
Linen Caftan with Liesl Gibson

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

- I'm going to show you how to make this caftan. You can make it as a short top, you can lengthen it a bit for a tunic, or you can go even longer for a dress. It's made of one rectangle of fabric. It's got a little drawstring encasing that cinch it up and make it fit to your body. I'll also show you how to print on it. You can print or you can leave it plain, whichever you prefer. But either way, this is a really versatile garment, and it's one size fits all. You'll have a lot of fun with this one. (playful instrumental music)

Chapter 2 - Materials

Materials

- For the caftan, you'll need a few different materials. To start out with, you'll need fabric. And I like to use a drapery fabric for this. Be careful not to use something that's too heavy or too stiff. Linen is terrific. And I've also got a wool jersey here that will be really nice for the winter. It'd be cute over a turtleneck or something like that. Be careful when you're selecting your fabric. It's better to use something that doesn't really have a right or wrong side. If you're looking at, say, a printed fabric, if there's a distinct wrong side, for example if it's really white on the back side, that will show, because the sides of the caftan are open. So keep that in mind when you're selecting your fabric. And I'll talk shortly about how much fabric to get as well. You'll also need pins. You'll need fabric scissors. Some chalk or a fabric marking pen will be really useful here. A ruler. I like to use a measuring tape to determine how long I want it to be and how much fabric to buy. And then you'll also need to download and assemble this little neck facing piece, and this will be available on the website. You'll need some interfacing. And you'll need a sewing machine and an iron as well. Now, when it comes time to print on the fabric, if you decide to do your printing, you'll need some fabric inks or paints. And I've got a couple of them here. I like to use a brayer to spread the ink onto some sort of a tray or something where you can apply the ink in itself. The little scraper will come in handy for applying the ink as well. And then I have a couple of different blocks here. This one I purchased. If you find a nice block that you like. Or you can also make one. And there's a Creativebug workshop that will teach you how to do that if you've never done that before. I have a couple of tools here that I use to make the block itself. So once you have all your materials assembled, we're ready to get going.

Chapter 3 - Start caftan

Measure and cut caftan body

- Before we can get started, we need to decide what length you're going to make, and that will also determine how much fabric you need. So I'm gonna talk through a lot of different numbers and lengths here. Stick with me and this will all make sense in the end. If you're making a top, I think of flattering length is to go someplace about halfway in between your high hip, which are your hip bones that you feel right up here, and your hip bones at the outside of your leg, about halfway between there, about here on me is a nice flattering length. If you're making a tunic, again, a flattering length is to go about a little higher than halfway between your hip bone and your knee. So on me, I like to make a tunic length about here. And then if you're making a dress, most flattering is probably at or just above your knee, or a little higher if you feel comfortable with that. If you go

longer it can start to look a little bit dowdy, so be careful with that. You can also, if you're feeling a little daring and trendy, go for the maxi length, which is your ankle approximately, or you can even go a little bit longer if you want. And once you've decided what length you want to make, then it's a good idea to take a measuring tape and measure the length, up to your shoulder. So I'm making a top today, I'm gonna go from right about here, I'm gonna measure all the way up to my shoulder, at my neck. And on me, it's about 24 inches. So that's the length that you need. Whatever length you decide, from the hem, all the way up to your shoulder at your neck. Now once you've done that, you're gonna double that number, because we've measured for the front, you need to measure the same thing for the back. So you'll double the number that you just measured. So on me, I'm gonna do 48 inches, 24 plus 24 is 48. And then you'll add one inch for the hem. So altogether, I'm gonna have 49 inches for my length. Now for the width, if we're going all the way across, it goes approximately from the inside of your shoulder, over your elbow, excuse me, to the inside of your elbow. And on most people, that's gonna be about 34 inches. Then again, add one inch, so 35 inches. Because you're including your hand there. So for the one that I'm making today, I'm going 49 inches for the length, and 35 inches for the width. Now when it comes time to actually selecting your fabric, you'll also need to remember that you want to have enough fabric for your neck facing. I'm using a 60 inch wide fabric today, so I know that my 35 inches wide is going to leave me plenty over on the side here that I can position my neck facing. If you're using 44 or 42 inch wide fabric, you're not gonna have enough over on the side. You'll need to buy a little bit extra length. So you might want to buy another half yard just to be sure that you have enough. Plus, you'll need a little bit for your casing, your drawstring casing, and the drawstring itself. So once you've determined how much fabric you need, then it's a good idea to always pre wash your fabric just to make it a little bit easier to work with to eliminate any shrinkage. And if you're printing on your fabric, you want to remove any sizing from the fabric as well, because that will prevent the ink or the paint from adhering to your fabric. Okay, so now it's time to go ahead and cut our fabric. So this is the caftan that I'm making today. This is a linen, it's sort of an open weave. And as you can see, there's no real right or wrong side. I've got my fabric all set. And I've pre washed it and pressed it, and I'm starting to lay it out here. So I started out, I've got a nice clean edge here, and I know that I'm on grain there. I want to do the same thing on the other side. So I'm gonna measure out, I'm measuring 49 inches because I'm making my top, and that's the length that I had measured. I'm gonna measure out 49 inches. And I'm just gonna make a little mark there. I think I'll cut it. Just put a little clip in here. And because this is linen and it's quite drapey, I actually want to pull a thread here so that I'm sure that I can keep my fabric on grain. You don't have to do this, but I find especially with a linen like this, because it is so drapey, it's very easy to cut it off grain a little bit and then you have sort of a droopy hem at some points, and it just doesn't look as nice. So I'm gonna actually go in here, and this takes a little bit of time. Some fabrics are easier to do than others. So I'm gonna look for a fairly strong thread. There are finer and thicker threads in this fabric, I want one that's relatively strong that I can pull to find the grain. And the grain, if you'll remember, are the threads that run either lengthwise in my fabric, or widthwise, they intersperse, they cross each other over and under, and that's what makes the pattern. But I'm looking for one thread, and I'm gonna pull that, and that's gonna help me to keep everything on grain. So I've got a few different ones here. This thread looks like it might be a good contender. I'm just gonna gently pull on this, and coax the rest of the fabric along. And you can see it sort of puckers and almost gathers. And I'll just continue to do that. If it breaks, it's okay. We'll just pick it up again. But by doing this, we can actually see where that thread carries through the fabric. And it allows us to cut it right on that thread. You don't have to do this

