Warm Llama Balaclava With Scarf

by paperplateandplane

Here's a fun winter hat so plush it can keep you warm and dry just like the llamas are in the cold mountaintops of the Andes.

In this Instructable, I will take you step-by-step on how to sew your own super warm fur-covered, fleece-lined llama balaclava and a removable fleece scarf with details so adorable, you will stop a real llama in its tracks.

This balac-llama-va has been entered into the Sew Warm Contest and I would be thrilled to have your vote. Thank you and enjoy the project!

Step 1: Supplies

You will need:

White faux fur (or sherpa) - 1/2 yard
Fleece - 1/2 yard
Pink scrap of fleece for cheek detail - optional

This can be sewn entirely by hand, however I did use a sewing machine, as well as:
Matching threads
Sewing pins
Fabric scissors
Fabric marker
Fabric glue
Pencil

Paper for pattern-making

For embroidering on a regular sewing machine, you may also need:
Clear presser foot - optional (it just makes viewing details easier)
Feed dog cover plate (darning plate) - if you cannot lower your machine's feed dogs

Step 2: Llama Balaclava and Scarf Patterns

The images illustrate how to measure for and shape the patterns.

For the Head:

Measurements required are the head circumference, top of head to shoulder, top of head to hairline, hairline to chin, face width, and neck length. The pattern also shows a 1" ear slit at the center of the pattern about 2" from the top edge. The pattern is curved at the bottom to allow for the balaclava to sit on the shoulder without bunching.

For the Ears:

I used 3-1/4" x 5" for my kids, ages 7 years and 19 months. However, this is entirely up to your preferences and needs.

For the Scarf:

Measurements required are the head circumference around the nose and the neck length.

Step 3: Cut Fabric

Before tracing the patterns on fabric, you must ensure the pattern is laid according to how the fabric stretches. Both of the fur and fleece fabrics I used are *2-way stretch* fabrics, so this is very important in deciding how to lay out the pattern. You want the fabric to stretch horizontally/width-wise while putting over the head.

After you've found the fabric stretch direction, trace the patterns on fabric and cut:
2 pieces of fur for the balaclava - one facing left, one facing right
2 pieces of fleece for the lining of the balaclava - one facing left, one facing right
2 pieces of fur for the ears
2 pieces of fleece for the ears
1 piece for the scarf

Step 4: Sew Ears

We will start by sewing the ears first.

1. Place fur and fleece with right sides facing.

2. Pin around the sides and top, leaving the bottom edge open.

3. Follow the pins and sew 1/4" seam.

4. Flip the ear right sides out.

5. Fold the ear about two-thirds inwards to the center and pin the bottom down.

6. The pattern for the head shows a slit where the ear needs to be placed. If you haven't cut this already, now is the time.

7. Slide ear into slit such that the ear and head are right sides facing and the bottom edge of the ear goes through to the wrong side of the fabric. Pin down.

8. Sew very close to the edge, as shown.

9. Your ear is attached. Repeat for other ear.

At this stage, you will have an ear attached to each fur head piece.

Step 5: Sew Seams

In this step, we will sew the two fur head pieces together and the two fleece head pieces together.

First, the fur pieces:

1. Place the fur right sides facing, ensuring that the ears are folded down so they do not get in the way of the stitches when sewing.

2. Pin around the top and back as shown in picture 3, starting from the bottom and ending at the forehead.

3. Follow the pins and sew with 1/4" seam.

4. Now pin the front neck edges together, as shown on picture 4.

5. Follow the pins and sew with 1/4" seam.

Now you now have sewn the head seam and the neck seam. The face and bottom are still open.

Repeat same steps for the fleece pieces.

At this stage, you now have an inside-out fur head piece and fleece head piece.

Step 6: Attach Fur + Lining

In this step, we will continue working with the head pieces and attach the fleece lining to the outer fur:

1. Flip the fleece over so that right side is out.

2. Picture 2 shows the fleece right side out.

3. Slide the fleece into the fur. Note that the fur is still wrong side out and this way, the fur and fleece should match up with right sides facing.

