Farm and home - A simple tiered petticoat or skirt; New idea for potholders; Cutting cakes

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HOOPED and frilled petticoats are now enjoying a return to favour, but did you know that hooped petticoats were first introduced in the 16th century? Layers of frilly petticoats came into favour after Napoleonic times and indeed were so bulky and numerous that women would have lost the art of walking altogether had they not finally revolted against them and returned to hoops to hold their skirts out. These two fashions have been coming in and out of vogue since that time.

Tiered petticoats give a graceful, bouffant effect without adding undue bulk at the waist. A simple petticoat can be cut from two yards of material. This pattern can also be used for a skirt.

To cut the petticoat lay out the material as shown in the diagram above. These measurements are for a 27in. length which is long enough for most people. Extra length can be obtained by adding 1in. on
to each of the strips, when an extra ¼-yard of material will be needed, or by sewing a lace edging to the bottom edge—four yards of edging being required.

If the material is woven very straight, the strips can be torn off to give an even edge but this is often quite a risk, so unless you are sure, it is best to cut the strips off. The top tier consists of one short piece (6in.) and will be found sufficiently full without adding unnecessary bulk at the waistline. If the top tier is made any deeper it is usually necessary to add extra width to allow this tier to fit over the hip line. Where extra length is needed it is better to add it to the other two tiers.

The simplest method of assembling the petticoat is to sew the three tiers together and sew up the side seam.

Along one edge of the second and third tiers work two rows of gathering. Two rows will give a more even result when setting the gathers. Where the gathering is hand-done, one row will suffice as this pulls more easily. When doing gathering on a machine try using two different colours of cotton on the bobbin and reel. It is much easier to follow the thread you are pulling up. Once the bobbin and reel cottons are pulled at the same time, the stitches lock and the only thing to do is start again. After the gathering has been set and machined in place the threads used for gathering can be removed so that the different coloured cottons do not affect the final result. To join the tiers use one of these methods of neatening:

- (a) Binding on the wrong side.
- (b) Binding on the right side.
- (c) Flat seam.
- (d) Overlap.

On a petticoat which is to be stiffened it is best to use a method which encloses the raw edges completely. When raw edges are starched they are most uncomfortable to wear and spell ruin to stockings.

For the first method of neatening join the tiers together with the right sides together using a quarter-inch or half-inch seam. Neaten the raw inside with bias binding.

METHOD 'A'

This same finish can be reversed to give a binding on the right side. This looks most attractive if a coloured binding or ribbon is used. In this case the binding must be attached more carefully as it will form part of the trim. The edge of the binding can be sewn down again if desired.

Joining by means of a flat seam is the method which requires more time and care but is one of the most satisfactory methods and is worth the extra trouble. To do a flat seam, turn down a ¼in. fold on to the wrong side on the plain (un-gathered) edge of one tier. Place wrong sides together and slide the gathered edge of the next tier up into the crease of the fold. Tack to prevent slipping, and machine a quarter of an inch from the folded edge of the material. It is not essential to catch down the edge of the ¼in. fold, but it is important to catch the two tiers together.

Press the fold over to cover the raw edges, checking to see that there is no bump of material on the wrong side. Machine down the edge of the fold.

For the last method of joining, turn a ½in. fold to the wrong side on the plain edge of each tier. Place the fold over the gathered edge of the next tier and machine along the edge. The raw edges on the inside can be oversewn or bound with bias binding.

This method is the easiest one, if trimmings such as a contrasting piping, ric-rac or bobble braids are to be used as the trim can be inserted under the edge before it is machined down.
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The top edge can be finished with a hem wide enough to take elastic. For easy insertion and replacement of the elastic leave a ½ in. gap in the machining along the edge of the hem. The gap can be sewn up by hand when the elastic is inserted and this is easily undone when necessary. This eliminates the necessity of working button-holes.

The lower edge can be finished by a hem. If lace is to be added the firmest finish is obtained by machining it along.

Broderie Anglaise edging is best attached with a tiny flat seam. The shaped raw edge should be straightened first. If this edging of lace is sewn without gathering it will be much easier to iron and there is sufficient fullness in the bottom tier.

