

Guide produced in partnership with:



Broomlands And Bourtreehill Community Association



CANNY COOKER

MAKERS' GUIDE

Introduction



This guide has been written to accompany the video “A Guide to Making a Canny Cooker”, filmed in 2023. The information and instructions below are not the only way to make a Canny Cooker, but we hope they will help to provide a useful overview of the process for groups or individuals who are interested in creating one. You will learn your own ways to speed up the process as you go!

Before you start...

...read this guide all the way through and watch the accompanying video!

If you're planning to make Canny Cookers as a project as a group, make sure you've given the following some thought before jumping in:

- Who are you making the cookers for? Have you done any 'market research' to establish demand for this product in your target area?
- Will you be providing training or instructions for how to use and maintain the cookers when they go to their intended users?
- Have you identified who else might be making cookers in your area? If so, have you linked in with them to ensure you're not duplicating efforts?
- If you're planning to sell the cookers, have you investigated any safety regulations you would need to meet?

Introduction

You should also consider the overall cost of your project, particularly:

- The cost of the fabric for the exterior and interior
- The cost of stuffing
- The cost of the notions for the project (thread, toggles, binding etc)
- The time required to produce a single cooker and the number of people you will involve in this process
- If appropriate, the cost of a pan and lid to distribute along with the cooker

Finally, do you (or the group you're part of) have the appropriate skills to produce a cooker? Could you benefit from speaking with other groups who have made cookers before to get hints and tips we may have missed in this guide?

Your Locality Team can provide support to work through these questions before you hit the sewing machine, so if in doubt, you can reach out to them on:

Arran: info@arrancvs.org.uk

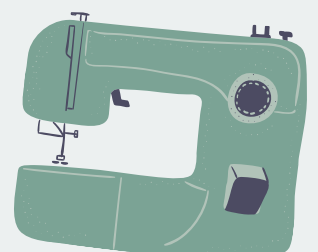
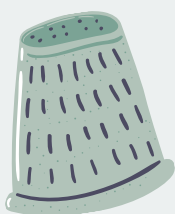
Garnock Valley: GarnockValleyLocality@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

Irvine: irvinelocalityteam@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

Kilwinning: KilwNCLocality@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

North Coast and Cumbrae: KilwNCLocality@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

Three Towns: 3TownsLocality@north-ayrshire.gov.uk



Materials and Equipment

01 Materials and notions

- 2 x 44 inch (112cm) squares of fabric (one of outer material, one of lining material)
 - 2 x 16 inch (41cm) circles of fabric (one of outer material, one of lining material)
 - 74 inches (188cm) of medium thickness cord
 - 44 inches (112cm) of 2 inch (5cm) wide bias binding ('edging material' in the video). You can either use pre-made bias binding tape or make your own
 - 2 x toggles
 - 1kg (2.2lb) of stuffing
 - Thread in a corresponding colour to your outer material
-

02 Equipment

- A sewing machine, ideally with buttonhole stitch function
 - Fabric pens
 - Pins
 - Fabric scissors or rotary cutter
 - Measuring Tape
 - Kilt pin (or other tool you can use to thread the cord through the drawstring channel)
 - Baking scales
 - Measuring jug or bowl
-

Materials and Equipment

03

Other tools and things to consider

It might also be useful to have access to an **overlocker**, which we show you in the video. However this is not necessary and we will give you suggestions for alternative ways to finish your cooker if you don't have one.

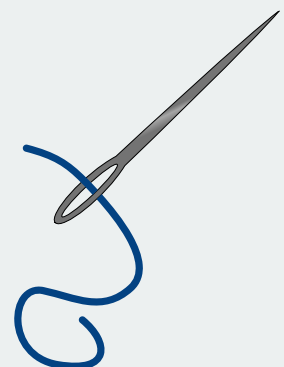
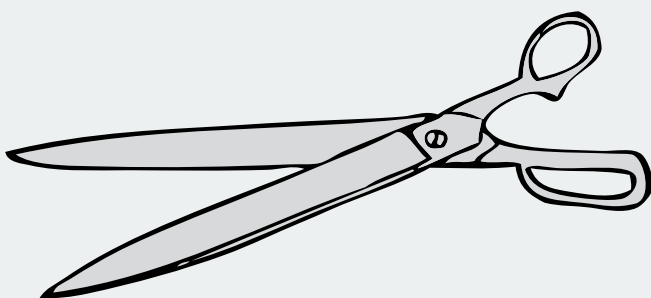
Some groups (like the Sew Lovely group who are demonstrating in the video) also have a **template** to cut out the pattern pieces. If you think you will make a few cookers, it would be worth speaking to your local **Men's Shed** to see if they could help make a lightweight wooden template for you to use.

