♥ Thank you for downloading this pattern! A little backstory…

We started to sew our own backpacks at home because our daily backpack was falling apart after just 4 years. It was made of laminated nylon for waterproofness along with many other plastic parts. Even under normal use, the plastic laminate was coming off in pieces and the zippers were struggling to function. It was also impossible to repair! This coincided with us transitioning to using less plastic in our home in general so we looked for natural alternatives for backpack fabric. **Cotton canvas was the answer – it is durable, water-resistant by nature, highly repairable** and doesn't disintegrate into micro-plastic to poison our bodies or the soil! You can wax it for more water resistance, dye it with natural dyes such as indigo and more.

As with all our other tutorials, we hope you can learn a new skill and have your own twist on it to make it beneficial to your life. If you don't have a certain material we mention, feel free to use your imagination to change up the pattern, up-cycle hardware from old backpacks and use scrap fabric.

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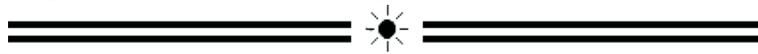
This backpack features:

- **3 dimensional side pockets** to fit water bottles even when bag is full and bulging
- **front pocket** with two compartments
- **large volume** yet very **light-weight** (we tested the small size - it can fit our home sewing machine with extra space for fabric!)
- adjustable roll-top for extra storage, also means it won't break like zippers
- adjustable shoulder straps
- handle for easy carrying
- no padded back but can easily be added
- no inner compartments – simple to construct!

Available in: sizes **small** and **large** (see Page 2)

Suitable for beginners

Table of contents

➔ **Visit blog post of this pattern** for any updated info:
https://gentlelivingshop.org/sew-canvas-backpack.html
➔ **Watch video tutorial:**
- YouTube: https://youtu.be/aCNLnCj9oog
- PeerTube: https://diode.zone/w/qUuEQQdtSGuSB5EDE7QXEG?subtitle=en

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Materials

★ 1m/1yd of 16oz cotton canvas (fabric width 1.6m/1.7yd)
★ 2m/2yd of 2.5cm/1in canvas webbing
★ 2m/2yd of 2.5cm/1in light-weight cotton twill ribbon (for edge binding)
★ soy wax (optional)

Hardware (we used metallic ones)

★ 2 pieces 2.5cm/1in ladder slider adjustable buckle (double bar)
★ 1 piece 2.5cm/1in adjustable G hook

Tools

★ Fabric scissors
★ Fabric chalk
★ Needle & thread / sewing machine

Measure the length of the backpack against your own torso to see which one suits you more.

Size small

Size large

Size small: 40cm/16in, 28cm/11in, 20cm/8in
Size large: 52cm/20.5in, 20cm/8in, 38cm/15in
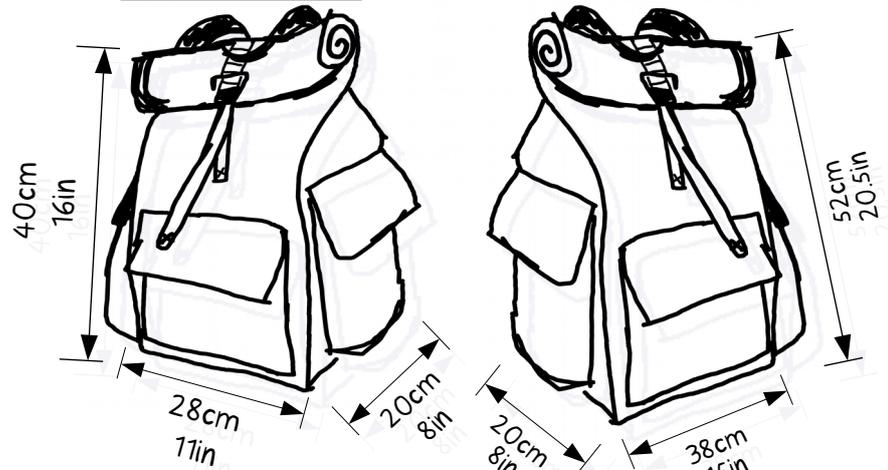
For each size - fabric pieces to cut out: 19; webbing strips to cut: 7.

Size small

Side Pockets
- 3D Panel CUT 2 — 22cm/9in × 24cm/9.5in
- Lid CUT 2 — 16cm/6in × 10cm/4in

Front Pocket
- Panel CUT 2 — 22cm/9in × 18cm/7in
- Lid CUT 1 — 24cm/9.5in × 12cm/5in

Side Panel CUT 2 — 20cm/8in × 22cm/9in, 60cm/24in

Body CUT 2 — 26cm/10in × 28cm/11in, 60cm/24in

Bottom CUT 2 — 28cm/11in × 22cm/9in

Size large

Bottom CUT 2 — 38cm/15in × 22cm/9in

Body CUT 2 — 36cm/14in × 38cm/15in, 72cm/28in

Side Panel CUT 2 — 20cm/8in × 22cm/9in, 72cm/28in

Front Pocket
- Panel CUT 2 — 30cm/12in × 24cm/9.5in
- Lid CUT 1 — 32cm/13in × 12cm/5in