with all fabrics. Some fabrics, it's really easy to just see the thread with your eyes. Other fabrics, it's fine to just draw a line as long as you've laid out your fabric evenly, and you're measuring, you can measure a line perpendicular to the selvages, to the tightly woven edges on the outside of your fabric, but because this fabric, it's a little tricky to see, and it's very tricky to get it laid out really nice and evenly, I really prefer to pull a thread on this one. Now my thread just broke. So I'm gonna use what I have here, and then I'll pick it up again in a minute. I'm just coaxing that thread along as much as I can. And this is going to be my cutting guide in just a second. You can kind of see there. It's giving me a little line that I can cut on. So I'm going to use that as far as I've pulled it, and then I'll pick it up again when I can't see any more. And again, this is a guide. You don't have to be too precise. You're being as accurate as you can, but don't obsess over this. It could drive you crazy if you're trying to pull this all the way across the 60 inch wide fabric. It's really just the cutting guide for you. All right, I've reached as far as I could with that broken thread. Now I'm gonna pick up another one right in the same area, hopefully this one will be strong enough, this is a finer thread. And I'm just going to do it again. Again, just gently coaxing it. You can even see the thread makes sort of a ridge, because it's tighter than the other threads. And that helps with the cutting. And you'll do this all the way across, until you reach the other side of the fabric. And then you can just finish cutting it using that same technique. So now we've got the length of the fabric that we need. We need to cut our width as well. And first thing I'm going to do, is to trim off this selvedge on the length of the fabric. And remember, that's the more tightly woven part of the fabric, and we want to trim that off because first of all, it doesn't look the same as the rest of the fabric, it has a different pattern to it, but also because it's more tightly woven, it won't hang the same as the rest of the fabric either. So we want to just remove that. And here I'm not pulling a thread because I'm close enough to the edge I can just kind of follow this by my eye. I'm really just sort of cutting along that first stripe in the pattern. And I'll do the same thing for cutting the other side, because it is a fairly visible pattern. But if you don't have a clear pattern on your fabric and you want to be sure you're on grain, then it would be a good idea to pull a thread on the length as well. Three sides done. Now we measure for the fourth side. And again, we had said 35 inches wide for this, 34 inches finished, but then another inch for our hem. So here's my 35 inches. I'll take a little clip there. And now I can finish cutting the length, or the width of the fabric. So again, I'm just following in between two stripes here. And that's working as a perfectly fine cutting guide for me instead of pulling that thread. Okay. That's our fabric that we need for the top. We have 35 inches wide and 49 inches long. So we have our rectangle to get started. Now we need three other pieces that we need to cut.

Cut remaining pieces

- Now we need three other pieces that we need to cut. The one is our neck facing. And then we need our casing for the drawstring, and we also need the drawstring itself, and I actually used a little piece of twill tape for my drawstring, but you can make it out of fabric as well. If you're making it out of fabric, the drawstring and the casing are pretty much the same piece. You'll need two rectangles, cut them each about two inches wide by at least 60 inches long. And if you need to seam a couple of pieces together to get the 60 inches, that's fine. But you want to start out with something longer than you'll actually need, so two inches wide by 60 inches long is your ideal measurement. So here's two inches right about here. You can cut these rectangles either the length of the fabric, so you're cutting along the salvage, or you can cut the width, whichever you prefer. Since my fabric is clearly easier to cut the length, I'm gonna cut both of my rectangles following these nice stripes, but whichever is easier for your or whichever allows you more fabric. And again

