

the stitchsmith

Contemporary Needlework Design

Aotearoa Christmas Decorations

Cross Stitch
Tutorial



Aotearoa

Christmas Decorations: Cross stitch tutorial

Stitch up some kiwi style decorations for your tree, or as gifts for your loved ones

Each decoration is approx 10 x 10cm

YOU WILL NEED:

Embroidery floss: red, white, green, yellow
4 pieces of 14 ct Aida: white, red, green 15 x 15cm
Cross stitch needle
Filling (polyfill or scrap wool)
4 pieces of felt backing (sizes as above)
Ribbon, bobble trim & buttons
Regular scissors
Pinking shears (optional)

STITCHES USED:

cross stitch
french knots
blanket stitch
running stitch

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1 Fold your canvas in quarters to find your centre point – this is important as you don't want your finished project to be off the edge!
- 2 Mark it on the back with a small dot – this will be your starting point.
- 3 Prepare your thread – cut an approx 80 – 90cm length of thread. Take hold of one strand and gently and slowly pull it out. If you go too fast it will tangle. Separate out each thread so you have 6 individual threads.
- 4 These designs are stitched using 2 strands of thread. To thread your needle, take one strand, fold it in half and put both cut ends through the needle so you have a loop at one end.
- 5 Locate the centre point of the design on the chart. Locate the centre mark on your fabric and bring your needle up from the back through to the front. (If your centre mark on the fabric is not on part of the design, start stitching at the closest point). Take the needle back down again making your first half cross stitch and pass the needle through the loop and pull it firmly. You now have your 2 strands and are ready to continue stitching.



TIP:

Count twice – stitch once!
Unpicking your thread is a pain so make sure you are in the right place before starting a new part of the design.

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6 The chart shows one stitch on one square of fabric. Following the chart, work a row of half stitches /////
all in one direction until you get to the end, then work back along the row \\\ OR complete each cross stitch as you go. Try to get the top thread always going in the same direction as it makes your finished piece look neater.

7 I find it really useful to mark off each row with a coloured highlighter once you have completed it so you know where you are up to on the chart if you need to put your stitching down and come back to it later.

8 When you come to the end of your thread, take your needle through to the back and weave the thread under 5 or 6 stitches, then clip the thread short so as not to leave a tail showing.

9 Finish off your thread for each part of the design before starting on the next. Don't be tempted to take your thread across a gap between letters or parts of the design as it can show through, especially on white fabric. You can "jump" the gap if the thread and fabric are a similar colour or the gap is very short.

10 If there are marks on your work, give it a wash in cool water with a mild detergent. Place between 2 tea towels and give it a good steam iron to remove any wrinkles.



Finishing

11 Apply any beads, buttons or other embellishments to your decorations as desired.

12 Cut your stitched work to the desired size and shape and cut felt backing pieces slightly larger all the way around using pinking shears.

13 Place one decoration on a piece of felt, right side showing. Use blanket stitch or running stitch in a contrasting colour to stitch most of the way around leaving a hole at the top. Insert some filling and a piece of ribbon and stitch closed. Add bobble trim and/or button embellishments as desired.

Now hang on the tree and admire your handiwork!

Merry Christmas!

Liz Smith

The Stitchsmith

Aotearoa Christmas Decorations Charts