Side Pockets
- 3D Panel CUT 2 — 22cm/9in × 36cm/14in
- Lid CUT 2 — 16cm/6in × 10cm/4in

Cut for both small & large

Shoulder Strap Bracing
5cm x 5cm/2in x 2in
CUT 2

Shoulder Straps — CUT 4 — 20cm/8in, 26cm/10in, 6cm/2.5in

Webbing (2.5cm/1in width)
★ shoulder strap connector 14cm/5.5in CUT 2 ★ shoulder strap adjuster 50cm/20in CUT 2
★ handle & roll-top adjuster 20cm/8in CUT 2 ★ roll-top strap 60cm/24in CUT 1

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Step by step instruction

Stage 1 – Prepare canvas fabric

1.1 Measure, cut & overcast: Cut out all pieces (19 fabric pieces; 7 webbing strips). To prevent fraying edges, overcast edges by hand or machine, skip shoulder straps. Dye fabric if you want.
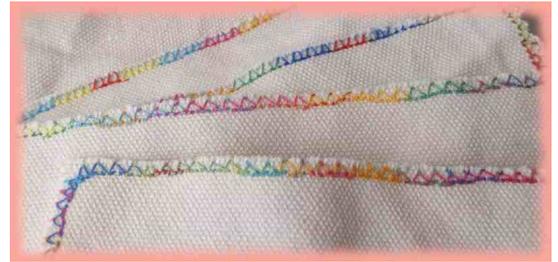
1.2 (optional) Scour and wax

a. **Scour** all pieces but shoulder straps. Scouring uses soap and washing soda in boiling water to clean fabric of oils and in turn makes it lighter. More on scouring: https://gentlelivingshop.org/scour-fabric.html

b. **Wax** all pieces but shoulder straps. Waxing helps canvas be more water and cut resistant but adds weight. More on waxing canvas: https://gentlelivingshop.org/waxed-canvas-diy.html

Stage 2 – Basic construction

2.1 Side Pockets: Mark out a 4 by 4cm (1.5in) square at bottom corners of fabric. Fold and sew down the corners in so two lines marked out are touching.

Make a little snip at each of the bottom corners, flatten the edges and sew onto the side panels. Sew on the lids.

2.2 Front Pockets: Sew two front pocket panel together (customise it to your liking!). Sew that and lid onto front panel.

2.3 Bottom, front, back and side panels*
a. Sew two bottom pieces together.
b. Sew front, back and side panels onto bottom panel.

*If you want seams facing out - sew wrong sides together; if you want seams on the inside of backpack - sew right sides together.

Stage 3 - Shoulder straps

3.1 Prepare shoulder straps
a. Sew two pieces of shoulder straps together, so you end up with 2 straps, each with two layers.
b. Bind edges with cotton ribbon to prevent fraying.

3.2 Prepare ladder slider adjustable buckle
a. Loop the 14cm/5.5in long canvas webbing around top bar of ladder slider adjustable buckle.
b. Loop the 50cm/20in long canvas webbing around bottom bar of ladder slider adjustable buckle. Thread it through the middle opening back to front and through the bottom opening front to back.

3.3 Shoulder strap & buckle sandwich
a. Sandwich the shoulder straps end in between short webbing strips and sew together with 'box x' stitch (webbing-shoulder strap-webbing).
b. For the long webbing strip side wrapped around bottom bar of buckle, fold tips of top half in twice and sew (prevent it from coming out of the buckle).

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3.4 Shoulder strap bracing

a. Fold shoulder strap bracing squares in half into triangles and sew one open edge closed.

b. Trim outside corners off the ends of bottom half of the long canvas webbing strip and sandwich trimmed corner between the opening of the shoulder strap bracing. Sew attached.

3.5 Attach straps to backpack: The roll-top of backpack is 20cm long so stitch shoulder straps onto back panel 20cm below top edge with a 'box x' stitch.

Stage 4 – Handle & Adjustable roll-top

4.1 Handle: Fold middle section (10cm long) of 20cm/8in long canvas webbing strip in half. Stitch to secure. Attach handle to middle of the back panel just above shoulder straps.

4.2 Roll-top strap: Thread 60cm/24in long canvas webbing strip onto G hook. Fold and sew one end like the should strap webbing. Attach roll top strap onto centre of front panel about 25cm/10in below top edge with a 'box x' stitch.

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4.3 Roll-top slots: Measure G hook's size, mark out appropriate slots for it onto 20cm/8in long canvas webbing strip. Sew down each slot onto top of back panel leaving a bit at the top to fold to the inside.

Stage 5 - Final assembly

5.1 Sew front panel and side panels together*

*If you want seams facing out - sew wrong sides together; if you want seams on the inside of backpack - sew right sides together.

5.2 Attach shoulder strap bracing to backpack
Sandwich long edge of shoulder strap bracing triangle between back panel and side panels towards the bottom of backpack. Sew panels together.

finished backpack!

Thank you for following along our guide! We hope you were able to create something awesome :) Let us know if you have any questions and please do share with us your creations!:
gentlelivingshop@protonmail.com

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☀this document was created with free and open-source software LibreOffice Draw☀

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