you need these rectangles to be long enough to go around you and for the drawstring itself, long enough to give you a little extra room to tie it. So you've got some ends. And you can always trim off the extra, so don't worry too much about this, worry more about getting it long enough rather than cutting it to the right length. Okay, so my rectangles are two inches long and plenty wide enough to get around me and have enough for tying. Now we have one last piece to cut, and that's our neck facing, and remember you'll be downloading this off of the website, and this will be several pieces of paper that you just need to tile together, you'll tape them together and then cut them out to create this piece. So we need enough fabric to cut out this piece, and I like to interface this before I cut it out. So we're gonna be using a fusible interfacing, and be sure that you're using a light enough weight for this too. Interfacing should never be heavier than the fabric that it's being attached to. For most of my sewing I tend to go with a feather weight interfacing or even lighter if I can find it. This, really it shouldn't be adding a lot of bulk to your fabric, it's just adding a little bit of stability. So you don't want this to feel stiff when you're finished with it, this really should just be making the fabric a little bit less drapey, but not heavy and stiff. I'm just gonna cut a decent size piece of interfacing here. So I'm gonna put my interfacing right on top of my fabric. Make sure it's plenty big. There we go, that's enough. And then I'll cut my fabric so I don't have too much extra here. And trim down the interfacing a bit so it doesn't hang off the edge of the fabric and attach itself to my ironing board. Before I cut out the neck facing I'm going to fuse the interfacing to the fabric, and that will help out to keep its shape a little bit better and it won't get distorted at all as we're working with it. So let's go over to the iron. If your fabric does have a right side or wrong side, be sure you're fusing the interfacing to the wrong side. Since my fabric really doesn't have a right or wrong side it doesn't matter that much. And be sure that your iron is hot enough, but not too hot. You don't want the interfacing to fuse itself to your iron or to melt onto your iron. Fusible interfacing I think is so neat because it, the heat of the iron actually melts the glue on the wrong side of the interfacing. And adheres the interfacing right to your fabric. I'm gonna turn it over and just press from the right side as well to be sure it's really well adhered. There we go. Okay. Now we can cut out the facing. And now I'm just gonna use a few pins to hold it in place. And now I can cut it out. Now this is just a really basic neck facing shape. You can certainly change this if you want to make the V a little bit deeper or give yourself a slightly different shape to it, you can easily change it. Just make sure that you keep the facing wide enough that it will stay inside of the kaftan when it's finished. But this is a really easy change to make if you're wanting to be a little creative with this project, it's very easy to change the shape of the neck and just create a new facing, so this will get you started and then as you gain some confidence maybe after you make your first one, you can decide what you want to make for yourself and change it up however you like. I'm gonna cut the center out as well. Just give a little clip to get in there. And then I'll go all the way around the outside edge. You'll also notice on this pattern piece that there are some notches and some lines. These are notches, and these lines that coordinate with them, those are all going to help you when we line this up on the rectangle itself to get it into position so that you know just where to place this neck facing and your neck ends up in the right place. And the dotted line on the facing here is the stitching line. Most of the time on a sewing pattern we don't include the stitching line because there are lots of different sizes and it's really hard to see if you have cutting lines and stitching lines, it just gets to be a little bit confusing. But since this is a one size pattern, we can include the stitching line, it's a little luxury that we have in this instance. So we have all our pieces cut out, we have our big rectangle for the dress or the shirt, however we're making this, we have our two two inch wide rectangles for our casing and our drawstring. And then we also have our neck facing. And we're set

to start sewing!

Hem caftan

- So the next step in making our caftan is to do a narrow hem all the way around that big rectangle, and that will give us that nice finished edge, right at the outside, at the bottom and at the sleeves, and at the sides. I'm gonna to do with the narrow hem, I like to do a basting stitch as a folding guide and this just helps to keep the size of the hem very consistent. And we're going to baste with a half-inch seam allowance. I'm also using a bright orange thread today, just so you can really see it, because I think any thread that was a matching color would blend right into the fabric and it would be really hard for you to see, but you'll actually wanna use something that coordinates with, that matches with your fabric, so that you possibly don't even have to remove the basting stitches when you're done. So a basting stitch, you'll remember is a really long stitch. I'm setting my stitch, to the longest stitch it can do, and then I'm just gonna stitch each of the edges, each of the cut edges, a half-inch from the edge. (machine whirs) Because this linen is quite loosely woven, I'm also sort of pulling on it as it goes through the machine. I'm holding it taut so that it doesn't pucker with the stitches. Not all fabrics will require that but I could just tell as I started stitching here, that the thread, itself, was puckering the fabric a little bit, so I'm just holding it a little bit taut as it goes through the machine. I'm not necessarily tugging on it, but I'm pulling in front and in back of my needle, so that the fabric doesn't get puckered underneath the needle. So that's one edge, and I'll continue this all the way around, all four edges. (machine whirs) So once you've sewn around all the edges, then we're going to go over to the ironing board and we're going to use these basting stitches as a folding guide, and we're going to actually press those hems, before we stitch them down. If your fabric has a right or wrong side, it's best to position the fabric with the wrong side up. My fabric really doesn't have a right or wrong side so it doesn't matter which side I choose, as long as you're consistent it's fine. So the first fold, we'll be folding the cut edge so that it meets that basting stitch, and again my basting is in orange, so you can see it. Your basting will probably blend into your fabric a little bit better. This is a really narrow little fold, be careful you don't burn your fingers and it will take a little while to get all the way around. Take your time. And once you've folded the first time, all the way around, matching the cut edge to the basting stitch, then you go back and on the second time, this time folding right on the line of basting stitches and that will enclose your cut edge of your fabric within a double fold there, so it gives you a nice lead edge. When you get to a corner, just do one side at a time. That's my first fold, here comes my second fold on one side. And then we'll turn it and do the other side. If you want to pin this, you can certainly do that. Usually, if you've used a lot of steam in your iron, you probably won't even need to pin it. But if it doesn't feel like it's holding the fold, you can certainly pin it to hold it in place as well. So I've got one already folded and pressed, and I'm going to move onto that one. Once you've got your two pressed folds, now you move back to the sewing machine. I'm going to change my thread color, because this one I do want to blend into my fabric. And don't forget to change your stitch length from the basting stitch to a regular length stitch. So now we can start finishing this hem, and we're simply going to edge stitch on the inner most fold that we made, the first fold, and we're going to edge stitch all the way around. We'll start by just backstitching a couple times, and there's a little bit of bulk there, so I'm gonna hold onto my thread tails, just to help coax it along. There we go. (machine whirs) So I'm about an eighth of an inch or maybe a little bit less than that away from the inside fold. It might be a little hard to see because of this fabric. But I'm just gonna continue all the way around. You can pivot at the corners when you get there. Here we come to the corner. Now

I'm going to put my needle down, so that I can just nicely pivot and continue stitching. And here we are, right back where we started. I'll backstitch a couple, and we finished hemming. Now there's one more thing that we wanna do to get ready for a neck facing, and that is we're going to fold the rectangle, and find the center, both lengthwise and widthwise. So first I'm folding it in half lengthwise, and I think I'll put a few pins in here to indicate the center. One over here. One over here. One towards the middle of the fabric, and then I'm gonna fold it the other direction, to find the center lengthwise as well, widthwise, whichever one we're on here, lengthwise I guess this is. And this will help us to position that neck facing and it will help us to find where our shoulders are going to be so that the rectangle is sitting squarely. So we really have a big cross in the middle of the fabric, and this is a good time, if you have your ruler and your fabric chalk or water soluble fabric pin. There's our center front, center back marking, and here's our shoulder. And now we're all set to move onto the neckline and making the neck facing!

