

December 2022 Block of the Month

Sudoku Block + Lots of Ideas for Using the Basic Pattern

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Several years ago, when **Sudoku Puzzles** were gaining a huge fan base, quilters were also trying to turn them into quilts. I remember seeing a few of them, with their arrangement of nine fabrics into 81 squares. I wasn't particularly interested in them, perhaps because the ones I saw were mostly in earth-tone batiks. If you know my own work, I'm definitely into brighter colors! I had also heard that making your quilt started with solving a puzzle—I just want people to be able to get started on the quilt!

Next I tried double and triple Sudoku puzzle arrangements (rather than just a single), liked them a whole lot better, and made patterns for both double and triple Sudoku-based quilts for my book, *Easy Grid Quilts*. The individual squares ranged from 1" to 3". Some of the squares were pieced, and my favorite ways to choose colors was to start with a focus fabric plus eight colors, a group of analogous colors, OR pick themed fabrics, as I did here for a Christmas Sudoku Block.

The individual squares for a 13 ½" block finish at 1 ½" (cut size 2"). At this size, there's a good chance you already have enough of nine fabrics in your stash that can work well together.

OR, make your squares/blocks larger for your quilt to grow faster. Make a few blocks to join on-point for a table runner. Turn your squares into rectangles to make a rectangular quilt in lap or bed-size. Make a month by month block with themed fabrics for the whole year.

As for assembly, just think of joining eighty-one squares the same way you might make a 4-patch or 9-patch block—there are just more squares in each row, and I've learned I really need to stay focused to keep them in order. But if I just chain piece the squares 2-by-2, it takes even more effort to remember how to get them all back in order.

Construction:

After you have decided on nine fabrics/colors, and the block and/or finished sizes of your quilt, cut ten of each fabric in the appropriate size pieces. Remember to add standard $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowances. Ten of each fabric will allow you to keep a reference piece for which number is for which fabric.

Stack your cut pieces, by fabric, in nine stacks. Assign each fabric a number. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHICH FABRIC HAS WHICH NUMBER, BECAUSE EACH ROW WILL BE ARRANGED BASED ON THE NUMBERS, not on how you might arrange them by their looks.

I ALWAYS lay out all 81 pieces together, if I have enough room. You can also lay out each nine-patch chunk, if you find that easier. Label each 9-patch with a letter (not another number) and an "up" arrow. Masking tape works great.

When I sew all 81 squares at once, I sew the first two columns together, side-by-side. I do not connect the cross seams. I add the third column to the first two, then the fourth, fifth, etc. DON'T CUT ANTHING APART! At this point, all my squares are attached to each other in the right order. Next, I sew all the rows together. I use pins to keep my corners accurate.



3	9	1	5	8	4	7	6	2
8	4	7	6	1	2	9	3	5
5	6	2	7	9	3	4	1	8
6	5	3	2	4	9	1	8	7
1	7	4	3	6	8	5	2	9
2	8	9	1	5	7	6	4	3
9	2	6	4	3	5	8	7	1
4	3	5	8	7	1	2	9	6
7	1	8	9	2	6	3	5	4