

# TOBACCO TRAY BASKET

Pattern and Instructions

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[www.textileindie.com](http://www.textileindie.com)

# TOBACCO TRAY BASKET

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IN THIS EBOOK YOU WILL FIND INSTRUCTIONS AND IMAGES TO SUPPORT YOU IN WEAVING A TOBACCO TRAY BASKET.



The tobacco tray basket, often called a tobacco basket, began as a practical farm and warehouse tool in the 1800s. Early examples were made in Kentucky, and North Carolina later became a major center for basket production as tobacco growing and auction markets expanded. These flat, open baskets were designed to keep cured tobacco leaves clean, organized, and easy to move during sorting, grading, and sale. Some versions were used well into the 20th century before newer handling methods replaced them.

These instructions will show how to weave your own tobacco style basket from rattan reed. This is a modernized, simplified construction process intended for creative entertainment, not historical accuracy.

Dimensions: 12 inches wide by 16 inches long and approximately 2 inches deep.

# TOOLS AND MATERIALS

## TOOLS

- Basket shears
- Spoke weight
- Straight-tipped packer
- Cloth measuring tape
- Pencil
- 2" plastic clamps
- Spray bottle of water
- Water tub
- Towel

## MATERIALS

- 22 feet of 1" flat reed
- 10 feet 5/8" flat-oval reed
- 0.5oz. Titebond Wood Glue
- scotch tape
- 2 ziplock bags
- printer paper

\*Note: the lengths of reed do not have to be continuous lengths, just an approximation of that length, and can be multiple pieces.



# RESOURCES FOR MATERIALS AND TOOLS

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## MATERIALS

Below are links to each of the supplies you will need.

- 5/8" flat-oval reed - <https://bit.ly/3N2giYm>
- 1" flat reed: <https://bit.ly/3H0JJ9i>

## TOOLS

- Basket shears - <https://bit.ly/3UT0FnU>
- Spoke weight - <https://bit.ly/3AdjTeC>
- Straight-tipped packer - <https://bit.ly/3URSDvu>
- 2" metal clamps - <https://bit.ly/41meMVg>
- 2" plastic clamps - <https://bit.ly/3ow3jEb>

## TOBACCO TRAY BASKET WEAVING OUTLINE

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- Cut stakes/mark centers
- Weave base stakes
- Lay out cross pieces and glue in place
- Cut and mark outer rim piece
- Apply outer rim piece, glue in place
- Apply the inner rim piece, glue in place
- Allow to dry for 24-48 hours
- Finish with a stain or a wood sealer

# SETTING UP A WORKSPACE

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Before you begin weaving lay a towel down on your work surface. This will catch any excess water as you work with the damp/wet reed.

Set another towel down to one side and place a bin of warm water on top of this towel. This bin will be where you soak the reed to keep things damp.

Finally lay out your tools in easy reach to one side where they won't be in your way.

# CUTTING SPOKES AND MARKING CENTERS

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Using a measuring tape cut stakes from the 1" flat reed following the cut list below.

Mark the halfway point on all stakes. Using a pencil, apply a small dash at the center point. Place stakes in water to soak for a few minutes (only while you prepare for the next steps).

# CUT LIST

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- 6 stakes from 1" flat reed @ 14-inches long
- 5 stakes from 1" flat reed @18-inches long
- 4 stakes from 1" flat reed @ 16-inches long

# BASKET TUTORIAL VIDEO

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**For details on weaving this basket see the video tutorial:**