Start neck facing

- The next step for making our neckline is to transfer some of these markings and these notches from our pattern piece onto the neck facing. So the first thing I'm going to do is to just make these little notches into little clips so I can find these, and these again, are just going to really help us to position the neck facing so that the neckline is in the right place, and there's one more little notch right down at the tip of the V here, and then I'm also going to transfer a little bit of these lines, because again, I think that really helps for getting the neck facing in the right place, so I'll just sort of hold my ruler underneath the pattern piece where the line is on the pattern piece, and then I'll transfer that same line using my marking pen, and I'm transferring these markings onto the wrong side of the fabric, onto the interfacing side, so these are our center lines, just like the lines that we drew on the caftan, on the rectangle itself, and then these lines on the side here are the shoulder lines. There's one, and there's the other. So these lines and notches will help us to position the neck facing when it comes time to sew the neckline, but before we do that, I wanna finish this outside edge of the neck facing so that it looks nice and it's not gonna be rattly or anything like that. If you have a serger, you can use a serger for this step. If you don't, a zigzag stitch is perfectly fine. I actually really like to change my foot to a little edge stitching. Not really an edge stitching foot, more of a zigzag foot, and then I change the stitch itself to what's called a mock serger stitch. I'm gonna start down at the V of my neck facing 'cause it's easy to stop and start there, and you can see I'm just stitching right over the edge. It's giving me a nice zigzag stitch that finishes the edge and prevents it from raveling and just makes it look a little bit nicer. This is a slow stitch. If you have a serger, that's where it moves a lot more quickly. You can ease your way around the curves, and here I'm coming right back to where I started. There we go, and now that outside edge is all finished. Now we're gonna position this right back on our rectangle and I'm going to line it up with the lines that we had drawn and match the notches to the lines and just pin it into place here. Make sure your pins are out of the way of the inside edge so that when you cut this out, they don't interfere or hurt your scissors in any way. Then once we've got that pinned in place, now we can cut out the center, because this is our neckline, this is where the head and shoulders are going to go, so we want to open this up and then we can stitch around this, but we need this out of the way so we can stitch properly, so I'm just gonna clip into it and then cut all the way around. So now I'm gonna take this back over to the sewing machine and we're gonna stitch all the way around this neckline with a half inch seam, and we're going to pivot when we get down to this V at the tip. You might even just wanna take a fabric pen and a ruler and just mark that pivot point, approximately a half

inch. It's gonna be right on that center line, so that's where I'm going to pivot right there. I think I'll start maybe up by the shoulder. No particular reason. I'm sliding half of the caftan onto the sewing machine here so that I can get right into that neckline and use my seam allowance guides. I'll just ease my way around the curves here. The shoulder will be the trickiest part on this, only because it is a relatively sharp curve, so here again, it's a good idea to just keep your needle down so that you can lift your presser foot and adjust to get around the curve. It also can help to use a really short stitch length because that will give you a smoother seam in that area. Make sure you're getting your extra fabric out of the way here so you're only stitching the neckline to one layer of the rectangle, and here we come up onto our pivot point. I'm just gonna walk the wheel until I get right to that center point, lift the presser foot, and then reposition to sew the other side of the V, and we're all the way around. I'm just gonna take a couple of back stitches there and then cut the thread, there we go. So now the neckline is sewn and we can go in and trim out the excess seam allowances at this point. I'm gonna trim this down to about an eighth of an inch. I like to make this fairly narrow. I prefer to trim my seam allowances really narrow than to clip into them. You'll have to do some clipping, especially here at the V, but I just find it to be a little bit easier to trim than to do a lot of clipping, so first you trim down, again, about an eighth of an inch. Once you've trimmed the seam allowances down, then we're just going to clip in a couple of places, right at that V, like I said, and clip down as close as you can to the stitching without actually clipping through the stitching, there we go, and then I'm also just gonna clip a little bit at the shoulder lines here. Not much because the seam allowances are pretty small and they're going to stretch a bit, just a tiny bit to make it easier. There, okay, now we can take this over to the iron. We're going to press the facing away from the rectangle, so we're gonna press it in towards the neckline, all the way around.

Finish neck facing

- So we'll start on one side of the neck facing, and just press it away from the rectangle, and you're pressing the neck facing itself towards the seam allowance, and we'll go all the way around the neck facing that way. And you can see now that the neck facing and the seam allowances are both going away from that rectangle. So now you have a choice. You can either turn the neck facing all the way to the inside and edge stitch this to finish it, or my preferred method of doing this now is to under stitch, which means instead of having a visible stitch on the neckline, it's actually going to be a stitch on the inside, just on the inside of the facing, and that will hold the facing down to the inside of the caftan and prevent it from showing, so I'm going to show you how to do that right now. I'm coming back over to the sewing machine. What I'm really doing here is stitching the facing to the seam allowances. I'm not going to go right to the tip of the V. I'm going to start maybe an inch or so up from the V, and just stitch as close as you can on the neck facing side, stitching the neck facing to the seam allowances all the way around. So again, this is up to you, whatever you prefer. I like my neckline to not have any stitching showing at all, and so I like to under stitch it instead of stitching on the top, but it's really a matter of preference for you. Under stitching is also just a really useful technique to know because you'll find that it comes in handy for a lot of sewing projects. And I'm stopping just shy of that V again on the other side. And now when I press this, and press it underneath, it will want to just stay there. It won't pop out. I'll press it just a little bit to show you. Just turn that facing underneath so that the seam rolls just slightly to the wrong side. And when we press that, it's just naturally going to curve towards the inside of the caftan so that it won't want to show. I'll just finish pressing that so I can show you. There we go. So you can see that the neck facing just tucks right inside the neckline and we don't have any stitching or anything showing. It's

just a really nice neat neckline.