If you decide to use a **rotary cutter**, you will also want a large enough **cutting mat** or **cut-proof surface** to work on.

Finally, you may also want to have some small pieces of **iron-on stabiliser** or **interfacing** to reinforce your buttonholes.

Do not be tempted to use any old scissors if you can avoid it! The sharper the blades, the more accurate your cutting out will be (and that's why, no matter how tempting, you shouldn't use fabric scissors to cut wrapping paper!).

If you are new to sewing terminology, we have also included a **glossary** at the end of this guide to help translate terms you may be unfamiliar with.



Instructions



01 Mark out the template

- Place your 2 x 44 inch squares of outer and lining fabric **right sides together**, with the lining fabric on the top. You should lay the fabric out on a flat, clean surface, lining up the edges and checking to ensure the pieces are well-centred on top of each other.



- You can find the centre of your fabrics by folding each one carefully in half and then in half again, pinching the creases, and then matching up the centre point where the horizontal and vertical creases overlap.

Instructions



01 Mark out the template

- You are now going to mark out your pattern pieces. You will see in the video that makers have a wooden template to make this process easier, but you can still make a cooker without one by taking your time and measuring accurately.

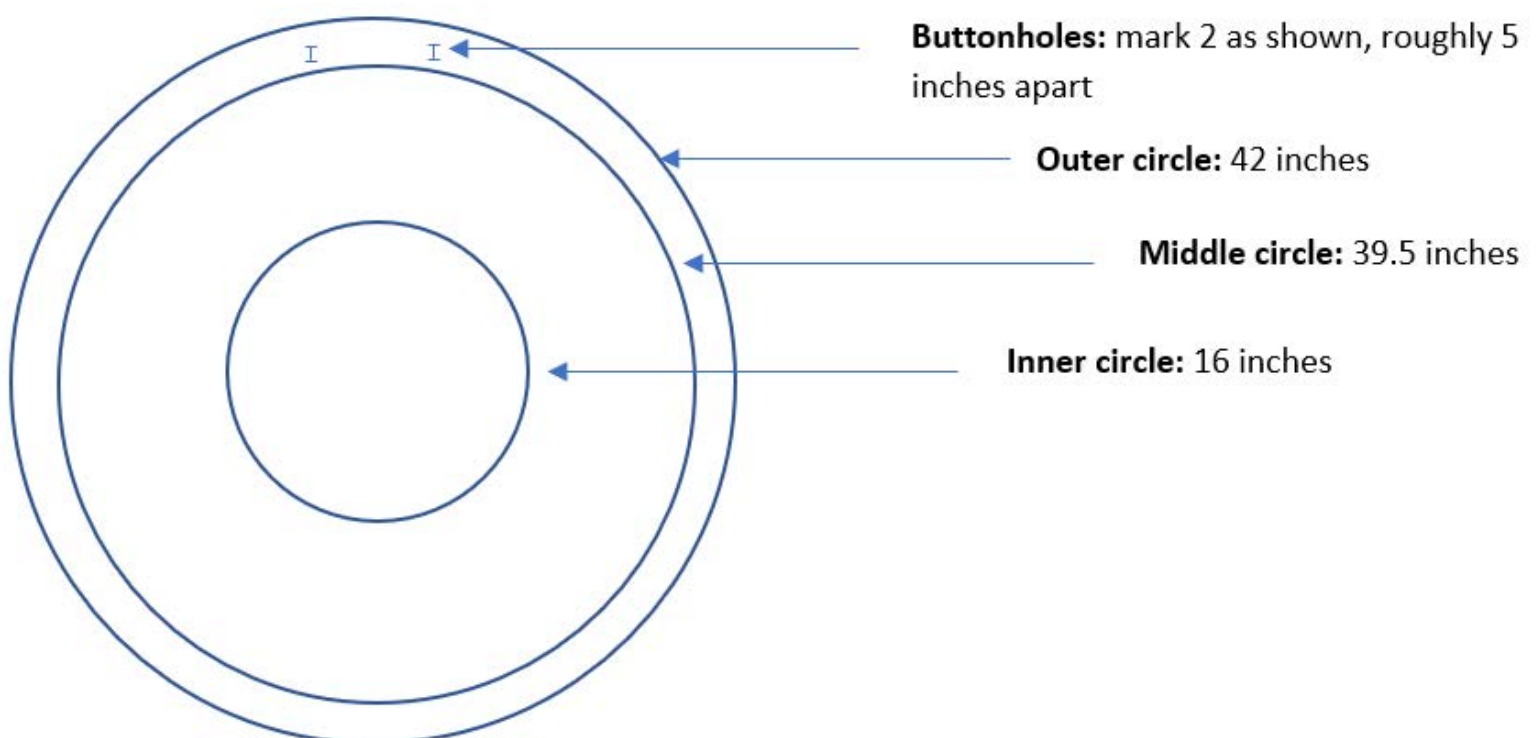


Instructions



01 Mark out the template

- Once you have your fabrics centred, mark out the following using a fabric pen:

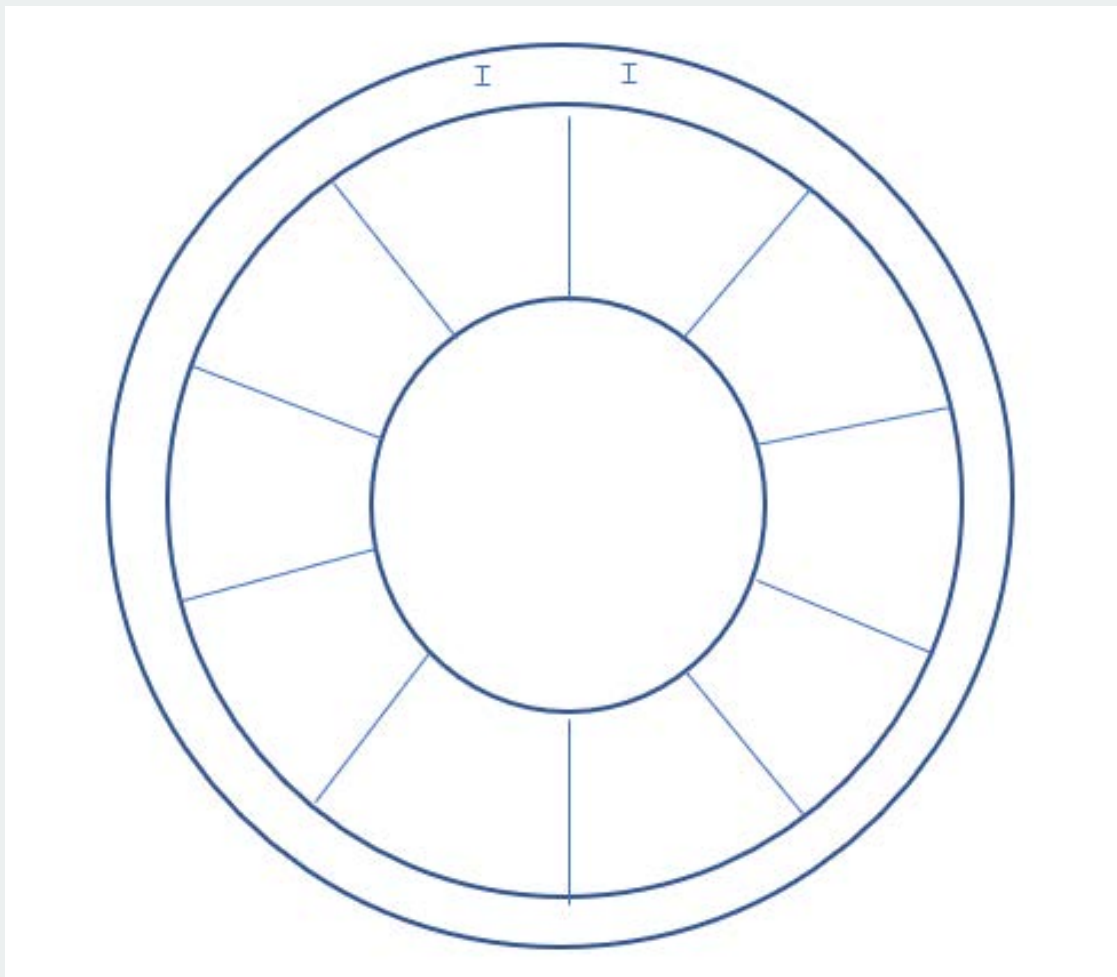


Instructions



01 Mark out the template

- Next, use your fabric pen to mark 10 equal sections (or as close to 'equal' as you can manage!) on your template between the inner circle and middle circle. It should look something like this:



Instructions



02 Pinning and trimming

- When you're happy with your sections, pin the lining and outer fabrics together along the new lines you've just marked and in the centre to hold everything in place while you cut the sections out.



