Everything You Need to Know About Fat Quarters

Contributors: Spoonflower UXD 4 Quilt Artists & Designers

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Fat quarters are a versatile and much-functional size of fabric popular with sewists and designers alike. Whether you're a seasoned quilter or just starting out, fat quarters are a great way to get a little bit of a lot of stuff. It's also a lot of stuff to take creative journey. However, if you're new to Spoonflower or sewing, you might be wondering your head asking yourself, "but what is a fat quarter?"

Whether you are designing your own tea towel, or ordering a collection of Marketplace designs for a DIY project, we've got everything you need to know about fat quarters with a little help from Kelly Ann Hands and others, our trusty customer support team member.

If you already know the basics and want to create your own fat quarter design, click here!

What Is a Fat Quarter?

A Spoonflower fat quarter is the width of your fabric by 1/4 the length of a yard (36" / 100cm).

While the width of your fat quarter will change depending on your fabric choice, the length of a fat quarter will always be 18" (50cm). For all you math whizzes out there, one half-meter and half-yard is a quarter. Hence the term fat quarter!

Now that you know the basics, let's start exploring everything you need to know about ordering a fat quarter from Spoonflower.

Fat Quarters 101: Fabric Sizes

Did you know Spoonflower offers fabrics ranging from 41"- 60" (100cm - 150cm) wide? **Your fabric choice will determine how wide your fat quarter is.** Having attention to this one difference will ensure that the designs you order are correct for the fabrics you select.

DOWNLOAD THE SPOONFLOWER FAT QUARTER CHEAT SHEET

Our two most popular fat quarter fabrics at Spoonflower are Petal Signature Cotton™ and Linen Cotton canvas.

Petal Signature Cotton is a great option for quilting, sewing projects, and Tea Towels & Dishcloths. The dimensions of a Petal Signature Cotton fat quarter are 21" x 18" (53cm x 50cm).

Linen Cotton Canvas is the go to fabric for Tote Bags. The dimensions of a Linen Cotton Canvas fat quarter are 27" x 18" (68cm x 50cm).

DECIDING ON QUARTER PROJECTS

Fat Quarters 101: Choosing the Right Fabric

Now that you know more about the size of a fat quarter, let's talk about choosing the right design for the dimensions of your fabric.

If you're choosing a traditional repeating surface pattern, one of Spoonflower's fat quarter sizes will do the trick. This is because the pattern is not size-fluidly designed (engineered) fit a certain block size. Just remember to choose the appropriate fabric in the dropdown menu based on your project requirements.

Crystal Bowman's design Dandelion Field Blue is one of our Little Prints with Lots of Uses collection's prints for quilters. You'll notice the name on the dropdown menu is after the width of each fabric.

Choosing the Right Fabric: Tea Towels

During the holidays, tea towels are a perfect go to handmade gift idea. Whether you're making your personal tea towel collection or ordering a DIY kit, the fabric you choose will determine how many repeats your design will be specifically for a 21" x 18" (Petal Cotton) Canvas fat quarter. When adding the tea towel design to your cart, make sure to select Linen Cotton Canvas in the Fabric Type dropdown menu and Fat Quarter in the Choose a Size dropdown menu.

Suzanne Kasler

When in doubt, use the fabric type in your design full print. **If the design is getting cut off on the preview, it means the fabric you've chosen isn't wide enough.** By changing the selected fabric in your dropdown menu, you can quickly adjust for a perfect-fit pattern.

Pro tip: Be sure to note the difference between the fabrics above the fabric dropdown menu and the About the Design section. Petal Cotton has a 54inch(1mm) width, remember to divide it in half to determine the appropriate fat quarter width.

Attention artists! Did you know you can set your Marketplace designs for sale on a specific fabric type and size?

Focus your design on art to your preferred fabric and fat quarter size, and then select the "Save this Layout" button to save these settings for your customers.

SHOP TRENDING TEA TOWEL DESIGNS

Choosing the Right Fabric: Cut and Sew Projects

Just like artists are creating engineered designs for tea towels, they're also designing engineered prints for cut and sew projects. You'll find these projects are most commonly designed for 27" x 18" woven cotton fat quarter. Remember to choose the appropriate fabric in the dropdown menu based on your project. Some of the made-up to order Fat Quarter in the Choose a Size dropdown menu are Petal Signature Cotton or Cotton Poplin in the Fabric Type dropdown menu.

