

"Mother's aunts, grandmothers, older sisters, little girls, and sometime boys made doll quilts. Usually only the simplest of patterns was used. One Patch, Four Patch, and Nine Patch were great patterns for learning the art of piecing."<sup>1</sup>  
Kiracofe & Johnson

#### History of Nine Patch Quilts

The first known dated 9 patch quilts were made at the beginning of the nineteenth century and they continue to be made to this day. Although the basic form of the 9 patch is very simple, consisting of nine equal squares, there are endless ways that the basic block can be varied. In the case of children's quilts the simple version is more common. Quilt historian, Sandi Fox, points out, "But in the most original of children's quilts, we find the piece is based not on the multiple variations at the quiltmakers' command, but on the nine-patch in it's purest and most fundamental form."<sup>2</sup>

One thing is certain, many girls learned to sew making this simple quilt. For the same reason it is an easy quilt that children can have fun making today. It's also a way to teach a child a bit of history.

#### Crib and Doll Quilt Patterns

Both the doll and crib quilts I've designed for you are made up of a combination of six inch and two inch 9 patches. If a child is making the doll quilt you might want to skip the small central nine patch. The crib quilt is simply an expansion of this with many more blocks especially the smaller 9 patches. The blocks are still kept small in keeping with the fact that crib quilts during this period were miniature versions of full sized quilts.

#### Picking Your Reproduction Fabric

Imagine that you are making your nine patch doll or baby quilt during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. You will find the fabrics from this period to be surprisingly delightful. Quilt historian, Eileen Jahnke Trestain, points out, "Many people think that old quilts are basically brown. This isn't the case. Fabrics from this era have a wonderful intensity of color that can make your heart beat faster just to look at them."<sup>3</sup>



I've used the bright greens, yellows and reds of this period for my little quilts. These cheerful colors were usually overprinted with small figures of contrasting colors. If you prefer a softer look there are wonderful pinks and blues available from this period. This page on [Reproduction Fabrics](#) leads you to a great variety of mid nineteenth century fabrics. You will see how lively the colors were.

#### Quilting Possibilities for This Quilt

The quilting on nine patch quilts was often simple as they were usually made for everyday use. In this case I've used diagonal lines for the baby quilt imagining it was quickly quilted by a busy mother or by a child. The diagonal grid is used for the crib quilt. It takes just a little more time to give it a nicer finish by sewing the diagonal lines in opposite directions. The more common quilting pattern during this period was the hanging diamond grid but I found more children's quilts with the simple diagonal square grid. Perhaps this was because the diagonal square grid was faster and easier for a busy mother to quilt.



Sewing machines were available to just a few by the 1850s but increasingly more families owned one as the century progressed. So these quilts most likely would have been hand quilted but could have been quilted by machine. In fact quilt historian, Barbara Brackman, points out that once the sewing machine was available, "Many children's quilts were machine-quilted, probably because they are easier to manage than full-sized quilts".<sup>4</sup> It's up to you which method you want to use.

#### That Finishing Touch, The Binding



Although many methods were used to bind nineteenth century quilts I've given these quilts a simple binding made by turning the backing fabric to the front. Nine patch quilts were often utilitarian quilts and this binding method was faster and more efficient in use of fabric. After quilting I cut the backing fabric 3/4 inch wider than the quilt then double folded it to the front. Quilters prided on narrow bindings so make yours about a quarter of an inch wide or even a little narrower

#### Measurements & Layout for Your Baby or Doll Quilt

Now that you have the background you need to make your reproduction quilt go to the [Pattern for the Doll & Crib Nine Patch Quilts](#) for the cutting and layout instructions.

© 2008 Judy Anne Breneman (You are welcome to use and share these patterns. Do not post them online or sell them.)

#### References:

<sup>1</sup> p111 "[The American Quilt: History of Cloth and Comfort 1750-1950](#)", by Roderick Kiracofe & Mary Elizabeth Johnson

<sup>2</sup> p125 "[Small Endearments: 19th Century Quilts for Children](#)", by Sandi Fox

<sup>3</sup> p42 "[Dating Fabrics: A Color Guide 1800-1960](#)", by Eileen Jahnke Trestain

<sup>4</sup> "Machine & Miscellaneous Quilting", "Barbara Brackman, The Quilt Detective: Clues in the Needlework, 2005, digital newsletter # 5.



Nine-Patch Doll Quilt by Judy Breneman

# Full Version of the Nine Patch Doll Quilt

[ [Children & Baby Quilt Index](#) | [Nine Patch Quilt Pattern](#) ]










Enjoy This Free Crib & Doll Nine Patch Quilt Pattern

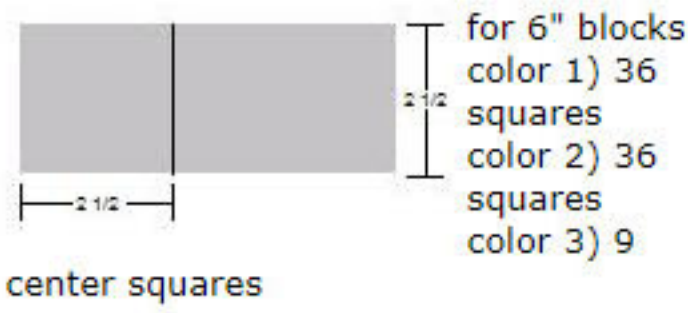
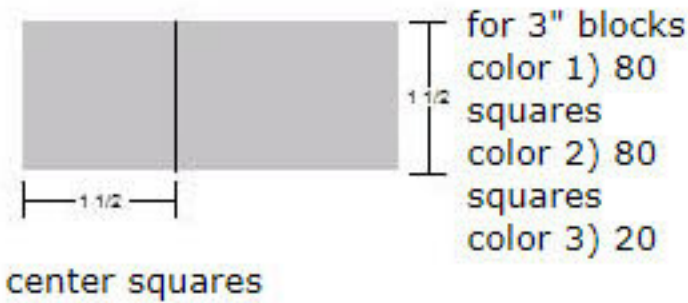
[Homepage](#) [Quilting History](#) [Quilt Patterns](#)

This page gives the layout, measurements and suggested quilting patterns for the doll and crib quilts. **Be sure to read the information at [Nine-Patch Quilts for Children](#) before beginning.** Once you have read that you will know a bit of nine-patch history and will have learned about the surprising fabrics used in the mid 19th century. This project will be a lot more fun once you have that background!