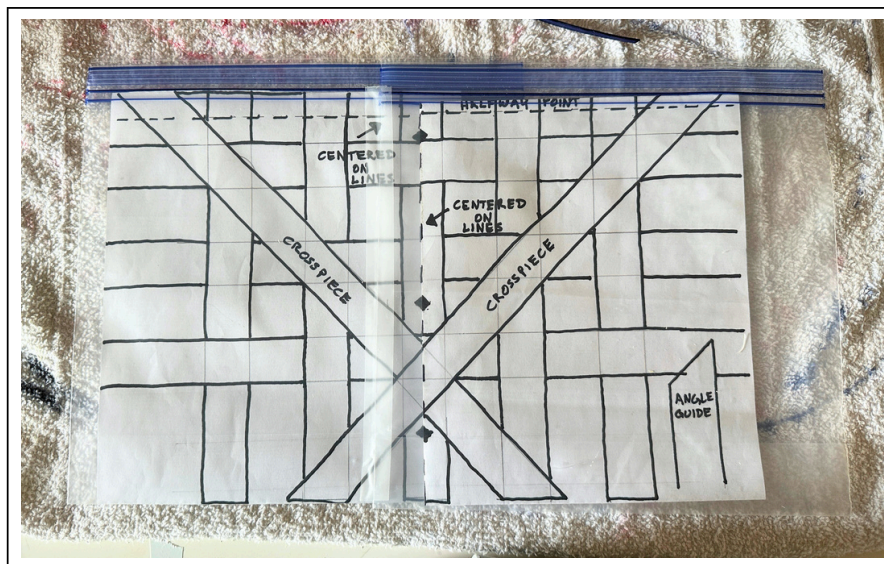


# USING THE DESIGN GRID

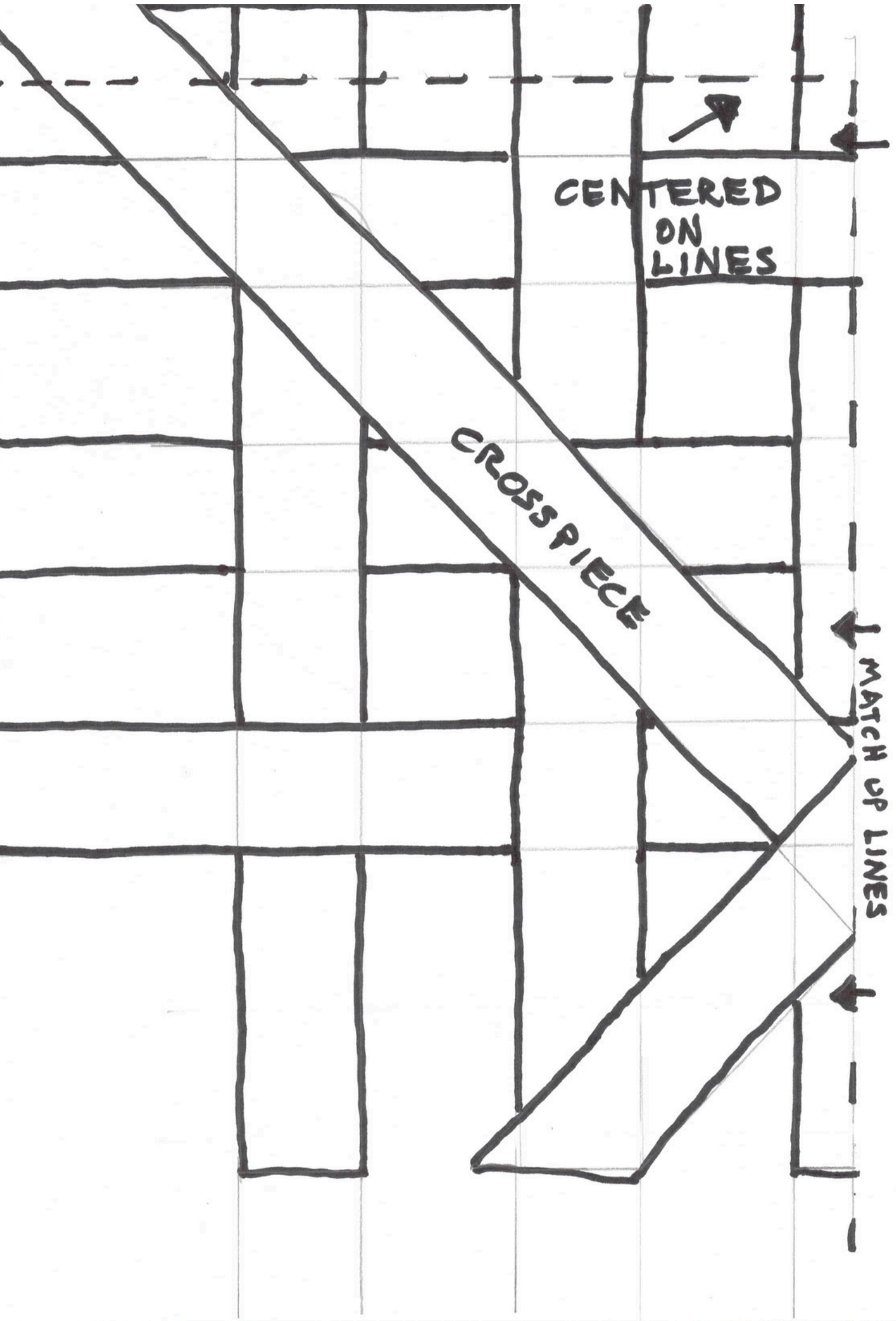
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The design grid is two pages that you can print and use as a guide to lay out your pieces so that the basket results are even and squared.