Chapter 4 - Print kaftan

Print kaftan

- One you've finished the neck, this is a really good opportunity to do printing if you're planning on doing any printing on your fabric. And one of the reasons for that is that the kaftan is still flat, there's no, the side seams aren't sewn, everything can be laid out really nicely, and if you want to specially position a motif like I did on this one, you can determine where that will be because the neckline is already in. So I've laid out my kaftan pretty flat here. And I've also gone in and just with a little bit of chalk I just drew a very light line to indicate where I'm going to put a border on this fabric. Four inches in from the hem, all the way around. And I'm going to use that as a guide when I start to print on this fabric. So I'm using a couple of fabric inks here, I wanted to go, I wanted to custom make a color, so I used some pearl, this is versitex, it's a screen printing ink. And I mixed it with a little bit of blue, and then I also added a little bit of a fixer in here, and that helps to set the ink onto the fabric without resorting to industrial methods, so I've already mixed up my ink into a custom color, I mixed just a little bit of the blue with the pearl. And I'm going to put some of it out on my plate here. You can use, I'm using just a leftover piece of tile I think this is marble tile, and I've used this for all different sorts of things, but if you have like, even a styrofoam meat tray from the grocer, you can use that. And I'm going to take a little bit of ink, take a little bit like this. And put it onto my plate, and then I'm taking a brayer which is really just a roller, and I'm going to spread it out evenly. You can also buy stamp pads that have ink positioned on them but I wanted my ink to be a little bit thicker for this, I wanted it to have more of a, little more of a texture, I guess. Now before I get started, I'm just going to test this to make sure I have the right amount of ink and I'm happy with the color, I'm putting out a piece of paper to protect my surface and to protect the fabric underneath it. This is just a leftover piece of linen so I can check it. And I'm going to use, this is a wood block print that I bought. I'm just going to pick up some of the ink. And then I'll test it over here on the linen. To make sure it works, it's a little light. I might want a little more ink on this. The lines on this block are quite fine. And it's gonna be a little bit trickier to get a nice imprint that looks pretty good. It's a little light in places, we'll work on that. I think the more I, the more I press with this the more I ink it up, the more consistently it will print. Let me just try another one here. Yeah, it's a little light in places but I think it will do the job. I'm also going to be printing a line on the border just like I have on my kaftan. And I'm going to use this ruler for it. I'll just pick up a little bit of ink with the edge of the ruler, and then position that down and press on it a bit. And that works pretty nicely. And then the last print I'm going to use, the last stamp, is this one that I carved. And this is made of a really soft sort of a rubbery material. And I made the lines on this quite a bit thicker so I think this will print really nicely. I'm gonna print right over here. Again, just to test this and make sure everything is working out well. Yeah, that again is a little bit light. I'll have to keep working on that a bit. But I think we're more or less ready. So ink takes a little while to dry. Be sure you're working on a large enough space that you can leave the entire kaftan out and let it dry probably overnight would be best. I'm going to start with my ruler, I'm going to start by making those lines along the border, pick up a little ink there. I'm going to move right over to my chalk drawn line. This is my guide. And I'll just position it right over that line. Now keep in mind with printing on fabric that it should look a little bit rough, don't go for perfection here. This is really, you want this to look hand done, or I do anyway, I think that's one of the charms of printing on fabric yourself. You're not going for something that looks like it was done in a factory someplace, you're really looking to make this

look handmade in a charming sort of way. And I'll just keep doing that line all the way around the border, you can either do it all now and then come back and print inside of the line, or you can do it in sections, I think maybe today we'll just do it in sections. I'm gonna use my scraper to take a little extra ink off of that and then pick it up again, there. Maybe I'll remove a little of the extra there, okay. And really just do what feels good here. Just keep an eye on how things are looking and if you want to go back and rework something you sort of can. But for the most part this is more just, it's a little bit impulsive, I think. Now I'm going to use this wood block and I'm going to go and just do some of the border. And because this is, the wood block is stiff, it's not going to give a lot, it's much easier to get an impression on your fabric if you use something a little bit soft and spongy underneath it. So I picked up at the art store the other day, this is a large, this is really the equivalent of what I've got here. This is a really large piece of, it's like a spongy rubber, and you can carve on this to make a really big plate for printing, but I'm going to use it instead, I'm putting it underneath my fabric and because it's a little spongy when I print on this, then it will take the imprint a little bit better, I think. So I lay down a row of ink or a layer of ink. Pick up some of it with the block. And then just press really hard. That looks pretty good! And I'll just keep doing that around the border. With the one that I'm wearing, I alternated the direction of the motif, so on this one it's going one way, and then I switched it the other direction. And I really just did this by eye, I just kind of, my daughter helped me, she was rolling the ink and we were just kind of talking and working as we went. And then I'll do it again, maybe the other direction. I'll do a couple more here along the border. And I'll just continue that way all the way around. And then I think I'll probably go ahead and use this larger one for the inside of the border. And I'll position that like I did with this one, I'll try to position it around the neck to create a nice motif at the center. Once you've done that then you can just leave this to dry for, probably overnight, check your manufacturer's instructions to see just what they recommend in terms of drying time. And the manufacturer will also say on the packaging how to fix this, I know with this one, it's recommended that you press from the wrong side of the fabric with a really hot iron, I think they say for about a minute to make sure that the ink is really set. And then you're ready to move on with the rest of the kaftan.