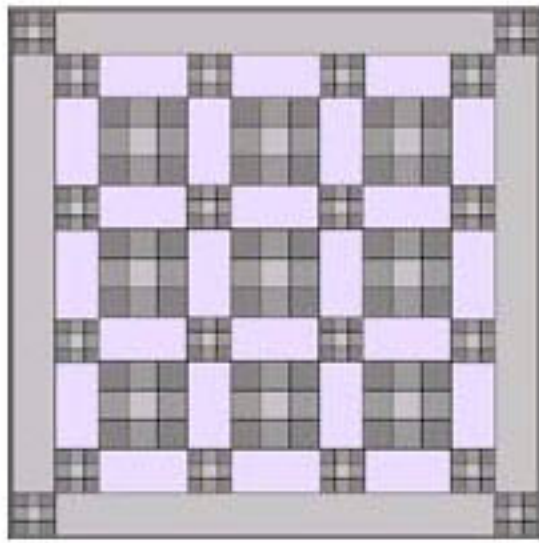
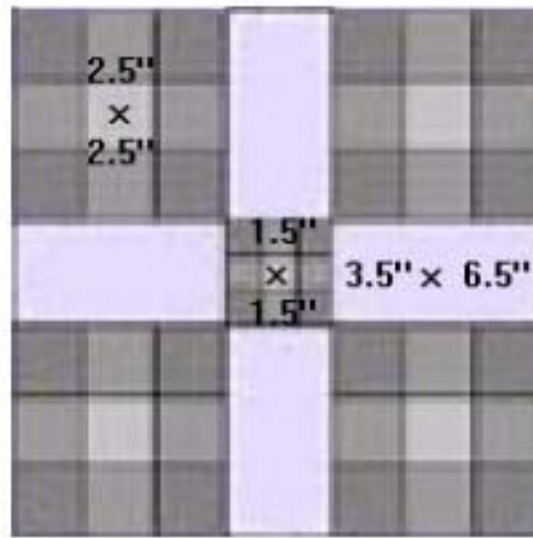
Estimated yardage for the nine patch crib quilt.  
For the doll quilt get a fat quarter of each fabric.

Fabric key	Number of patches	Yardage estimate	Fabric key	Number of patches	Yardage estimate
	58	1/4		58	1/4
	33	1		58	1/4
	58	1/4		24	5/8
	4	* 1 + 1/8			

For the baby quilt you will want to use the following for rotary cutting.

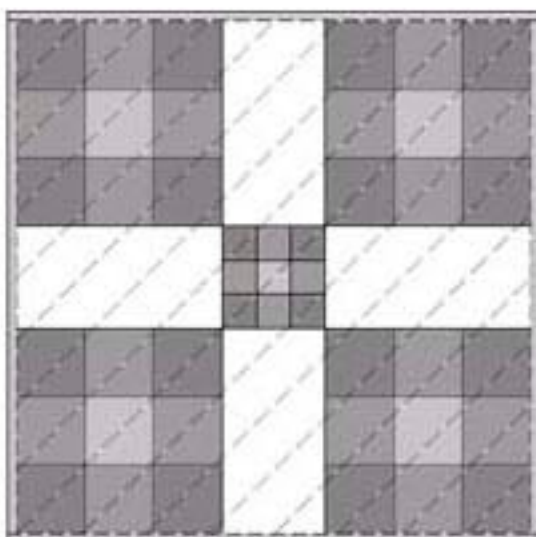


To the right you will see the layout for the nine patch doll quilt along with the sizes you need to cut the squares. The measurements include the 1/4 inch seam allowance. The finished doll quilt will be about 15" square.

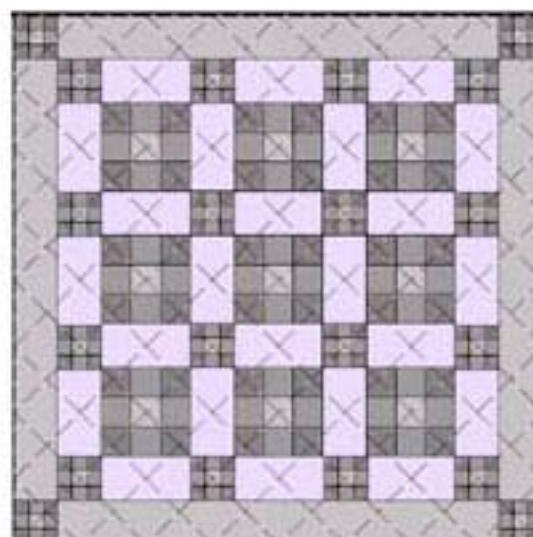


To the left is the layout of nine-patch crib quilt. Use the measurements above given for the small and large blocks. They include the seam allowance. The finished crib quilt will be about 36" square.

Below are suggested quilting patterns for the crib and doll nine-patch quilts.



quilting pattern for doll nine-patch quilt



quilting pattern for crib nine-patch quilt