

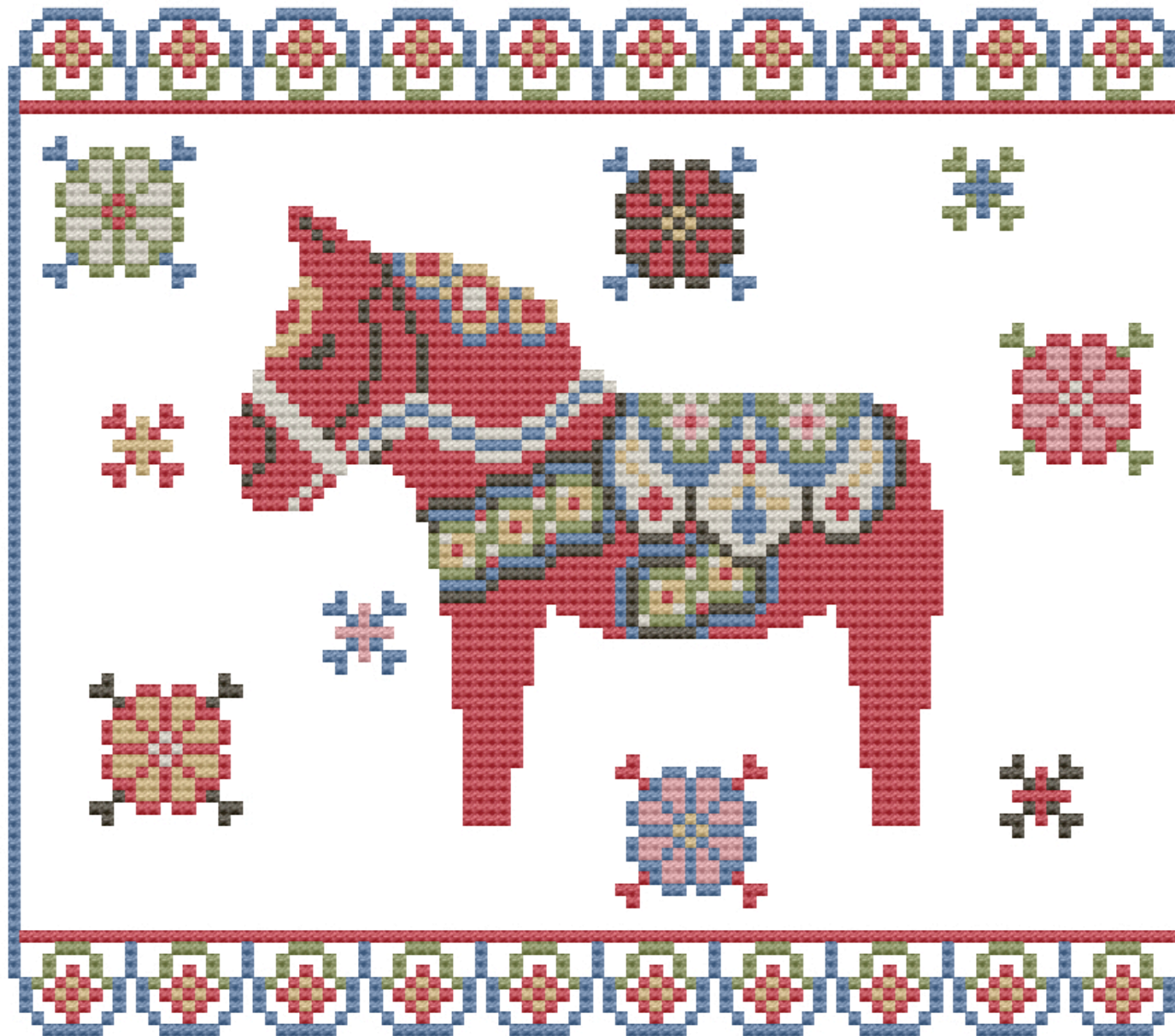
a pint of cream

patchwork embroidery & appliqué for those who love handmade goodness

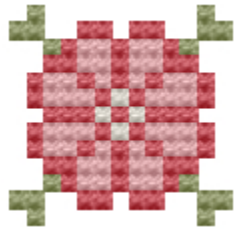


The Red Mare

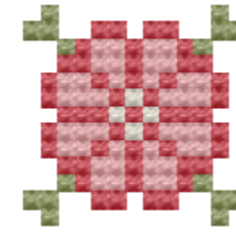




The Red Mare ©



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an original design by Lily Boot

Design size: 102 x 89 stitches
Fabric size (on 14 count linen): 7.2 x 6.3 inches

Supplies

DMC embroidery floss as listed in thread chart (see right)

Linen or Aida cloth for cross stitch in the count of your preference

A higher count will result in smaller stitches and a smaller picture overall, a lower count will result in larger stitches and a larger picture overall.

