



Magen David Bag

My pattern draws direct inspiration from the tefillin bag my great-grandmother made for my great-grandfather on the occasion of their engagement (pictured above). It was traditional to give your fiancé a tefillin bag when engaged. When I created my own version (to share with you!), I followed the geometry I found my great-grandmother's embroidery held. Each flower is placed in relation to a point on the Magen David. I felt how magical it is to walk in a past needleworker from my own family's shoes, to reason through an embroidery project the way she did.



This embroidery has a Magen David as the central motif, surrounded by flowers. Backstitch, French knots, and satin stitch are worked with 6-strand cotton embroidery floss to illustrate the Magen David and its accompanying flowers.

----- Materials and equipment -----

- Loose Leaf paper
- Scissors
- Embroidery needles*
- Textile to embroider on*
- A pencil and/or water erasable fabric pen
- 6 inch hoop*
- Thimble*



----- Thread -----

DMC 6-strand cotton embroidery floss:

- DMC 368 LT Pistachio Green, 1 skein
- DMC 3755 Baby Blue, 1 skein
- DMC 744 Pale Yellow, 1 skein

The Pattern To Be Referred To

*Clover, DMC, or another high quality brand, none will be costly

*If you're not using a hoop, I suggest a canvas bag or another semi-heavy fabric—do not use a stretchy fabric

*optional, suggested for beginners

*optional, highly suggested for all, on your middle finger

Preparation:

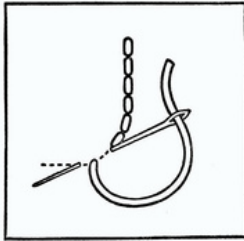
Trace the design directly onto the fabric by putting the pattern, then your fabric, over a bright window. Use a pencil or a water erasable fabric pen.

~ or ~

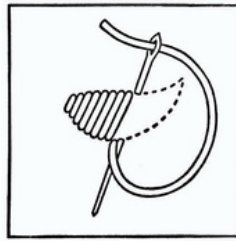
Trace the pattern onto loose leaf paper. Poke holes along the lines of the pattern with a sewing needle or the lead of a mechanical pencil. Put this poked design over your fabric (has to be a light colour or it won't show) and then insert the lead of the mechanical pencil through the holes to mark the fabric with dots. If using a fabric pen, just insert the tip of it into the holes. This is a make-shift form of *pouncing* to transfer images. You can look up *pouncing art*.

Instructions:

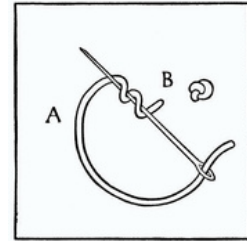
1. The central Magen David motif, flower stems, and leaves are worked in backstitch with all 6-strands of the embroidery floss. If the eye of your needle seems too small for all 6 strands, just use 3 strands.
2. The flower petals are worked in satin stitch with 2 strands (out of 6) of embroidery floss.
3. The *eye* (center) of the flower is a single French knot worked with 3 (out of 6) strands of the embroidery floss.



Backstitch



Satin Stitch



French Knot

----- Tips! -----

- Thread your needle by licking the thread flat between your teeth and tongue
- Use an arm length of thread
- Pull fabric taut with a hook or use sturdy fabric and keep it tense with your fingers
- Separate threads when needed by pulling them away from their accompanying thread *gently*
- Use high quality needles (Clover or DMC) and all natural fibers
- You are highly encouraged to use a thimble on your middle finger
- Never embroidery for more than 2 hours
- Do not let the lack of immediately perfect results get to you, embroidery is a skill that comes with practice

Below are the readings from the workshop. They illustrate the relationship between Jews and their garment-related, and overall, history. Leading with magic and heart, these works draw you into this fraught, yet Romantic, past world.

Rosenfeld, Morris. "The Sweatshop."

Nattel, Lilian. *The River Midnight*. New York: Scribner, 1999.

Manger, Itzik. "Fly, Little Birds," 1936.

Nattel, Lilian. *The Singing Fire*. New York: Scribner, 2004.

Artist Discussed: Carol Hamoy

Richler, Nancy. *Your Mouth is Lovely*. New York: HarperCollins, 2002.

For additional diagrams and instructions:

Christie, Grace. *Embroidery and Tapestry Weaving*. Edinburgh: Ballantyne, Hanson & Co., 1912.
available through the Project Gutenberg: [gutenberg.org/files/20386/20386-h/20386-h.htm](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20386/20386-h/20386-h.htm)

Coss, Melinda. *The DMC book of embroidery*. London: Collins & Brown Limited, 1996.
available through the Internet Archive: archive.org/details/dmcbookofembroid0000coss