Pro tip: If you prefer a softer fabric like Organic Cotton Sateen for a project intended to a 21" wide fabric, it is also choose the wider fabric in the dropdown menu, and keep in mind that will make your fat quarter plus a little extra, as demonstrated in this cut and sew project example above fabrics.

In the example below you can see Sarah Knight designed her Cut and Sew Tank Dress Pattern for Minky a 27" (57cm) wide fat quarter based on the designer note in the About the Design section. If you want to order the designs in a fat quarter of Petal Signature Cotton, part of the project would be cut off because it is only 21" (53cm) wide.

It's important to note that some artists will design cut and sew projects for fat quarters in a 21" wide fabric. Sarah Knight's design about the dress preview and the and it's About the Design section. In the example to the right, Sarah Knight designed her Cut and Sew Tank Dress Pattern for Petal Signature Cotton and made for a 21" x 18" fat quarter.

Designing Tea Towels for Fat Quarters

Every holiday season the Spoonflower community gets extra festive, tuning into tweets and we don't blame them. They're the perfect time to preserve family memory and a great gift idea for anyone on your list, even for those family members who are impossible to shop for! For the full how to tutorial, click here. Before you start designing, there are a few things you need to know about fat quarter tea towels. Spoonflower's Marketplace tea towel collection, Personalized Designs for sale, has created a fantastic resource for fat quarter tea towel designs. Let's see what artist chooses the Petal Signature Cotton fat quarter (21" x 18") the design gets cut off. Yikes!

DOWNLOAD FRAME REPEAT TEA TOWEL

If a template is never your style, we've created a Linen Cotton Canvas tote bag template that can be used to ensure your design doesn't get cut off when you have the wrong size. This is also a great tool if you plan to enter a Marketplace tea towel.

Ordering Your Fat Quarter Design On a Finished Tea Towel

If you've designed a tea towel pattern specifically for a Linen Cotton Canvas fat quarter following the instructions above, there's a chance you may want to use the tea towel yourself! If you're ordering your tea towel using "Pre-Trim Linen" there's a few ways to ensure your design is centered on the finished tea towel.

1. Crop your tea towel pattern in your Spoonflower account.
2. Add the tag **photoboard** in the tag section of the Marketing and Selling section of your design page. This will automatically retain your design 90" to the right to ensure a picture-perfect preview!
3. Order a Pre-Trim Linen Swatch to see the full size of your design.
4. Select the "Pre-Trim" option and add to your cart!

In the example below you can see what happens to Meredith's tea towel design when she adds the photoboard tag and what happens when she doesn't.

Designing Cut-and-Sew Projects for Fat Quarters

If you want to design a cut and sew project, don't miss these tutorials. Pick the right cut and sew guide for self, click here.

SHOP FAT QUARTER CUT AND SEW PROJECTS

Find inspiration samples for that perfect cut and sew project, or designing your own fat quarter, we hope these tips and tutorials will help you make the most of your fat quarter! Let us know in the comments or Spoonflower's Shop your questions below or send us a message at service@spoonflower.com or tweet us @spoonflower.

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Crystal Bowman Contributing Artist October 15, 2021

24 comments

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Is it possible to have a design produced with 27 (instead of 18) and an original design which is the size of printing and design on a yard of silk or cotton? What is the turn around time for this printing? What is the cost of the printing? Not interested in having tote or pocketed shirts, only printing.
Sincerely
Elena Nikolaeva

Elena Nikolaeva February 1, 2022 Reply to this comment

REPLY

Hi Chris, Thanks for your interest in Spoonflower! You can find all the fabric types we currently print on here. I would also recommend picking up a sample pack of all our fabrics so you can feel them and make the right choice for your project.

You can also find our current turnaround times here.

I hope that helps, but please let me know if you have any further questions!

Best,
Amy
Spoonflower

Amy | July 19, 2021 at 9:35 am

REPLY

I am covering a dining chair seat and was wondering if a fat quarter could be used for that

Kathy Glover | June 1, 2021 at 10:30 am

REPLY

Hi Kathy,

Thanks for your interest! This depends on the fabric you are ordering and the size of the dining seat. To check how big a fat quarter of your chosen fabric would be, click here.

Looks like our upholstery fabrics like Dogwood Denim or Celosia Velvet would either be 27 X 18 inches or 28 X 18 inches.