Needles suitable for cross stitch

These are usually quite short, slender and straight, have blunt tips, and long eyes. I have used a few of the popular brands (John James, Clover, Richard Hemming, Birch) and have no preference. Just make sure the tips are blunt, otherwise you are likely to break the weave of your fabric while you stitch. And choose an eye size that you are comfortable with threading - 20 is large and easy to thread, 28 is very fine.

A small pair of sharp scissors for trimming your thread

Thread Chart

■	DMC 321	Christmas Red
N	DMC 3371	Black Brown
≡	DMC 676	Old Gold LT
●	DMC 798	Delft DK
□	DMC 712	Cream
×	DMC 3326	Baby Pink
3	DMC 470	Avocado Green LT

Cross stitch tips

Fabric Completing your design on a linen fabric will certainly give you a beautiful finish, but feel obliged to take this path. Linen is costly and, for those new to cross stitch, tricky to count. I love Aida cloth and other even weave fabrics just as much and still cheerfully pull out a piece of natural Aida for the most intricate of designs - including this one! It is entirely up to you.

Once you've selected your fabric, allow at least 3 inches on each side of your design area; i.e. if you are using a 14 count fabric with a design area of 16.1 x 11.5 inches, cut your fabric at 22 x 17.5 inches. This allows plenty of room and a good turn-under allowance for framing.

Overlocking (serging) your raw edges will stop fraying. Press your fabric with a steamy iron before starting. This makes the fabric more pliable. Once you have started stitching, you should only press the fabric on the back of the design as pressing the front will flatten your stitches.

Stitching frames Wooden hoops are pretty but can leave unattractive and grimy rings on your work and distort your stitches.

Stretcher frames are much better and there are some beautiful ones to choose from, i.e. frames to hold in your lap, frames to sit on a table, or really elegant frames that stand in front of you. They keep your fabric taut, straight and the

sections you are not working on are neatly rolled up.

I often use stretcher frames but sometimes simply hold the fabric with my hands. While this can warp the fabric, it is a matter of personal preference.

Start in the centre To find the centre of your chart, follow the arrows that can be found in the middle of each edge to the mid point. This is the pattern's centre. To find the centre of your fabric, fold it in half lengthwise, then in half again widthwise - the folded point is the middle. Mark with a pin. Starting in the centre means your finished design will be centred on the fabric - and will all fit in!

Knots Don't make them! I know it is so tempting, especially when you only need to add a few stitches. But it is never worth it - and my 16 year old self learnt this the hard way! You will be able to see the knots and any long (or short) tails that you do not tuck under and trim when your work is finished. Yuck!

The standard method of beginning a new thread is to leave a tail dangling at the back of your fabric, hold it flat against the fabric with your fingers and anchor it in place with your first several stitches.

You can also leave the tail on the front of the work, i.e. take the needle down several squares away from where you intend starting, then bring your needle up at the starting point and start stitching. You have created a long stitch at the

back and the next several stitches you complete will anchor this long stitch into place. Once the long stitch at the back is secure, trim off the tail at the front. I find this much easier than the first method - you're not trying to stitch and hold at the same time.

However, I prefer a method I was shown in a lovely little embroidery store over 20 years ago - I've used this method ever since and have never had the thread wear out or break but I suppose it could so I should tell you to take the following instructions with caution.

Cut your length of floss twice as long as you would usually (elbow to finger tip is the recommended length, so double that). Gently pull out one of the six strands, fold this single strand in half, and thread its two ends, side by side, through your needle.

This leaves you with a loop at the bottom of your strand. Bring your needle up at A (see cross stitch diagram overleaf) but don't pull the loop through. Take your needle down at D and duck your needle through the loop and gently pull until secure. Voila! It's fastened with no knot and no fuss! I follow the standard method for finishing - leave enough thread so that you may run a tail under several stitches and then trim.