To use the grid, print both pages. Fold one page along the dotted line that is marked with “match up lines”. Put each sheet of paper into a ziplock bag so that it doesn't get wet. Use scotch tape to tape the bags and the pages together along the “match up lines” area using the arrows as markers.



Now you can use this as a quick and easy guide to lay out the base and cut the ends of your cross-pieces.



CENTERED  
ON  
LINES

CROSS PIECE

MATCH UP LINES

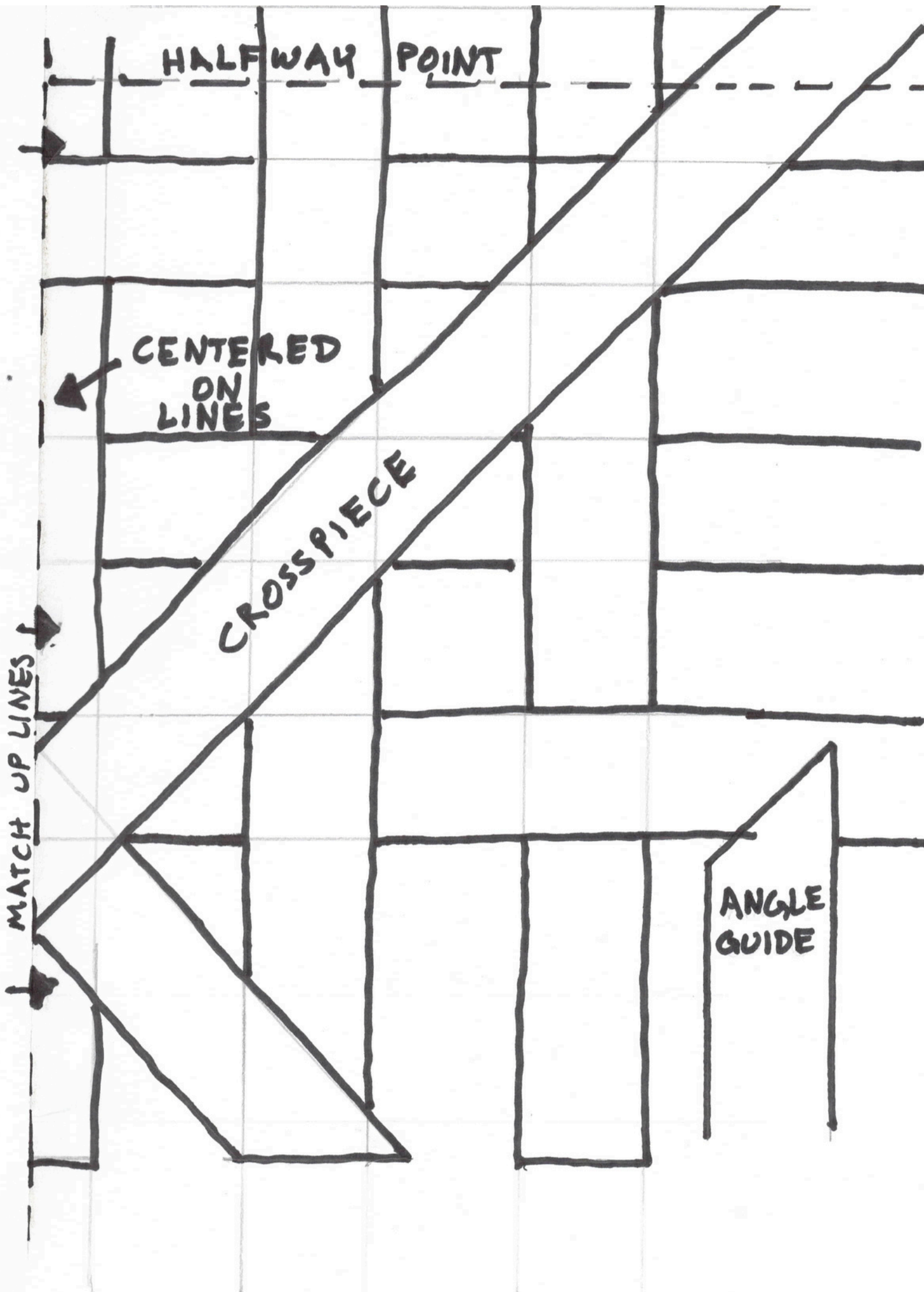
HALFWAY POINT

CENTERED  
ON  
LINES

CROSSPIECE

MATCH UP LINES

ANGLE  
GUIDE



# LAYING OUT THE BASE

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Start with the five eighteen-inch long stakes. Lay them out in front of you parallel to each other, leaving 1 1/4" between each one. Or use the grid guide given as your guide. Match the center marks as you lay each stake down; the mark should be facing up. Use the spoke weight to hold things in place as you work.

