



## Shop Your Stash

Timeless Stitches — Quilt Capital of Kansas

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December is here and a lot of us are checking our lists. The thought of standing in long lines to pay for purchases does not excite me, so I have turned to doing a more “Homemade Christmas.” The inspiration for this was trying to decide what to get a 23-year-old young man a couple of years ago. The brand of socks he wanted could be purchased only at a specific store that was not open during the hours I had available to shop. Then the lightning bolt hit! He would be excited to receive his very own chocolate pie! I purchased more pie plates and plastic containers to hold them and followed my plan. The men in my life received pies for Christmas! There was chocolate for one, pecan for a couple of them, cherry for another, pineapple for yet another, etc. I made machine-embroidered kitchen towels for the ladies. Then I decided to make Christmas potholders to go with the towels. As my stack of potholders grew, I considered adding a potholder for each of the men. After all, I believe in equal opportunity kitchens! The potholders were a hit! It turned out that my grandson did not own a potholder (a situation that I quickly resolved) and my grand-daughter’s boyfriend was elated to receive a potholder. Who would have guessed that something that simple would be so appreciated. The best part about the potholders was that I made them from my fabric stash. I had plenty of Christmas fabric scraps and this project put those scraps to good use.

This year I’m planning more homemade gifts. I can’t tell you exactly what because some of the recipients might read this column. It’s time to check my list and see who returned their pie pans for a refill and make a few more potholders. I think I will branch out from Christmas fabric this year.

In case you need a few ideas for quick and easy gifts you can make, here are a few ideas--

Drying mats for dishes. Bosal has come out with “foam” inserts to cover with fabric and make your own mats. I sewed up one in about an hour.

Ten-minute table runner (well actually it’s about 30 minutes) is a pattern that has been around for a few years. All you need is a half yard of one fabric and quarter yard of a coordinating fabric. I tweaked the pattern and use 2/3 yard of one and 1/3 yard of the other.

Mug rugs. Anyone who drinks coffee or hot tea can use one of these and they make a great stocking stuffer. If you have some left-over six-inch quilt blocks, why not put a back on them with a thin batting inside and have an instant Christmas gift?

Cosmetic bags. Two rectangles of quilted fabric and a zipper and voila! You have a simple gift.

Table runners. Some runners can be made fairly quickly, especially if you have some orphan quilt blocks. Check your stash and see what you come up with. There are patterns that are “sew and flip” (or can be done that way) and when they are pieced together, they don’t have to be quilted. The “sew and flip” runners can be

made in an afternoon and the binding can be completed while you watch your favorite TV show that evening.

Advent Calendar. If you have someone on your list who is counting the days until Santa comes down the chimney, consider making an Advent Calendar. There are some really cute Advent Calendar panels out this year. I made one after supper one evening--used backing and batting scraps from my stash, and it was finished! The panel is marked showing where to fold it to make the pockets. Press on the folds and then stitch across and up and down to define the pockets. I chose to stitch the panel to the back and batting around the outside edge and turn it right side out before I stitched the pockets down. That way I stitched through all layers and no additional quilting was required. All that was left to do was to fill the pockets with the smallest candy canes.

I'm sure if you shop your stash, you are likely to find fabric or projects that will inspire you. Happy Holidays!

This recipe came to me from Nina Browning, my Foods I instructor at K-State. I think I have made it every Christmas since. I'm sure a food processor would work to grind the apricots and coconut.

## Apricot Balls

14 dried apricot halves

½ c. coconut

1 Tbsp. powdered sugar

Approx. 1 Tbsp. orange juice

Approx. ½ c. granulated sugar



Using a food mill, grind apricots and coconut together. Add powdered sugar and enough orange juice to hold mixture together. Shape into balls. Roll in granulated sugar and place on rack to dry.