Best,
Amy
Spoonflower

Amy | June 1, 2021 at 11:29 am

REPLY

Please correct the measurements above for users of the metric system! 18 inches is not 50 cm, it is 45.7 cm.
36 inches =91 cm, about 10% less than the 100 cm you wrote. This might matter a lot to some people. Thanks!

Cathy | March 1, 2021 at 12:44 pm

REPLY

Hi Cathy,

Thanks for your message. We have different sizes for fat quarters and this depends on whether you order in yards or meters. The measurements you see here aren't inches to centimeter conversions and are the correct measurements as to what we offer on our website when you order a fat quarter depending on if your region uses the imperial or the metric system. I hope that helps, but please let us know if you have any other questions.

Take care,
Amy
Spoonflower

Amy | March 1, 2021 at 3:02 pm

REPLY

1. Are there plans to limit the top 10 winners (to not be repeat designers) within a certain time frame? Say, once or twice a year? This would even-out the playing field (as many repeat winners are professional designers) and still allow for plenty of room for variety and a wider range of participant enthusiasm.
2. I also wonder why so many contest entries (and even those who place) are clearly not instep with the actual design challenge guidelines. In some challenges, such as coded-color limit, the entries all seem to be according to the rules and I am guessing this is because the entries were SF curated. Perhaps some culling would add to the vitality of all contests and streamline against extraneous entries that everyone must wade through. Just a passing thought. Thanks again, the challenges have helped me to learn more and hopefully improve.

C A Reber | January 16, 2021 at 10:48 pm

REPLY

Hi there,

Thanks so much for your feedback! Weekly design challenge winners are selected by our community through voting and we don't currently have plans to limit how many times an artist can place within the top 10 in a specific time period. Our seller handbook features a great article all about the benefits of participating in the challenges that I'd encourage you to read if you haven't already done so. The real prize of these challenges is the extra eyes on your artwork!

The spirit of the Design Challenge is to give a creative prompt that inspires designers to introduce a new design to the Marketplace that speaks specifically to the theme we have crafted. We realize that there are many creative ways to interpret the themes. When a challenge has more limitations like the limited color palette challenges you have mentioned, it does create a naturally curated collection of designs.

We appreciate you taking the time to share your feedback regarding our challenges and if you have any more questions don't hesitate to ask!
Meredith F.
Spoonflower

Spoonflower | January 26, 2021 at 4:17 pm

REPLY

Question: Do you allow designers to have more than one shop? I have seen atleast one prominant designer who has atleast 2. Just wondering. Thanks

Carrieber | January 16, 2021 at 10:26 pm

REPLY

Hi there,

Thanks for your question! An artist may have multiple shops on Spoonflower if they would like!

I hope that helps, but if you have any more questions don't hesitate to ask!
Meredith F.
Spoonflower

Spoonflower | January 26, 2021 at 4:18 pm

REPLY

I agree with the old flat preview being far better. FYI: Also, your site still lists Pic Monkey although it is nearly impossible to ge this free version to function anymore due to flash changes in Windows(!) Anyhow, I have a very powerful desktop and can no longer get Pic Monkey to function usefully. Thank you.

Carrieber | January 16, 2021 at 10:24 pm

REPLY

I'm sorry for the confusion. Spoonflower can no longer support a PicMonkey integration. Adobe Flash is no longer be supported by any updated browsers after Dec. 31, 2020, and without Flash, our PicMonkey integration will cease to function.

You can still upload high-quality images to Spoonflower from PicMonkey, however you will need a paid subscription to PicMonkey to download your image to your computer and then upload it to Spoonflower. We have a list of other suggested image editors that you might consider here.

I hope that helps, but please let us know if you have any further questions.

Take care,
Amy
Spoonflower

Amy | January 21, 2021 at 2:10 pm

REPLY

Aloha Meredith... and all y'all as well...
my view of the Lightweight Cotton Twill must have been simple "operator headspace" on my part... I don't recall the incident, nor do I recall posting this message (less than two months ago)...
Oh my... (wink)
* * *
I do agree with Marian about changing the display appearance for customers, and possibly new clients. It may be aesthetically pleasing, but for many, not all that accurate AND just that much more confusing.
Many newcomers are confused enough by the online ordering process, they now have to interpolate what they're seeing online to that same fabric laying flat on their own cutting table... for many novice sewists, myself included, possibly not an easy visualization to achieve.
* * *
I'm glad to hear about the move to new digs... I hope the HQ building remains the same... it would be such a waste to make all the improvements and then just give up the facility (sigh).
I also hope the new printing location will improve the handling, packing, and shipping.
* * *
Happy New Year to all y'all... and a Hau'oli Makahiki Hou, y'all... to boot... (LOL)
* * *
Born on Valley Isle,
Home Now, North Carolina;
Aloha y'all...
* * *

Until that time. . .