4. Start by matching together seam lines around the face and match the edges of both fabrics and pin down.

5. Follow the pins and sew 1/4" seam.

At this stage, your fur and lining are attached together by the seam around the face. The bottom is still open and unattached.

Step 7: Hem Bottom

In this step, we will finish off the bottom hem.

1. First you will need to flip the fur (just the fur) right side out.

2. After flipping the fur right side out, you will have the lining attached by the face and it will look like a siamese twin.

3. Push (NOT flip) the lining into the face opening as shown in picture 3.

4. When the lining is in the right place, you should notice the seams are all right side out on both the fur and the fleece.

5. Time to finish off the bottom by matching the back and neck seams together and pinning the edges down so that the fur and fleece are perfectly matching, or as close as possible. However, you do not want the fleece edge to go past the fur edge.

6. Follow the pins and sew very closely to the edge of both fabrics, as shown.

Now your balaclava is finished!

Step 8: Ear Tuck

You will notice that the ears are looking more like a lamb's than a llama's at this stage. No probllama! An ear tuck will solve this.

Sewing by hand, attach about 1" up from base of the ear to the head. You will sew each ear at two points: at the back of the ear and also close to the front of the ear, both about 1" up from the base of the ear.

This quick tuck should make the llama's ears perk right up.

Step 9: Embroider a Mouth

Before sewing the scarf, we will need to work on the scarf details.

1. Fold the scarf lengthwise in half, right sides out.

2. Find the center point of the scarf and draw a mouth, close to the folded edge. Note you are drawing on the right side of the fabric, so make sure the marker will not show through the stitching and will blend in.

3. You may hand embroider a mouth or use an embroidery machine or, if like me, you are using a sewing machine, you can rig your sewing machine for embroidery. You may attach a clear presser foot to make visibility much easier than using a normal presser foot. You may also cover your feed dogs with a cover plate or a darning plate. If your machine can lower the feed dogs, even better, you don't need a cover.

4. Using a zigzag or satin stitch setting, follow the mouth design and sew while making sure to stretch the fleece as you sew. The more stretched the fleece, the less the stitches will sink into the nap of the fleece. I've seen regular sewing machine embroidery tutorials using an embroidery hoop, you may do that if you have one. You may also use interface or fabric stabilizer if you have one. I didn't use those.

At this stage, you now have an adorable embroidered llama mouth. Llamouth?

Step 10: Blushing Cheeks

This step is totally optional. My two girls wanted their llamas to have blushing cheeks, so this is how to do it:

1. Trace and cut two small circles using a small scrap of pink fleece.

2. Using a toothpick (or the like), apply and spread some fabric adhesive on the back of each circle.

3. Adhere the circles to the front of the scarf, fairly close to the mouth to ensure it could all be seen within the balaclava's face opening.

4. Using a small zigzag stitch, sew the circles down.

Step 11: Sew Scarf

In this step, we will finish off the project by sewing together the scarf, which is essentially a very snug infinity scarf.

1. Fold scarf lengthwise, right side facing. Pin edges along the length and sew 1/4" seam.

2. Flip the scarf halfway into itself, starting by taking one end and pulling it inside the tube.

3. You should be left with the scarf as a tube with right sides facing.

4. Gather the edges and pin.

5. Sew 1/4" and leave a 2" opening so that you ca turn the scarf right side out.

6. Start to turn the scarf right side out by pulling some of the fabric out.

7. Continue pulling the fabric out until it is all right side out.

8. You will have a small gap at the back.

9. Fold the seams in and pin the gap closed.

10. Sew very closely to the edge to sew the gap shut.

And you now have a matching scarf for your balaclava!

Step 12: Stay Warm!

Keep warm and enjoy the outdoors in your homemade llama balaclava and scarf! Make as many as your family (and friends) require!