How to make the stitches - I always make the whole cross as I go. Some folk (including my mum who was taught by nuns in the 1950s) like to do all of one thread's worth of stitching as the first arm of the cross and then with the next thread, they make the second arm, thus finishing

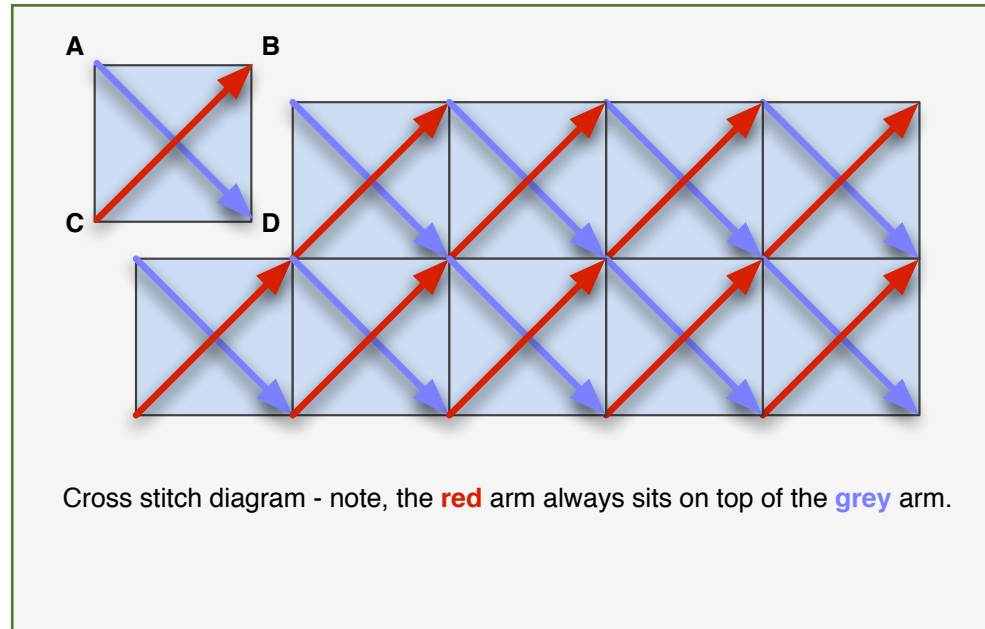
the cross. I find this method pulls the stitches too tight (unattractive) and makes it so hard to run your tail under the last few stitches when you are finishing off (aggravating). So I make the whole cross as I go. The only thing to remember with this method is, always make your cross's arms run the same way. Huh!?

Your fabric is made up of tiny squares (see right). The top left hand corner is A, the top right hand corner is B, the bottom left hand corner is C, and the bottom right hand corner is D. To make a cross stitch you bring your needle up at A, down into D (you've formed the purple arm), up at C (the thread is carried across the back between D and C) and down into B (you've formed the red arm - the colours are illustrative of the concept only!)

The purple arm and the red arm are traveling in a consistent direction and this creates a nice smooth pattern. Even when both arms are the same colour (as they are in real life stitching), you will be able to tell if they are not traveling in the same direction - your finished work will look bumpy and uneven - it will look like the dog gave it a chew.

It doesn't matter whether you're an up at A, down at D, up at C, down at B person, or up at B, down at C, up at A, down at D person, or any of the variations in between. As long as you keep going the same way for the whole piece you'll be fine.

Stitch direction Whether you stitch back and forth, like an old fashioned typewriter, or up and down does make a difference to your finished



piece. I look at the item I'm about to stitch and think about which way its "grain" would run. If it is a boat I would stitch back and forth to make my stitches look like they are forming the horizontal planks of the wooden hull.

If it was a tree trunk, I would stitch up and down to make it look like the vertical bark of a tree. If I don't want any direction on a large, filled in area, I would fill it in with diagonal lines. In small areas, I don't worry about stitch direction - whatever works at the time is fine with me.

More help There are lots of great instructions and help available on the internet - just type "how to cross stitch" into your search engine and you'll find heaps of good sites to check out.

Visiting your local embroidery store is also a brilliant idea - you will be sure to find not just lots of inspirational needlework, but staff who are highly skilled and happy to help.

If you have a question particular to the attached pattern, or further information regarding **A Pint of Cream** designs, please email me at lily@blockaday.com.

Now, set aside a few hours, find a comfy spot with good light, arrange your notions and threads within arm's reach, and settle down to enjoying your cross stitch.

That's the most important bit.

Thank you so much for purchasing this **A Pint of Cream** pattern. I hope stitching **The Red Mare** gives you as much pleasure as it did me.

with warm regards,

Lily Boot

