



Spring Color Placemats

WEAVE THESE COLORFUL PLACEMATS
WITH A VINYL TABLECLOTH AS WEFT!

Amanda Robinette | Western Sakiori | Spring 2020

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These placemats were the sample project I made from a vinyl tablecloth before I made the picnic table cover and seat covers set in my *Handwoven* (May/June 2019) article, “Building a Better Picnic Table”. I needed to calculate the take-up, draw-in and shrinkage after washing before I made the magazine pieces, and I figured that one large vinyl tablecloth should make four placemats. Sampling is necessary but it’s more fun when you make something useful with your sample!

As I noted in the article, vinyl tablecloths (the kind with vinyl on one side and a fuzzy lining on the other) are useful items themselves, but eventually they get torn or stained, or just might not be needed any more in their current form. If you have a lot of them, you can make the projects in the *Handwoven* article, but if you only have one, you can make a nice set of placemats.



Pattern makes 4 placemats (approximately 12-1/4" x 19" finished)

Structure

Plain weave.

Equipment needed

2-shafts or more loom with 15" or more weaving width

12-dent reed

rag shuttle

boat shuttle and bobbin

the usual suspects (scissors, bobbin winder, measuring tape, etc.)

Yarns

Warp: 8/4 cotton carpet warp (1600 yd/lb; Maysville), #36 Limestone Grey, 336 yd., #15 Lavender, 288 yd., #03 Purple, 32 yd

Hem Weft: 8/4 cotton carpet warp (used doubled), #15 Lavender, 12 yd.

Rag Weft: Vinyl top/polyester backed tablecloth, 1 large rectangular or two smaller ones, cut into 1" strips

Warp Length

164 ends (84 Limestone Grey, 72 Lavender, and 8 Purple) 4 yds long (allows 30" for loom waste and for approximately 15% in take-up and shrinkage)

Sett

12 EPI (1/dent in 12-dent reed)

5 PPI (for rag weft)

Dimensions

13.5" wide in reed, woven length (each mat under tension on the loom) 20" + hems (see Instructions)

WEAVING INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Machine wash the tablecloth(s) on gentle cycle in cold water; hang to dry. If the tablecloth design flakes off or otherwise fades, it won't survive regular washings in its new life as placemats, so choose a different tablecloth. Be careful; the tablecloth may drip a lot as the wash water drains off of it, so be mindful of where you are hanging it up.
- 2) Cut the tablecloth into 1" strips, discarding the fused/sewn hem areas. I found it easiest to fold the cloth over twice and cut through four layers at once to quickly make the strips. I used a rotary cutter, which I also recommend.
- 3) Wind the warp using the following stripe pattern (G=limestone grey, L=lavender, P=purple): 12G - 12L - 4P - (12G-12L)4x - 12G - 4P - 12L - 12G (164 ends total)
- 4) Warp your loom for plain weave by your preferred method. Spread the warp with waste yarn.
- 5) Wind a bobbin with 2 strands of lavender carpet warp. Weave 15 picks of this doubled carpet warp. Cut weft and weave in ends. Place a temple in this hem area if you have one. It will help keep the placemats flat, but simply remove it as you move up the body of the placemat, rather than moving it up. The teeth of the temple will make holes in the vinyl tablecloth weft. It is really only helpful at the very beginning of each mat.
- 6) Weave the body of the mat for 20" (measured under tension). Weave as follows: For each strip of the tablecloth weft, fold it over with the white fuzzy part on the inside so it is mostly only the vinyl top showing. Lay this weft in the shed at an angle. Beat on an open shed, change sheds, and beat again. See "The Secret to Neat Selvedges" at the end of these instructions for how to get the vinyl weft to behave at your selvedges!
- 7) After the rag weft area measures 20" under tension, cut rag weft and weave in the end. Repeat the hem of 15 picks of doubled carpet warp. Cut weft and weave in ends.
- 8) Weave several picks of contrasting waste yarn or rags and repeat instructions #5-7 3 more times, for a total of 4 placemats.
- 9) Remove from loom. Machine zigzag stitch close to hem edges before trimming away waste yarn. Turn hem edges under twice and stitch by preferred method. I like Laura Fry's instructions, here: <http://laurasloom.blogspot.com/2012/04/hemming.html>
- 10) Machine wash in cold water and hang to dry. Do not iron or machine dry.



The Secret to Neat Selvedges

Vinyl tablecloths are tricky beasts, when it comes to using them as weft. The material can be stiff and unwieldy and may not want to turn neatly at the selvedge. However, you too can be the boss of your selvedge by taking the following precautions.

After placing the weft but before beating, make a hook with your finger in the loop at the selvedge between the current pick and the last one.



Pull against your finger to stretch and soften the vinyl. This should make it more pliant and allow you to make the selvedge turn. Use your finger to tamp down the first couple inches of the pick to set and secure the way you want the selvedge to look.



It should look like this when you are through.

That's it! I hope you enjoyed my pattern and instructions. If you have any questions, you can reach me at westernsakiori@gmail.com. Happy weaving!