Chapter 5 - Finish Kaftan

Add buttonhole

- We can finish assembling the kaftan now. There's a couple of things we're going to do. First step, we're gonna fold it in half and pin up the edges so that we can decide how high to make the casing and how high to make the armhole. So I've got everything laid out. The kaftan is folded in half with wrong sides together. And I'm just going to put a few pins in. I'm pinning right along the two edges just to hold them together. And I'll do the same thing on the other side. And now it's really helpful to actually put this on so that you can determine just how high you want that casing to be and how high you want the armhole to be. I'm not going to do it, because I already have one on, but I measured, and I like the armhole, leave yourself a little bit of room here, but don't make it so roomy that everything is showing when you put your arm up. I measured down about eight inches from the top fold, from the top line. And then the casing is measured, I measured down about, from that shoulder line, I measured down about 12 inches. So I'm going to position the casing 12 inches from the shoulder line and the top of the sleeve about eight inches. And it's important that your sleeve ends a little bit higher than the casing, because the casing is going to run. You need a seam there where the casing will run across. So I'm going to move back to my fabric, since I already know where I'm going to position both of those items. Now I'm going to unpin it and turn it inside out so

that I can draw the line for the casing itself. So my shoulder line is right here. I'm just transferring from the right side of the fabric to the wrong side. And I'll do that on this side as well. Here's my shoulder line. Just mark it over here. Now I'm going to use a ruler to draw that all the way across. And if you prefer, you could actually fold your fabric in half and find that center point as well, but either way is fine. So here's my shoulder line. And then the same thing over here. So 12 inches down for my casing. That's what I had measured. I'm going to measure down. Here's 12 inches. And I'll measure that in a few different places here. And then I'm going to connect all of those lines. And this will be the guide when we stitch the casing in place in just a little while. It's also going to show us where to put the little buttonholes for the drawstring. So I measured 12 inches. This is really a matter of preference, and it sort of depends on your bust and how tall you are, so it's nice to measure that from that shoulder line down to determine just where you want that to be. It will be approximately within 12 inches for most people, I think. You could actually, if you really wanted to, you could even drop this casing down and do a drop-waisted dress, which could be kinda cute too. So be creative with this. This can be kinda fun. I'm going to do the same thing on the back, so I'm just turning this around. Okay. So that will help us in just a little bit when we actually apply that casing. But before we want to do that, we want to put in these little buttonholes so that we have a place for the drawstring. So first thing here, we need to find the center front line. And I happen to have, there's sort of a crease going down my center front, so I know where the center front is. There's my center front line. I'm going to position my buttonholes just below that line that I made for the casing and to either side of center front, maybe 1/2 inch on either side of center front. So the buttonholes are going to be right about there. But before I do that, I actually wanna take a little piece of fusible interfacing. And I'm just going to stabilize the fabric right where those buttonholes are going to be. So this is maybe an inch and 1/2 by three inches approximately, and I'm going to fuse that right down on top of that spot where the button holes are going to be. So I'm just going to get the iron a minute. And this, again, is just going to stabilize that fabric and help it to hold the buttonholes a little bit better, especially because this is a really loosely woven fabric. So now I can get out the sewing machine. And I think that before I do that, I'm actually going to transfer that buttonhole placement onto the right side of my fabric, because I think buttonholes always look better if they're stitched from the right side of the fabric rather than the wrong side of the fabric. So I'm just gonna take a couple of little pins. There's the center front at the top of the casing. The casing is about an inch deep. So there's center front at the bottom of the casing, approximately there. And if I turn that over, I'll mark that. There's the top. There's the bottom. It's a little hard to see that. There we go. Now I'm just gonna take those pins out. And there's my center front. I'm going to put one buttonhole 1/2 inch to one side and another buttonhole 1/2 inch to the other side. And I'm going to make my buttonholes about 1/2 inch long. I'll drop them down a little bit from the top of my casing so they don't run into the casing. So these are the markings for my button hole. It's like a capital letter I. There's the top and the bottom and the length of the buttonhole. Here's the other one. This is my center front. This is the top of my casing. And, again, my casing is about an inch wide. So this is the bottom of my casing right here. So the buttonholes are within the width of that casing and on either side of center front. So now I'm going to get out the sewing machine and actually stitch those buttonholes. And I've already got the buttonhole foot on the machine. Let's see, I have a special buttonhole setting here to use. My machine does beautiful automatic buttonholes, but not all machines will do that. Buttonholes are really, if you've never sewn one before, they're really a series of zigzag stitches, and the newer machines have a really interesting setting where they'll stitch one side at a time, and it's really easy to work your way through. If you have an older machine, it will be

a little bit more complicated, but it shouldn't be too bad. Just be sure to read your instruction manual. And buttonholes sound a lot more scary than they actually are. So I'm getting everything set up. I already set up the length of my buttonhole, so I know I'm ready to go. One of the reasons I bought this machine is because I don't have to do anything when it sews buttonholes. I've eaten my breakfast while I've sewn buttons before. So there's one. Now we'll move over and do the other one. I'm just finding the top of it. Now. And there we have two nice finished buttonholes. I'll open these up a minute. Let me just grab a seam ripper. My favorite way to open a buttonhole is to use the seam ripper. Insert it at the end of the buttonhole, moving, always cutting away from the end of the buttonhole. So I'll sink it in at the end, push it back out a little ways away, and then just cut that segment. Do the same thing on this side. Put it in, pull it back out, and just cut that segment. Then I'll turn it around to cut the other end of the buttonhole. Seam ripper right in. Coming back out, and cut it. And then you can cut the rest. You can use your seam ripper or scissors. Just be careful that you don't cut those stitches on either side. And I think this way is really safe, because you're not cutting anything except for what's in the seam ripper at that point. So those are some nicely stitched and open buttonholes, and now we're ready to do the side seams.

