



SEPTEMBER 2007 BLOCK OF THE MONTH

Traditional Log Cabin

Turn in at October meeting

Techniques: *Traditional piecing or strip piecing a log cabin block*

Block size: 10-1/2 inch unfinished

Colors:

- *Center square: Red*
- *Lights: Whites, creams, or mix of white and cream*
- *Darks: Blues*

Cutting: You can make your block either by cutting every piece to size, or by cutting strips and then sewing to the strip and trimming as you go (great technique when making multiple blocks). Here are the cuts for each method.

1. Traditional (precut patches)

- Red: 1 square, 3 x 3
- White/Cream:
 - Fabric 1: 1 rectangle, 1-3/4 x 3 and 1 rectangle, 1-3/4 x 4-1/4
 - Fabric 2: 1 square, 1-3/4 x 5-1/2 and 1 rectangle, 1-3/4 x 6-3/4
 - Fabric 3: 1 rectangle, 1-3/4 x 8 and 1 rectangle, 1-3/4 x 9-1/4
- Blue:
 - Fabric 1: 1 rectangle, 1-3/4 x 4-1/4 and 1 rectangle, 1-3/4 x 5-1/2
 - Fabric 2: 1 rectangle, 1-3/4 x 6-3/4 and 1 rectangle, 1-3/4 x 8
 - Fabric 3: 1 rectangle, 1-3/4 x 9-1/4 and 1 rectangle 1-3/4 x 10-1/2

2. Strip Piecing method (for one block)

- Red: One strip, 1-3/4 by at least 3 inches long
- White/Cream:
 - Fabric 1: 1 strip, 1-3/4 by at least 7-1/2 inches long
 - Fabric 2: 1 strip, 1-3/4 by at least 12-1/2 inches long
 - Fabric 3: 1 strip, 1-3/4 by at least 17-1/2 inches long
- Blue:
 - Fabric 1: 1 strip, 1-3/4 by at least 10 inches long
 - Fabric 2: 1 strip, 1-3/4 by at least 15 inches long
 - Fabric 3: 1 strip, 1-3/4 by at least 20 inches long

Construction – Traditional Method

1. Stack white pieces in order by size, with the smallest rectangle on top
2. Stack blue pieces in order by size, with smallest rectangle on top
3. Place smallest white rectangle right sides together with red square, sew seam down one side. Press AWAY from the red square. (All seams will be pressed away from the center of the block)

4. Put joined patch right sides up, with red square on top. (In every step, the last piece you showed will be on the BOTTOM (think, if the piece is continuous and has no seam, it goes on the bottom, right side up). Put the next larger white piece right sides together and seam down the right side. Press seam away from red patch.
5. Time to switch to BLUE. Put the patch you just completed right side up, with the last white piece you added on the bottom. Put the shortest blue piece right sides together on the RIGHT edge of the patch. Sew $\frac{1}{4}$ inch seam. Press away from the red center.
6. Put the patch you just completed right side up, with the blue you just added at the bottom. Place the shortest piece of White/Cream Fabric 2 right sides together down the right side of the patch, sew $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch seam and press away from the red center.
7. Put the patch you just completed right side up, with the white you just added at the bottom. Place the second rectangle of White/Cream Fabric 2 right sides together down the right side of the patch, sew $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch seam and press away from the red center.
8. ***If you've done it right, you should have a SQUARE patch in front of you.***
9. Continue by adding Blue Fabric 2, smaller piece first, then larger piece.
10. Switch to White/Cream Fabric 3, adding the smaller rectangle first, then the larger. (Keep pressing away from the red center.)
11. Finally, add Blue Fabric 3, the smaller piece first, then the larger.
12. Block should measure 10-1/2 inches.

Construction – Strip Piecing Method

Strip piecing log cabin blocks is a great method for making multiple blocks without having to precut all the pieces. Decide before you start how many you blocks you plan to make, and make only that number of the first patch (patches of red and first light).

Start by cutting strips (in this case, 1-3/4 inches wide) of all fabrics except the red, which is 3 inches wide. Lay out your fabric strips in order: red, white/cream 1, blue 1, white/cream 2, blue 2, white/cream 3, blue 3. Put red strip right sides together with white/cream 1 and sew $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch seam down one side. For one block, sew about 3 inches. For multiple blocks, keep sewing. When white/cream 1 and red are sewn down one edge of the strip, measure and cut every 3 inches and press AWAY from the red. To add the next piece (also white/cream 1), place strip of white/cream 1 right side up. Lay the patch you just made right sides together over the strip, lining up the right edges, with the red at the top and sew a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch seam down the right-hand side. If you are making multiple blocks, stop sewing just before the end of patch 1, slide patch 2 (for a second block) close up against (but not under) the bottom of patch 1 and continue sewing. Keep adding patches until you have filled the white/cream 1 strip. Cut between the patches (easier to do than you might think), press away from the center and you now have the center plus the first two white pieces. Next, put the blue fabric strip right side up. Lay the first of your 3-part patch right sides together on the blue strip, with the last cream/white at the bottom (the last sewn piece is always at the bottom). Sew the $\frac{1}{4}$ inch seam on the right, abut the next patch against the one just added to the strip, repeat the process until the strip is filled. Starting from the beginning, it's center/first light, next piece of first light; then two blue; then two light; then two blue; then two light, and finally, two blue. Since each successive "round" of the log cabin gets larger, you'll need more strips of the fabrics for the outer parts of the block than for the inner parts of the block.