

A WORD ON MAKING:

The following instructions assume a basic knowledge of CROCHET and a healthy sense of experimentation on the maker's part.

There is no formal pattern for this bag. I encourage makers to "freeform" it on every counterfeit handbag, and be inventive on how to interpret the textures and parts.

I found it helpful to rummage around a few crochet books to choose from basic stitch patterns, and got inspiration from a few vintage 70s ones as well. There are great online tutorials on how to crochet, and it's a fast and fun way to build up shapes.

I'm hoping that folks try out their own techniques and ideas in making their bags. These instructions are to provide a launching point to help you get your creative counterfeiting juices flowing!

—Stephanie S. organizer



COMPONENTS: The body is made of worsted-weight brown and mustard cheap acrylic yarn. I really like the chunky look and it's faster to work with a thicker yarn. Also, I make no bones about this being a "fancy" purse made out of nice or expensive yarn—for me it's all about both "debasement" the original and using common materials to interpret the couture.

The purse has a front flap (where the logo is) that buttons down. Four little gold "grommets" (hand crocheted) are at the top corners, and a long handle is run through them to make an adjustable single long strap or two shorter double straps, depending on how you like to wear it.



STEP 1: THE BODY

The main body is made in four separate pieces:

- **FRONT:** a rectangle measuring about 11" wide x 6" high
- **SIDES/BOTTOM:** one long piece measuring about an 1" wide and 23" long, or the length that it takes to wrap around the sides and bottom of the FRONT
- **BACK PANEL/FRONT FLAP:** a square measuring 11" wide x 11" high. It creates the back of the purse as well as a small flap that folds over the top.
- **LOGO PANEL:** a smaller square measuring 6" wide x 6" high. This will eventually have the logo applied to it is whipstitched to the BACK/FLAP.

crochet, which made it look kind of like raised piping—an added visual bonus. You could technically crochet the body of the bag "in the round" as one piece, but I liked the more structured look of having separate pieces joined together.

This faux "quilted" effect is just one way of how to achieve a grid pattern. It's very textured and based on a vintage crochet bedspread I picked up from a thriftstore a few years ago. You could just as easily use an untextured stitch for good effect.

The squarish LOGO PANEL was made more plain, using a simple single crochet (sc) and then a double crochet (dc) border on the sides and bottom. I wanted something more plain so the logo stood out better.

The FRONT, SIDES/BOTTOM, and BACK PANEL/FRONT FLAP were joined using a slipstitch



(continued from front)



STEP 2: THE LOGO

The Chanel LOGO was super easy, but took a few tries to get it right. The trick is getting the "C's" the right length so that when you sew them together it leaves the tell-tale gap between the curves, the letters aren't too chunky, and it's legible.

- Chain a length that corresponds to the inside length of your final "C", then add an extra 2 chains.
- Turn and double crochet (dc) into each chain about a third of the way to the end, dc twice into a single chain.
- Continue along, then about two-thirds of the way to the end, dc twice again into a single chain. Finish the length with a single dc in each chain. You'll notice the extra dc's help create the curve of the "C".

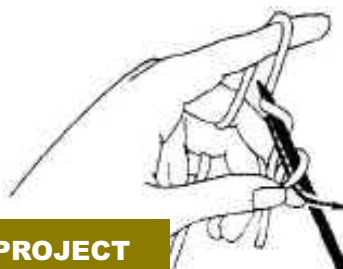
I used thread instead of yarn to applique the logo down--I didn't want too much of a topstitched look. Make sure to intertwine the C's, as opposed to just laying one on top of the other. *It's all about being a good counterfeiter, remember!*



STEP 3: THE GROMMETS

The GROMMETS were made using a much finer gold string. Each has about a 1/2" open circle inside. I used a very tiny hook and chained 10 stitches, joined them, and made a series of single crochets (sc) inside the circle until it felt right.

I made four grommets and stitched two sets (one in the front, one in the back) at each corner. The quilted pattern of the body uses triple crochet stitches (tc), so there's an open laciness to it and I could make a "hole" easily



STEP 4: THE STRAP

Using a technique from my 70s crochet book on how to make a belt tie for a caftan (awesome!), I figured out how to make a relatively supple, solid, not-too-thick, and not-too-skinny strap. The strap is first worked in brown yarn, and then embroidered with a single strand of mustard yarn.

- Chain, using two brown yarns at the same time (for double thickness), making it the final length of the strap. Mine is 40" total. The strap is adjustable, and can be worn as shorter double straps, or longer single strap, depending on how you adjust them through the grommets.
- Guide one end of your chain through one set of grommets on one side, and then through the second set of grommets (you'll have to figure this sequence out so that it works like in the final picture)
- Join together the chain ends in some manner so it is permanently looped through the bag.
- Slip stitch through each single chain, still using two yarns at once, going around the loop until you come back to your start. This makes the strap thicker and less flimsy to hold.
- Use a yarn needle to thread a long length of mustard yarn in and out of the strap to create a "braided" effect.

Voila! That's pretty much it! I added buttons at the end, but it didn't necessarily need them. The laciness of the "quilted" pattern means there are lots of holes for small things to fall out of (goodbye lipstick!) which isn't so practical. Hence, a fabric lining is needed with perhaps a zipper closure to really finish it off and make it functional. To see color photos of a finished bag, visit the website! ✕

Viva la revolucion!

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ABOUT THE COUNTERFEIT CROCHET PROJECT

In 2006 I created a website soliciting crocheters to join me in hand-counterfeiting designer handbags: Fendi, Gucci, Chanel, Prada, etc. Participants troll the internet and choose a design that they particularly covet, working off of low-resolution jpgs which they download. The final results may or may not bear resemblance to the originals, which also interests me.

The resulting "translations" are both homages and lumpy mutations. Crochet is considered a lowly medium, and the limitations imposed by trying to create detail with yarn takes advantage of the individual maker's ingenuity and problem-solving skills.

I am also interested in how this project can be similar to contemporary manufacturing and distribution channels.

As a collaboration it parallels the idea of "outsourcing" labor, but also adds a democratic and perhaps anarchic

level of creativity--within the basic framework, participants have taken liberties with their translations, changing colors, adding materials (cardboard, hot glue, etc.) to suit their needs.

Makers are encouraged to keep and wear their bags, in an attempt to insert strange variants into the stream of commerce and consumption. I ask for people to send me snapshots of their items to share with others.

This is an ongoing global project, with makers from all over the world. I am always seeking more collaborators, so please contact me to join up! In 2007 the project travelled to Manila, Beijing, and Istanbul for exhibitions and counterfeiting workshops.

For more info, text, patterns, and images, visit: **www.counterfeitcrochet.org**