Instructions



02 Pinning and trimming

- Cut around the **outer circle** using fabric scissors or a rotary cutter, and discard the excess fabric, leaving the marked and pinned circle.



Instructions



03 Stitching

- Securing at the start and end with a **backstitch**, sew around the inner circle, leaving a gap around 5-10cms wide to insert your stuffing. If you are likely to forget to leave a gap, pop some pins in or mark where you're going to not sew!



- Securing at the start and end with a **backstitch**, sew along each of the lines you have marked between the inner and middle circles. Do not sew around the middle circle, or you will seal up the cooker before you have stuffed it!

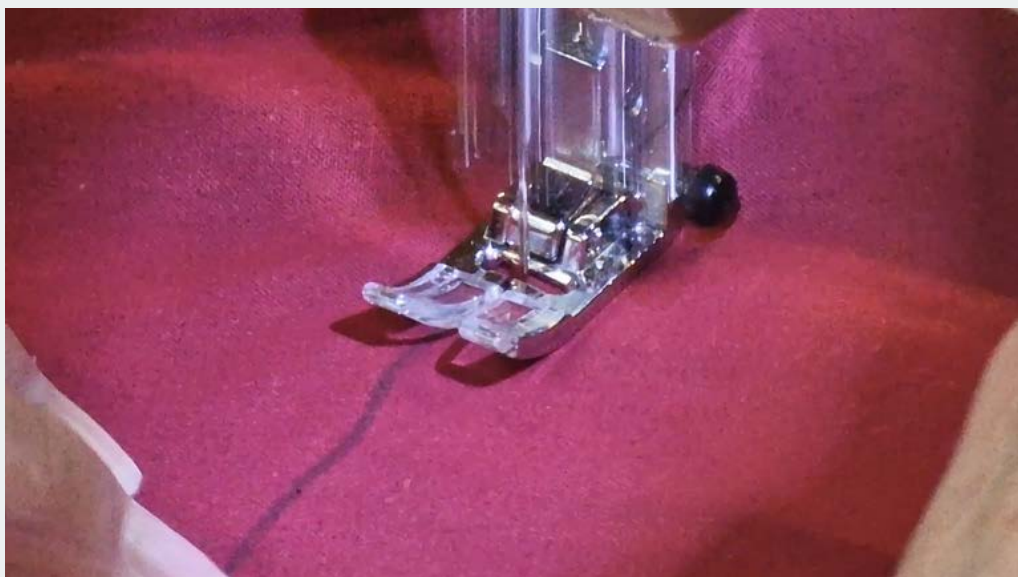
Instructions



03 Stitching

Additional step not shown in the video:

- This is a good time to sew your buttonholes using the buttonhole stitch on your machine if you have that function. To make the buttonholes, follow your machine's instructions (they're all different!) and stitch the buttonholes **onto the lining fabric only**, being careful not to catch the outer fabric. This will be used as a channel for your drawstring later on.
- You may also want to consider using some iron on fabric stabiliser or interfacing behind this part of your fabric to give it some extra strength, but this is optional.



Instructions



04 Insert stuffing into the base

- To ensure even insulation of the cooker, we recommend weighing out your stuffing into equal sections. Set up your baking scale and measuring jug or bowl, and set the scale to zero.
- Measure out 200g of stuffing. This will look like a lot, so you might need to squash it down into your container to get to the full weight!



Instructions



04 Insert stuffing into the base

- Stuff the **inner circle**, using the 5-10cm gap you made earlier. Take your time to make sure the stuffing is evenly distributed across the inner circle, as this will form the base of the cooker, so you want it to be relatively flat and stable.
- Using your sewing machine, **stitch the gap on the inner circle closed**. Make sure you give this a good backstitch at the start and end to ensure that the stuffing is held in place securely. Take your time, especially if you have a small machine! Trim the threads.



Instructions



05 Filling and finishing the wedges

- Measure out **60g of stuffing** and insert into one of the sections you created by sewing lines between the inner and middle circles. It's easier to do this by taking a handful of stuffing at a time, rather than trying to put all 60 grams in at once! If you're struggling to distribute the stuffing equally, you can use the blunt end of a pencil, chopstick or knitting needle to work the stuffing down into the corners to ensure that each wedge is filled evenly.
- Repeat this step for each wedge, ensuring that you fill the sections evenly as shown in the video.



