is an amateur historian who enjoys naalbinding, sewing and cooking.

AVA VAN ALLECMERE (AoA) is a 9th C widow who loves spending time on her small homestead. She grows vegetables and herbs. Ava enjoys naalbinding socks for her townspeople and she has been known for feeding many hungry Vikings. Every once in a while, you will be able to spot Ava travelling in Drachenwald. You can read more about Ava and her adventures on her blog *Ava's Corner*, <https://ava-s-corner.com>

basket and 'bag' fabric. I used a 7cm (2 ¾") needle. A tapestry needle could work; choose carefully, as you want to make sure you don't damage the reeds or other basket material.

Make sure you sew around the basket fibers, not through them!! Stitches should be spaced at intervals of about 1 ½" (4cm approx.).