Sew side seams

- When it comes to the side seam, you have two choices. You can either just sew a seam straight down from the height of the arm hole down towards the hem, stop maybe three or four inches from the hem to leave a little bit of a vent on the side, or you can do like I did with my dress, and I sewed more of a curved seam that creates more of a kimono sleeve. And what I like about that version is that when I put my arm down, because the seam is right here, it sort of forces the shoulder down and I don't get quite such a wing on the side as you would if you just sewed straight down. So I'm gonna show you the kimono sleeve, but you really can do either one depending on the look that you're going for. So, I had measured, I wanted my arm hole depth to be about eight inches from the shoulder line. I'm going to mark that on my fabric now. I've positioned this so that the edges of the caftan are together and meeting at the hem. So, now I'm going to place a mark eight inches down and that's going to be where I start my kimono sleeve, right there. I'm going to sew in four inches. This is really a matter of preference. I just think four inches is a nice measurement. It might be different on you. This is really a matter of preference. I had made the border on my fabric four inches wide, so that's one of the reasons why I'm going in four inches. So, I'm going to measure in four inches here, on my side seam, and mark that. I'm sorry it's hard to see on this fabric. There we go. And then I'm going to come back out again at the bottom, so I'm going to curve right around to make the kimono sleeve and then to curve at the hem. And I'm actually going to, in order to make a nice curve and keep it consistent on both sides, I'm going to use, I just picked up a plate from the kitchen, and I'm going to use that to draw my seam. This is just going to help to make a nice template. This is like a luncheon sized plate, and it gives a nice gentle curve moving right into my four inch line. And I'll measure four inches down at the bottom, and then I'll do the same thing down here. I'll start at the corner and just use this plate. Gonna fake it a little bit down here, because I want to come in at an angle. And then make that same curve down at the bottom. And I'll join those with some chalk. So that's going to be my stitching line. Now, I'm going to also put some pins in here to hold these two layers together. Make sure they're matching at the hem. By that, I mean the hem at the side seam. And I'll put one pin down here at the bottom, as well. And then I'm going to flip this over and copy that line to the other side. I've just folded it in half, and that way I can kind of just lift up the top layers to copy the same curve to the bottom layers. If you prefer, you can just

redraw this using the same techniques you did. But I think that to be really accurate, to keep it consistent, I would rather just lift one layer and make the same markings onto the second layer. So you'll notice that one set of my markings is on the front of the caftan, the other side is on the back and that will work out just fine when it comes time to sew this. It won't really matter. In fact, it might almost be easier to do it this way because I like to sew from the bottom up, and we'll have the same markings on the same sides. I'll show you that in a minute so you'll know what I mean. And then I'll just join those lines and put some pins in there. There we go. Again, you're going to make sure that those two edges at the side are meeting. Place a pin down here at the bottom again. And I think we're ready to go. I'm gonna move over to the sewing machine a minute and we're going to sew these from the bottom up. I like to start sewing from the bottom because I want those two bottom corners to match. And because I made my markings on the same side of the fabric starting at the bottom, that will be really easy for me to do. I'm going to make a slightly longer stitch length here. Okay. Backstitch just a couple to get started. And then I'm going to follow right along that chalk line that I had drawn. I'm curving around to make that kimono sleeve at the top. And again, I'll stop just inside the hem. So that's one side seam. I'll do the other side in exactly the same way, and then we'll have our side seams sewn.

Place drawstring casing

- We are on the homestretch. We're going to make the drawstring. We're going to make the drawstring casing, apply it to the dress, and we're done. So you have two rectangles of fabric that we cut. We had cut these two inches wide by longer than we need them. We're gonna take these over to the iron and it's really the same process for the drawstring and the casing. We're gonna fold it in half. If you have a right side and wrong side, you want this wrong sides together. Fold it in half and press the crease right down the center. Once you've got a center crease, you can open it back up and then you're going to fold and press each of the cut edges so they meet at that center crease. And you'll continue all the way down like that for both the drawstring itself and for the casing. I have one over here that I've already pressed all the way. I'll bring it over here to show you. For the casing, we'll be applying it just like this, with the two edges folded to meet that center crease. For the drawstring itself, you'll want to fold each of the short ends under by about a half inch or so and then fold it again on that center crease and you can put some pins in there to hold that. And once you've got that all folded and pinned in position then you can take this over to the sewing machine and just stitch the short end and then all the way along that pinned long edge to finish the draw string. And that's really easy. I'm actually going to use a piece of grosgrain ribbon instead of the drawstring just for the fun of it, for a little spot of color right in the front there. So I'm gonna put that aside for now. Now moving back to the casing itself, like I said, we're folding and pressing those two cut edges in to meet at that center crease. And then we've actually completed preparing the casing. Now we're actually going to apply it. I'm moving over to the kaftan. I've turned the kaftan inside out and I'm now going to start pinning the casing right to that line. And it's a little faint here. I'm going to fold the short end under by about half an inch. And then I'm going to start pinning right at center front. Lining up the top of the casing with that line that we had drawn. And we're just pinning to the outside fabric. And we're going to pin all the way across until we reach that side seam. But keep in mind here, we don't want to be stitching the casing and we don't want to be sewing through this flap. So we're going to stitch up to the casing or up to the side seam, excuse me. And then we're going to flip the flap over and we're going to continue to apply the casing around the back. And then we'll do the same thing when we get to the other side. We're going to be skipping over that

