

Fabric Postcards

Fabric postcards have recently surfaced in quilting and fiber arts communities and I think the progression to machine embroidery is very exciting. Our beloved machines can stitch them up beautifully and quickly. The postcards are very easy to make and can be stitched up quickly. I have streamlined the process so you can cut your fabric beforehand and eliminate any trimming! You can also use these designs for any 4" designs that you currently have. You will want to reduce the design slightly so that the design will fit into the 4x6 frame and use my postcard frame design. Fabric postcards are sent through the postal service like a traditional postcard but will need to be hand cancelled. You can ask your carrier to do this when you take them to the post office. Fabric postcards are popular to swap and are often done in themes by online groups. They can be done very elaborately or very simply depending upon what you want to do. Below I'll fill you in on the process and the many choices you have.

Supplies:

4x6 piece of fabric to be the background fabric for your embroidered design

4x6 piece of fabric for the postcard side that you will address. It will need to be light enough to read once you have addressed it

4x6 piece of Peltex, Timtex, Stiffy or Fast-2-Fuse stabilizer to add body to your card. You can find this in the stabilizer section of your fabric store. Some have adhesive already on the stabilizer – others you can use a fusible like Wonder Under with. You can fuse the adhesive onto the Timtex yourself while the Peltex and Fast-2-Fuse already have adhesive on them and are ready to use. Stiffy is very close to Timtex and sells for \$1 yard at www.longcreekmills.com It works great and costs 1/10th the price! You can also use duck cloth which is very inexpensive.

Applique pressing sheet – You will need this to place under your fabrics when adhering the stabilizer to your fabric so that you don't mess the adhesive onto your pressing surface. If you don't have one of these, you can even use an old flattened paper grocery bag underneath

A bobbin wound in the same color as your top thread so that you get a beautiful edge from the top and bottom of your postcard

2 sheets of Vilene or another water soluble stabilizer

2 sheets of tear away stabilizer

Pigma pen or fabric pen

Postcard stamp (optional)

How to make the postcards

I will use the term postcard back for the side that will be addressed and postcard front for the decorated/embroidered side of your postcard. I've digitized these designs so that you can precut all your pieces to save fabric and time - eliminating trimming to make them easier and faster to make. You can cut them with your rotary cutter or use the enclosed template for cutting. They will measure exactly 4x6 inches.



Prep:

Cut a 4x6 pieces of background fabric you will stitch your design on
4x6 sheet of light fabric for your postcard back
4x6 piece of Timtex/Peltex/Fast-2-Fuse/Stiffy/whatever you are using that you will fuse to the back of your postcard front fabric

First let's start with the postcard back – the postcard side of your design

If you would like to stitch the “postcard” back for your card, you will need to:



Hoop 2 sheets of tear away stabilizer or water soluble stabilizer in your hoop



First a placement box/line will stitch – place your postcard back fabric on the placement line – you can spritz with 505 or another spray on the back before placing it inside the lines



Start your machine and a tack down stitch will stitch out securing your postcard back fabric

If you prefer you can use a blank piece of 4x6 fabric as your back without any stitching on it

You can also use fabric postcard stamps – I will be designing some and have some available on my sites very soon!

www.toocuteembroidery.net or
www.oregonpatchworks.com/collections.php?id=TD4U



Stitch postcard lines, stamp frame and the word postcard

Remove from hoop and remove stabilizer

Set aside for now. You will be floating this piece under your hoop when you stitch out the front of your postcard after your embroidery design is sewn

Stitching the front of your postcard – the pretty side



Preparation – You will need to hoop two sheets of a water soluble stabilizer like Vilene in your hoop

Gather your postcard back piece and 4x6 piece of fabric that you will be embroidering your design on



Fuse your Peltex/Timtex/heavy duty stabilizer to the back of your postcard front piece of fabric



First a placement box will stitch. Place your piece of 4x6 background fabric with stabilizer inside the box lining it up carefully – you can use a spray adhesive on the back if you like



Next a tack down stitch will stitch once around to secure your background fabric



Start your machine and the embroidery design will stitch out

A placement box/line then will stitch out – remove your hoop and turn over – place your postcard back piece of fabric inside the the placement box and smooth by running your fingers over the top of the fabric. Use spray adhesive if you like

Place hoop back in machine and stitch out tack down stitch then final satin stitching

Be sure to use matching bobbin/top thread so that your borders stitch out beautifully from both sides



This is what the postcard back will look like underneath once it's done.



Trim Vilene close to edges



Remove any remaining water soluble stabilizer by wetting your finger with warm water and running it along the edges of your postcard



Finished design from front and back – too cute!

Address your postcard using a fabric pen or Pigma pen and add postage



Other info:

The finished post card size is 4x6 – You can use your existing embroidery designs for these by reducing them just a bit and using my plain fabric frame postcard design

Mailing – When you mail your postcard you will need to ask your postmaster to hand cancel them. If you pay postcard rate, they are less expensive to mail but if for any reason there are problems with delivering it, it won't be forwarded on. If you want to ensure that your postcard is forwarded on or returned to you if there is a problem, you will want to pay for first class postage to send it.

Another consideration is whether or you want to protect your postcard. During the postal process, you can get smears or other marks on your cards. Some don't mind and think it adds to the charm of the postal experience. If you're not one of them, you can place your cards inside a clear protective sleeve (card sleeve) once they've been handcancelled.

The possibilities are endless with these postcards. I plan to design some machine quilting patterns and decorative designs and create holiday postcards that you can add family photos inside so be sure to watch for upcoming designs.

For an interesting look piece two pieces or more of fabric for your background piece and then hoop it or add other embellishments. You can use ribbons, yarns, fibers, variegated threads, netting, tulle, even beads. You can cut out and fuse motifs on fabric and layer... You will want to make sure that whatever you use it is securely attached to your card and that your card is no higher than 1/8 “.

I will also be adding rubber stamps to my site and the Oregon PatchWorks site so that you can purchase these if you prefer for stamping the back of your postcard. You will need to use a dye based ink and not a water based ink. I would recommend purchasing one of the Stampin' Spot craft ink sets from Stampin Up. You get one color family of 12 colors for \$25.95. This ink can be used on fabric and on paper too though if you use it on paper you need to allow for more drying time. You will want to

heat set it also. If you would like more information about these inks, you can visit my Stampin' Up website here: <http://www.debbiehicks.stampinup.net/Welcome.aspx>

You can also use stamps to decorate these postcards - truly the possibilities are endless.

I hope you've enjoyed making your fabric postcard and look forward to bringing you many fun designs to try!

All the best,

Debbie Hicks
Too Cute Embroidery

If there is something you would like to see or you would like something special made into a postcard, email me – deborahicks@comcast.net