Earl r (Maui Boy) | January 2, 2021 at 3:35 pm

REPLY

I don't see any lightweight cotton twill... can't get fat quarters in that fabric?

Earl r (Maui Boy) | November 4, 2020 at 5:11 pm

REPLY

Hi Earl,

Any Spoonflower fabric may be purchased as a swatch, fat quarter or by the yard once on a specific design page. If you're not seeing Lightweight Cotton Twill in the fabric dropdown menu, please send us an email at help@spoonflower.com and we'd be happy to assist you further. I hope that helps, but if you have any more questions don't hesitate to ask!

Best Regards,
-Meredith F.
Spoonflower

Meredith | November 5, 2020 at 6:39 am

REPLY

I wish Spoonflower would go back to the flat view of fabrics (prior to the drastic site revamp customers could not only see a full fat quarter, they could put in multiple yardage and see it as a continuous length) Putting up a blog post telling people about fat quarters isn't nearly as effective as letting the view show exactly what you'll get. A few people will see this blog post once, while everyone will see the view on fabric forever.

I just had an inquiry about this design (my only top ten contest winner, which hasn't been selling since the scrunchy view was put in place). The lady wanted to know what she had to order to get a complete cut-and-sew because the view makes it look like a FQ cuts off on both the left and right. I have no way of knowing how many people might have bought it if only they could see that a FQ gives them a full unit. It's really ruined by the distorted fabric mockup.

https://www.spoonflower.com/en/fabric/1818894-microsuyadle-body-warmer-hotdog-dachshund-by-eclectic_house

The lack of seeing a continuous multiple length has also caused problems. I've had people tell me they bought the 2 yard FAY because they thought that was the only way to get a continuous length. The little 'increase/decrease' arrow is finicky to click on - half the time it doesn't work for me, and when it DOES work, neither the view nor the text description change - it still shows a yard and says a yard.

Marian (Eclectic House) | October 14, 2020 at 8:32 am

REPLY

Hi Marian,

Thanks so much for taking the time to share your feedback and we apologize for any frustration the preview may have caused. We are always working on ways to improve the artist and maker experience on our site and I have passed along your message to our development team. -Meredith

Meredith | October 14, 2020 at 3:03 pm

REPLY

I agree with Meredith. The old way of viewing the material was far better!

Rose Hennig | November 3, 2020 at 9:44 am

REPLY

What fabric type would be similar to flannel? I am making slippers for my grandbabies with flannel (or similar) and furry/fuzzy inside.

Thanks,
Kathy

Kathy | October 13, 2020 at 2:34 pm

REPLY

Hi Kathy,

Thanks so much for reaching out! While we don't have flannel at the moment, our Fleece is a great alternative and you can learn more about it here. I recommend starting off with a sample swatch or sample pack to get a feel for the fabric. I hope that helps, but if you have any more questions don't hesitate to ask! – Meredith

Meredith | October 14, 2020 at 3:23 pm

REPLY

If I buy more than one fat quarter, will they all be one big piece, or do they come in separate fat quarters?

Roslyn Reid | October 13, 2020 at 11:09 am

REPLY

Hi Roslyn,

Great question! Each fat quarter will arrive as individual fat quarters. If you'd like to order multiple designs on one yard, our Fill-A-Yard™ tool would be a great option!

Meredith | October 13, 2020 at 11:52 am

REPLY

I just ordered several different fabrics, Fat Quarters. At the very end of the ordering process, I was told that for some reason, the order didn't go through. So I checked my bank account and the amount had been entered already! What is going on?

Hazel Anderson | October 13, 2020 at 9:46 am

REPLY

Hi Hazel,

Thank you for using Spoonflower — I'm sorry the check-out process was giving you trouble! I do see you were able to get order #46689637 successfully placed, and it is now processing normally and should print and ship out within the turnaround time noted on the order confirmation email. Once it ships, you'll be receiving a shipping confirmation email that includes tracking information. Thanks for your patience, and please let me know if you have any further questions or concerns!

-Meredith

Meredith | October 13, 2020 at 9:55 am

REPLY

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