whole flap at the side. So I'm going to pin first right up to the side seam, right along that line. So I'm just pinning right up to that side seam. And then I'm going to flip it over. And I'm going to feel with my hands to get that flap out of the way. And continue pinning across the back. And if this shifts a little bit as you're sewing it, that's okay. You'll just move it and re-pin as you go. But it's good to get it pinned approximately into position so that it's waiting for you when you get there with your sewing machine. Now I'm reaching the other side seam. And again, I'm just going to pin right up to the side and then flip it again so we're back at the front and just push that flap out of the way to continue to pin. And if you remember, when we were measuring for the side seam and for the casing placement, I had said that you wanted the side seam, the arm hole, to be a little higher than the casing placement. The reason is that you need to be sure to have a side seam where the casing is going over. If your arm hole was lower than your casing position, you wouldn't have anything to sew to when you get to the side there. Now I've reached back to center front. I'm going to fold under again to meet at center front. And then I'll just trim the excess fabric. I'll leave about a half inch seam allowance there. And then pin it in place. And once we've got this all pinned, then we can just go over to the sewing machine. And we're going to do the same thing sewing. We're going to stitch both sides of that casing. We're going to be stitching along the top edge and we're going to be stitching along the bottom edge. But when we get to the side seam, we need to stop, move that flap out of the way, and then continue around the back. And do the same thing when we get to the opposite side. So let's take it over to the sewing machine and get started.

Sew drawstring casing

- I'm gonna start at center front. The reason being that if my casing shifts a little bit as I'm stitching, I'll just be able to move it as I continue around. As I come back around to center front, then I'll just be able to shift it and we'll stitch match up at center front. If you start it at one side or the other, then you might not match back up when you get to center front. So just a couple of back stitches. And again, I'm edge stitching here pretty close to the fold. And I'm keeping an eye out for that side seam. I've made sure to shift the flap over to the back side so it's out of my way. And here's the side seam. So I'm going to take a couple back stitches, cut my thread. And then I'm going to go actually back to center front and I'm gonna stitch the other side of the casing before I flip over to the back. And I'm coming up on the side seam here again. So I'm just gonna keep an eye on that. And stop just a stitch or two before. So now I'm just gonna flip that flap over to the other side so that I can stitch the back. And you're not gonna be able to see that because it's underneath, but you can feel it. And just make sure that's completely out of the way. And when you continue, start just a fraction of an inch away from that side seam because you don't want to accidentally stitch on top of that. If you leave a little bit open, that's okay. That's not going to harm anything. It's better to leave a slight opening there than it would be to accidentally stitch over the flap at all. And this will be a nice long seam. You can continue all the way over to the other side seam. So I'm approaching that side seam again and I made sure that the flap is turned to the other edge, to the front. Just take a couple of back stitches there. And then I'm gonna jump back and do the same thing on the other side of the casing. Going all the way back to the opposite side seam. Make sure that flap is out of the way. You'll have to feel for that underneath. And then again, starting just a fraction of an inch away from the side seam. Back stitch to hold it in place. And then just continue on again. Oh, and I almost missed the side seam there. Gonna back stitch. Keep an eye on that. I nearly missed it. There we go, okay. Now we continue on to do the front. Again, I'm flipping that flap out of the way. So now it's against the back. And here we go again. And this time, again, we're going to be coming around to

the center front. So we'll keep an eye on that. And if we need to refold and reposition that center front so it matches, we can do that. If anything has moved. I think, in this case, we're pretty much on where we had pinned. But we'll check that when we get there. And here's center front. And I think just to make sure that doesn't go anywhere, I'm just gonna stitch right over those two folds and then I'll back stitch to hold everything in place. Now we'll go back again to that side seam, making sure that flap is out of the way. And we are nearly done. Here we go. Right over the two folds. Back stitch a couple of stitches. And we have a casing. So there's the two edges finished at their center front. Now I'm gonna turn it right side out. We can lay it flat. And you can see here that our casing ends at that flap on both sides. And we can look at it from the back and see the same thing. The casing starts at the side seam, ends at the opposite side seam. The only thing left to be done is to feed our drawstring right through that casing. So I'm gonna take my ribbon, which is what I'm using for my drawstring. I'm gonna put a little safety pin, actually a big safety pin if you have one. It'll make the job a little bit faster. I'm pinning it to the very end there. And then I'm going to just feed that right through that casing. If you push it, push it with one hand and then hold it and pull the fabric. And you'll just do that all the way through that casing. Push for a ways, hold on to it through the fabric, and then just tug the fabric out of the way. We'll flip over there and go to the back. And as we get a good ways around this, keep an eye on the opposite end of your drawstring because you don't want to pull it all the way through. That would be a shame 'cause then you'd have to do it again. You could even pin it to the center front just to be sure it doesn't get tugged all the way through. So now I've gone back around to the other side of the front. And here we come out the other button hole. I'm just going to tug on that a little bit to get plenty of ribbon fed through there. There we go. And then I'll cut it with plenty of extra length here. Now once you've got the drawstring all the way in, then it's a good idea to put on your caftan. And you can decide how long you want that drawstring to be by cinching it up a bit. Don't make it too tight. You want a little bit of room in there. Cinch it up, tie it, and then you'll want a little bit of length there. Don't make it too long. And you can either fold the ends under and stitch them, or if you're using the ribbon, you could also cut the ribbon at an angle. And if you have a little bit of seam sealant or some fabric glue, you could just put a little bit of it right along the edge there. And that will prevent it from raveling. And if you're actually using one of the drawstrings, if you find that you want to shorten this, you can just cut it to the right length. And then you might want a seam ripper. I'm looking for one here. Just open up the last few stitches so that you can fold that end under again. Like this. And then just restitch that. And that will give you a nice clean end. Once you have done that, your caftan is done. Go out, have some fun.