Now begin weaving the set of six fourteen inch stakes into the base. Starting on one side of the center, weave over-under, keeping the center marks just to one side of the stakes. Weave each stake in the opposite pattern of the previous stake. There will be three stakes on either side of the center marks.

Use the angle guide on the printout to cut the ends of each crosspiece. The angles should look like this on each piece:



Glue the crosspieces in place where they overlap with the grid pieces of the base. A small dot of glue will hold the pieces together. Clamp and allow to dry for the necessary amount of time - this is dependent on the type of glue you are using.

# MAKING THE OUTER RIM

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For the outer rim you will need a piece of 5/8" flat-oval reed that is 53" long.

You are going to put some pencil markings on the rim to identify the corners so that the basket ends up squared.

From one end of the 5/8" flat-oval reed measure in 2". Put a pencil mark at this point. Now move the measuring tape to the pencil mark and measure from there 5" further down the length of reed. You will continue moving down the length measuring from each new pencil mark as follows:

- 1" from the last pencil mark
- 14" from the last pencil mark
- 1" from the last pencil mark
- 10" from the last pencil mark
- 1" from the last pencil mark
- 14" from the last pencil mark
- 1" from the last pencil mark
- 5" from the last pencil mark

Each longer space will have a 1" space between them, which will act as the corners of the rim.

Follow the instructions in the video tutorial to attach the rim to the basket grid. Be sure to work with the rounded side of the flat-oval reed to the outside of the basket for the outer rim and the rounded side of the reed to the inside for the inner rim.

Attach the inner rim to the inside of the basket, clamping the piece in place as you work around the edge.

# FINISHING STEPS

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## ALLOWING THE BASKETS TO DRY

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When the rim is complete do any final shaping or molding of the basket while it is still wet. Allow the basket to dry overnight.

## SIGNING THE BASKET

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Sign and date your basket with a waterproof pen. This is a great way to see your progress as you continue to weave baskets. Or look back to remember the time you wove your basket.

## STAINING OR SEALING THE BASKET

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Once your basket is completely dry you have the option to stain or seal the basket. I highly suggest at least sealing your basket with a clear finish to preserve the basket and avoid mildew and mold.

There is also the option to stain your basket with a wood stain that will change the color of your basket. If you want something darker, a wash of color, or a slightly different wood tone consider staining.

Check out Basket Weaving with Textile Indie on Youtube for videos on how to stain and seal your baskets as well as how to sign your baskets.

See this video on stains and maintaining your handwoven baskets:  
Staining and Sealing Baskets: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8evQMD9HrSs&t=1s>



# MAINTAINING HANDWOVEN BASKETS

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If at any point your basket gets dirty you can use soap, water and a soft scrub brush to clean the basket. If you choose not to stain or seal your baskets check them for mold or mildew regularly, especially in damp environments. If you do begin to see signs of mold or mildew use soap and water to scrub the basket clean.

## COMPLETE!

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Congratulations you finished your basket!



## MORE RESOURCES

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Visit [www.textileindie.com](http://www.textileindie.com) for more basket weaving information, tutorials and our online materials shop.

For videos on techniques and basket tutorials check out Textile Indie on Youtube:  
<https://www.youtube.com/@BasketWeaving>



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Brittany began her basket weaving, textile, and fiber arts journey at age ten and has been trekking that road ever since. Brittany is on a mission to make basket weaving and fiber arts accessible and easy to dive into. From weaving baskets in the bathroom next to the bathtub as a teenager, hand cleaning pounds of wool in the backyard, spinning thousands of yards of yarn just to move on to a new project, and traveling around with an ever-growing assortment of tools and materials in tow, living as a fiber fanatic is her way of life. She strives to teach in a way that empowers each student to feel confident and enthusiastic about the object they are creating. She runs a textile arts website and Youtube channel called Textile Indie where she encourages others to explore basket weaving and other fiber arts. See more of her work at [textileindie.com](http://textileindie.com).

BRITTANY STANTON



# TEXTILE INDIE





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## BASKET WEAVING WITH TEXTILE INDIE

Our teaching-focused YouTube channel shares approachable basketry tutorials, step-by-step projects, and practical techniques you can follow at home.

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## LIBRARY OF FREEBIES

Access our collection of free guides, cheat sheets, and printable resources to support your basket weaving journey.





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