

Caftans

*One of the easiest garments you'll ever make!
One of the most comfortable garments you'll ever wear!*

1) Choose and cut the fabric:

- a) The length should be twice the desired finished length, plus hems (1"-3").
Caftan lengths can vary: 50" – 55" for a person 5'8", less for a shorter person, around 42" for knee-length to wear over tights.
- b) Caftan widths can vary, from 40" (36" is quite small) to 54" – most normal is 45".
- c) It is simplest if the fabric does not need to be cut at all, but sometimes it's necessary.
 - i. For the length: watch for one-way patterns, as the pattern will appear different on the front and on the back (e.g. something might be upside down). It might be possible to cut the fabric length in half and join the two pieces at the shoulder.
 - ii. Sometimes it works best to use the cross grain for the length (so one selvage at the shoulder, one selvage at the hem). In that case, the shoulder needs to be seamed.
 - iii. For the width: it's possible to get creative. For example, one could add a 9" piece to a 36" width, to get 45". However – there should be no raw seams, which can ravel when washed. So any seams need to be serged, or flat-felled.
- d) Neck facing: Cut a square or rectangle for the neck facing – this can match or contrast. Turn in the edges of the square with a single ¼" hem.

2) Decide on the shoulders: Shoulders can be left untouched (more authentic but boxier), or they can be sloped by up to 7" as measured from the centre to the shoulder seam. Simply draw a line with a ruler from the centre of the piece to the edge 6" down, cut, and stitch. However: again, the seam needs to be finished.

3) Check to see if the selvages need to be removed because they pucker the fabric. If so – cut off the selvages, and hem the sides with a narrow (¼" doubled) hem.

4) Mark the shoulder line:

- a) Mark one line on the right side of the main length of fabric, straight across. It might be possible to simply press this line, once you have folded the length in half.
- b) Make sure you identify the shoulder line on the neck-facing square.

5) Cut the neckline:

- a) Fold both the fabric length and the neck-facing square in half length-wise, wrong sides together.
- b) Align the neck-facing square fold with the fabric length fold.
- c) Align the shoulder lines on fabric length and neck-facing square.
- d) Pin.
- e) Cut all four layers together (that way you can be sure the neck openings are the same).

6) Complete the neck facing: (NOTE that the facing can also be put on the outside of the fabric as contrast – a little more complicated, so no instructions here)

- a) Open the neck facing and pin it to the fabric, right sides together.
- b) Stitch, using a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam. Carefully clip the curves to the seam line.
- c) Turn the facing to the inside, press (you might need to pin or baste it, depending on the fabric).
- d) Topstitch the facing along the edge. Stitch the facing down along the outside edges of the square. Most often this will not show much (patterned fabric).

7) Complete the caftan side seams and hem:

- a) Fold the fabric length in half along the shoulder line, right sides together: this gives you the garment front and back.
- b) Measure the side seam: 15-16" down from the shoulder, 4" in from the edge, 24" long for a full-length caftan (dropping the shoulder may or may not change the length of the seam). The important measurement is the one down from the shoulder, as it provides for a roomy armhole.
- c) Stitch the side seam on the fabric on the right side, through the front and back. The 4" 'flange' gives the caftan gracefulness in movement.
- d) Iron the hem prior to stitching: a narrow ($\frac{1}{4}$ ") turn-in, followed by whatever further turn is desired to make the caftan the right length.