Instructions



05 Filling and finishing the wedges

- Once you have stuffed all of the wedges, sew around the middle circle to seal the stuffing in, making sure to do a backstitch at the start and end to secure your stitches.



Instructions



05 Filling and finishing the wedges

- It's now time to sew around the edge of the outer circle. In the video, you'll see the makers using an overlocker to finish the outside edge. The overlocker sews the edge together using a stitch that prevents the fabric from fraying, and trims off excess to produce a professional finish.



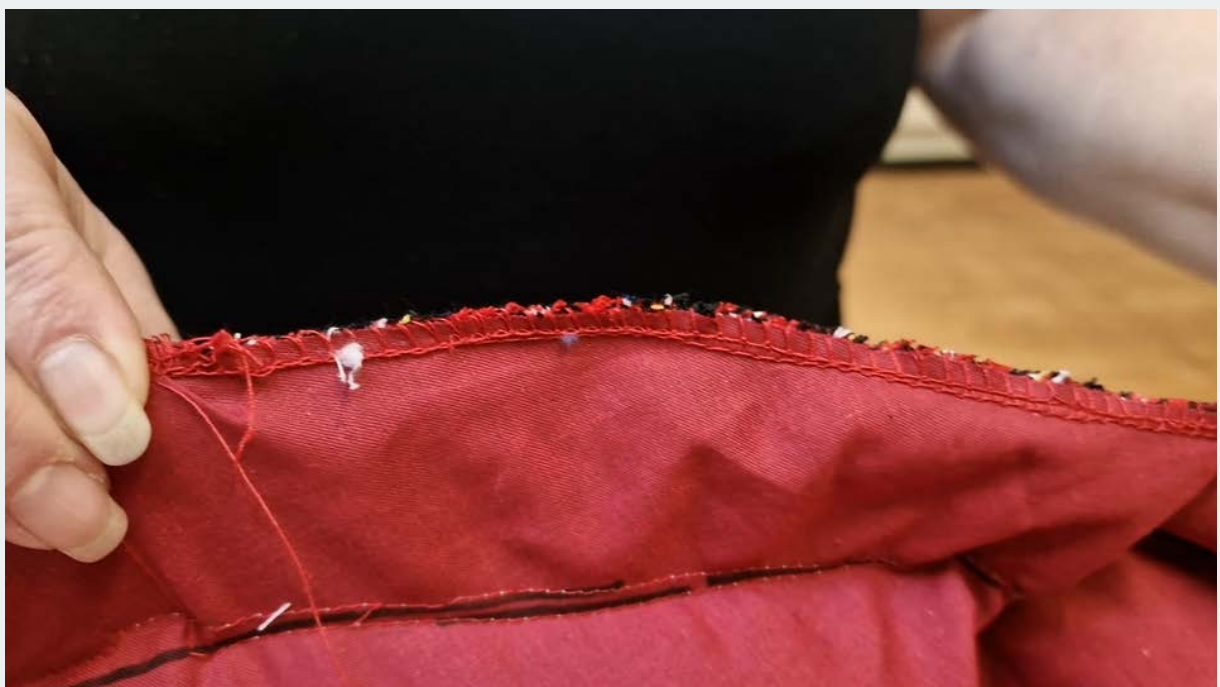
Instructions



05 Filling and finishing the wedges

Alternative finish on a sewing machine

- If you don't have access to an overlocker, then we recommend sewing around half an inch in from the edge with a straight stitch, and then switching your machine to a zigzag stitch, and sewing over the raw edges around the outside. This will work very similarly to overlocking – it won't be quite as professional-looking, but it'll do the same thing! Again, take your time if you're using this method, as it can be quite hard going on your machine.



Instructions



06 Bind the edge

- It's now time to cover up the edge you've just overlocked or zigzagged using your **bias binding**, which will both neaten up the edge and reinforce it. You can pin this in place all around the outside, easing it into the curve of the circle, and then sew; or if you're confident with a sewing machine, you can do as the makers in the video do and ease it around the outside with your fingers and sewing as you go. Make sure to **backstitch** at the start to secure in place.



Instructions



06 Bind the edge

- We recommend that you sew one side of the binding down before folding over and sewing down the other edge, as this ensures that you have caught the binding fully and will reduce the likelihood of gaps.



- The cooker will be quite large and cumbersome at this point, so you might need a glamorous assistant (or a larger table!) at this stage to take the relative weight while you're sewing the binding on.