A NEW IDEA FOR POT HOLDERS
By BRENDA CLEEVE

Keep the pot holders in your kitchen bright and fresh by making them with removable padding. This saves tiresome drying of bulky fillings on wash day and the outside covering can be changed when it becomes soiled. One or two filling pads can be used for a series of covers to match your colour schemes or provide bright spots around the kitchen.

The easiest shapes to make are square or round. For a good-sized square holder use a piece of material approximately 18 in x 8 in. Hem or bind the two short sides. Fold these edges in to the centre of the strip so that they overlap about ½ in. Machine along the raw edges. Turn the cover onto the right side and it is made.

Attach a small curtain ring or loop to one corner.

Round holders—which have the advantage that there are no corners to get burnt by coming in contact with the stove surface—are made in the same manner. Using a plate as a guide for size, cut one complete circle of fabric and two about 1 in. deeper than a semi-circle. When a hem or binding is placed on the straight edges of the semi-circles there should be sufficient material to allow a ½ in. overlap of these two pieces when placed on the full circle. Where there is only a small overlap it will be found that the filling falls out easily.

The filling should be made just slightly smaller than the cover. This can be made of any material such as wool, flannelette of even hessian. It need not be washable, as only the cover is washed and when soiled the padding could be replaced by a new pad. Make the padding of several layers of the material, depending on the thickness of the fabric. Sew the layers of padding firmly together with tacking or machine stitches.

Curtain rings used for hanging can be covered quickly by working a double crochet edge over the ring. This has the same effect as buttonhole but is much quicker and the ends can be left long enough to enable the ring to be attached.
CUTTING CAKES

By BRENDA CLEEVE

Cutting cakes is usually a problem especially at party time when you want to cut economically without spoiling the appearance of the cakes. To cut a cake neatly a sharp knife with a thin blade is essential. Cut by keeping the point of the knife down and the handle up, pulling towards you as you work. Where the icing sticks to the knife and breaks away from the surface of the cake, dip the blade into a jug of hot water to keep it free while cutting.

To check the number of pieces you will be able to cut from each cake make a rough plan on the bottom of the tin with chalk or pencil. Allow a few extra pieces to compensate for variations in the size of the pieces cut and you should be able to calculate the number of cakes you will need. Butter cake mixtures will always cut into more pieces than sponges and lighter types of cakes.

ROUND CAKES

These often present difficulties especially with a large tin. In this case it is not very satisfactory to cut triangular-shaped pieces starting from the centre as the pieces are too large and hard to manage.

A better plan is to cut an inner circle about halfway between the centre of the cake and its edge. The outer ring and the inner circle thus formed can then be cut into pieces of a much more manageable size. An 8in. diameter cake cuts approximately 20 pieces with a sponge mixture.

Another method of cutting a round cake is to cut it into four across the centre to form a cross. Each quarter can then be cut into slices, reversing the direction of the cuts in each quarter. Some of the centre slices can be cut in halves as they may be too large. An 8in. diameter cake cuts approximately 20 pieces.

OBLONG CAKES

Shallow cakes baked in rectangular tins can be cut into triangular shapes either before or after icing. These shapes look quite attractive for cakes such as petit fours and party lamingtons. Cut the cake diagonally from one corner and make several cuts on this angle until the cake is in slices. Starting from the other end cut in the same manner to form triangles with diamonds between. If the cake is wide and the centre diamonds are too large cut down the centre so that all the cake is cut into triangles.

A large square cake can be cut on the same principle. Cut it first into two or four oblongs and then cut each one according to the directions for an oblong cake.

A square cake can also be cut into quarters and then each section cut into four again. Cut diagonally across each section so that each original quarter cuts into 8 triangular shaped pieces.

HEART-SHAPED CAKES

This is an awkward shape to cut with any system. Probably the simplest method is to cut the cake down the centre and then across in slices in the opposite direction. Some of the larger slices can be cut again.
ROUND CAKE
1st METHOD.

2nd METHOD.

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