

# Shibori (Japanese Stitched Resist Dyeing)

Supply list – 2 pages (revised 6/03/26)

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Shibori is a form of resist dyeing similar to tie-dye, but it goes beyond merely wrapping fabric around tubes or tying with rubber bands to get starburst effects. Japanese Shibori is usually stitched and gathered into traditional patterns, then dyed. When the stitching is removed, a beautiful array of patterns emerges. Any dye can be used for Shibori, but you get the best results with Indigo. Because Indigo works through oxidation, you can get extremely graphic patterns if you stitch and dye carefully, and watching the color ‘develop’ before your eyes is a sight to see. For this class, you will learn some basic classical Shibori patterns and a handout with a few other designs to try. You will dye them with pre-reduced synthetic indigo, which is much easier than dyeing with natural indigo.

In class, you will also receive instructions on how to make a special Japanese palm needle, which is helpful for Shibori and Sashiko stitching. They can be ordered online, but are very easy to make yourself. Class fee includes the use of the instructor’s chemicals and dye, and instructions/materials to make a Japanese palm thimble\* (NOTE: in class, you will use one of the instructor’s homemade thimbles if you need one, but they must be returned at the end of the class; you can make your own thimble at a later date). **NOTE:** If you have taken one of my previous Shibori dyeing classes and would like to revisit this intriguing fiber art, I will have some more complex designs for you to stitch.

**Please be courteous to others by arriving for class with the correct supplies. Contact me at 503 888-9784 or [helene.m.knott@gmail.com](mailto:helene.m.knott@gmail.com) if you have any questions.**

**A Note to Students:** Many students do not realize that once the teacher is paid, the shop offering a class makes little if any income on the class itself. The shop is relying on product sales to continue offering quality classes to you. Therefore, I urge you to patronize this shop when buying your supplies for this class as much as possible and remind you that big chain stores do not offer the variety of classes that the smaller shops do. Keep quilt classes alive by supporting this shop. Thank you, Helene

## Tools/Materials:

- **Fabric:** 1- 1½ yard of PFD (Prepared for Dyeing) white cotton. (NOTE: If you cannot find PFD fabric, you may use any commercial white, or natural quilter’s cotton that has been ‘scoured’ see instructions at the end of the list.
- **Thread:** You will need a very strong smooth thread to carry out the stitching. Strong button & carpet thread is an excellent choice.
- **Doll needle:** You will need a long doll needle (3” is ideal) with an eye large enough to accommodate the thread for the stitching. If you cannot find a doll needle, a large-eye extra long quilter’s basting needle will do.
- **Pencil:** A graphite mechanical pencil to trace designs on the fabric for stitching.
- **Scissors:** to cut thread, etc. Bring a pair that has sharp narrow points so that you can snip the stitching threads without risking cutting your fabric during the thread removal process.
- **Rubber needle puller (optional):** This is a small rubber disc made by Dritz that you wrap around the needle to grasp and pull it through multiple layers of fabric. You may not need one but it will save poked and strained fingers if you do.
- **Seam ripper**
- **Plastic Shoe-box sized bin with lid:** A cheap one from the Dollar Store will do.
- **Old Clothing:** Wear something that you don’t care if it gets dye spilled on it. When dyeing in a vat some splashes are inevitable, better safe than sorry (and don’t forget the shoes as well unless you want Indigo colored sneakers).

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- **Rubber gloves:** Very important! To protect your hands from the dye or you will be sporting indigo hands for days.
- **Gardening gloves (optional):** You need to pull the gathering thread very tight for the best results. The repetitive pulling and tying can make your fingers sore from the rubbing thread, Rubber palm/finger coated gloves may be helpful for this step.

**Preparing your fabric:** Prior to dyeing, the fabric should be scoured to remove sizing or random contaminants that may be present that might interfere with the dye process. Even PFD (Prepared For Dyeing) fabric, will get better results if you pre-wash the fabric before using. Indigo is a strong dye but even the oils from your hands – especially if you use hand lotion – can block dye penetration and result in a splotchy dye job. It can be interesting to over-dye and existing colored fabric as long as it is light in color. If you want to try that, the results can be unpredictable as some of the chemicals used in Indigo vats may strip existing color from fabric.

**To Scour Fabric:** Wash the fabric in very hot water (over 140°F) with ½ teaspoon Synthropol and ½ teaspoon of Washing Soda. If you cannot get Synthropol, you may use a good basic laundry detergent without fabric softener, scent, brighteners, or any other such additives. This may be done in hot water by machine. It is very important that you rinse it thoroughly before drying, so do a second rinse cycle if possible. Dry the fabric in the dryer (without any dryer sheets!) and then tear or cut it into fat quarters or 12”-14” squares which will be easier to stitch and handle in the dye bucket. Afterwards, you may want to label the fabric so that you don’t get it mixed up with other white fabric you may have in your stash.

If you cannot get an additive free detergent, you can pre-wash the fabric by hand with a good dish soap like Blue Dawn. Fill a large bucket with boiling hot water and stir in 2-3 teaspoons washing soda and 1-2 teaspoons Blue Dawn dish soap per gallon. Stir well with a stick to dissolve the soda. You should use enough water to completely submerge the fabric with water to spare. Add the fabric and stir, and mash the fabric with the stick, an old potato masher you won’t reuse for food is a great tool to do this with;. This is easiest done outdoors or in your bathtub to prevent water from sloshing onto your floor. Let the fabric soak for a couple of hours then drain the fabric a rinse repeatedly with hot water to remove all the soap and soda. Protect your hands with rubber gloves, washing soda is hard on the hands. It may be dried in the dryer but do not use any dryer sheets. Iron the fabric without using starch or sizing (like Best Pressed).