Instructions



07 Insert the cord

- If you didn't sew buttonholes with your machine as part of Step 3, then now is the time to cut the slits into the lining fabric where you marked them earlier. We recommend reinforcing these if you can by whipstitching or buttonhole stitching by hand to prevent the holes from fraying.



Instructions



07 Insert the cord

- Using your kilt pin, attach it to your length of cord and feed it through one buttonhole into the space between your bound edge and the middle circle. This can take a surprisingly long time, so be patient, and wriggle the cord along in sections before pulling it through.



Instructions



07 Insert the cord

- Once you've threaded the cord all the way through, even up the ends and **thread on your toggles**, and tie a secure double knot on each end of the cord to secure the toggles.
- Draw the top of the cooker together, and voila, you have completed the main body of your Canny Cooker!



Instructions



08 Create the lid

- Take the two 16 inch circles you cut out earlier and place them right sides together.



- Pin them together securely, ensuring they are properly centred and aligned.

Instructions



08 Create the lid

- Leaving a 5-10cm hole for the stuffing, sew around the outside edge, either using an overlocker or a sewing machine. If using a sewing machine, follow the same method as for the alternative method with the body: sew half an inch in from the edge using a straight stitch, and then use a zigzag stitch around the raw edge to reinforce.



- Weigh out 200 grams of stuffing and stuff the lid, keeping the distribution of the stuffing as even as possible.

Instructions



08 Create the lid

- To close the lid, turn the raw edges at the opening under once (turning them to the inside of the lid) and stitch the opening closed. You can either neatly and carefully stitch this closed on the sewing machine (stitching close to the edge) or sew it closed by hand using a whipstitch or ladder stitch, whichever you prefer.



Instructions



09 Assemble the cooker

- Bring together the main body of the Canny Cooker, the pot you're planning to use along with it and the lid you've just completed.
- Insert the pot into the main body, putting the cooker lid on top of the pot lid and pull the drawstring tight using the toggles.
- Congratulations! You've now completed your Canny Cooker!



Glossary

We've included a list of some of the more technical terminology used throughout this guide for people who are new to sewing. If you're still unsure of what a certain term means, YouTube has some excellent, high quality videos from sewists demonstrating common techniques, so have a look on there for some step by step demonstrations.



Backstitch

A way of locking your start and end stitches in place by sewing over them backwards on the machine. This prevents them from pulling apart under stress.



Buttonhole Stitch

A dense stitch used to reinforce the fabric edges around a buttonhole. Most sewing machines will have a manual buttonhole function and buttonhole foot, with instructions on how to use included with the machine. You can also sew a buttonhole stitch by hand: tutorials are available on YouTube showing how to do this step by step.



Ladder Stitch

An 'invisible' hand stitching technique used to join two finished edges together for a neat finish. We recommend finding a YouTube tutorial to see this in action, as it's very hard to describe in writing!

Glossary



Raw edge

An edge of fabric that has not been finished and is therefore likely to fray. You can finish an edge with a variety of techniques, including binding, overlocking and zig-zag stitching.



Right Sides Together

The 'right side' of the fabric is the side of the fabric you want to show when you've finished your project. The fabric used in the Canny Cooker video is double sided, so it doesn't really matter which sides you put together! If you're using a printed cotton, there will be a white side and a printed side - the printed side is the 'right side' and the white side is the 'wrong side'.



Whipstitch

A hand sewing technique used to join two finished edges together by bringing a small stitch vertically over the top of the two edges and passing it diagonally behind the finished edge so that only a small stitch shows on the outside. This is a slightly faster and simpler way to sew up an edge compared to the **ladder stitch**. As with other stitches we've mentioned, YouTube is your best friend here!

Notes

We have included a few blank pages for you to make your own notes or sketches to help you plan and make your cooker.

Notes

Canny Cooker: Makers' Guide

This guide has been produced in partnership by the Sew Lovely Group at Towerlands Community Centre, Broomlands and Bourtreehill Community Association, The Farm Basket Community Larder and the Irvine Locality Team (Connected Communities) from North Ayrshire Council.

It is intended for use by groups and services who are interested in producing Canny Cookers as part of their activities.

The Canny Cooker was originally developed by the Health Promotion Dietetic Team at NHS Ayrshire and Arran with funding from Community Food and Health Scotland, and we are grateful to their staff for their ongoing collaboration and support with community groups and the local authority around food, diet and healthy weight.



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

