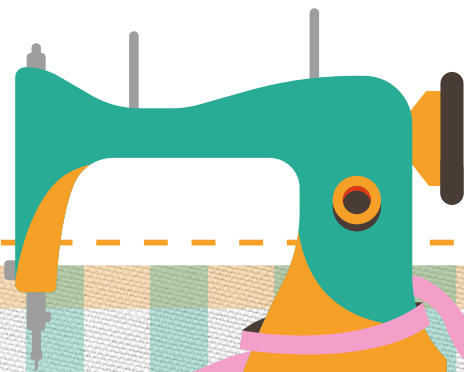


COSPLAY FABRICS: WHERE DO I START?

NeutralGoddex





GENERAL OVERVIEW

- What to look for when shopping online for fabric
- Different fabric websites to start your search
- Chicagoland Brick-and-Mortar Stores for in-person shopping
- How to decide what fabrics to use



Intended to be a beginner friendly panel but cosplayers of all skill levels are welcome!
Feel free to take pictures of slides or scan QR code to access PDF of panel.



MOST IMPORTANT THINGS TO LOOK FOR:

FIBER CONTENT



FABRIC WEAVE

BUT WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?



FIBER CONTENT

What is the fabric made of?





THREE MAIN TYPES



CELLULOSE

- Plant-Based
- Cotton, Linen, Hemp, Bamboo, etc.




NATURAL

- Also referred to as animal fiber
- Silk, Leather, Suede, Wool, etc.



SYNTHETIC

- Man-Made
 - Usually derived from petroleum products
 - Polyester, Acrylic, Spandex, Pleather, etc.
-
- 

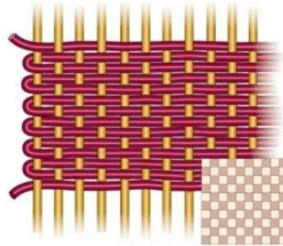


FABRIC WEAVE

How is the fabric woven?



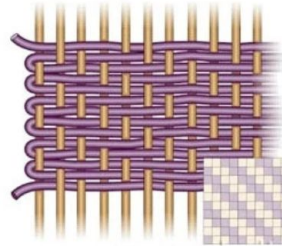
FABRIC WEAVE



Plain

PLAIN

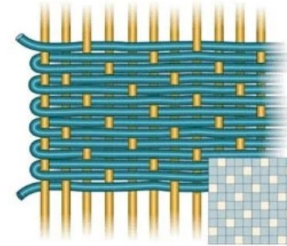
- Most common
 - Simple under-over pattern



Twill

TWILL

- Has a diagonal pattern
- Usually stronger than plain weave



Satin

SATIN

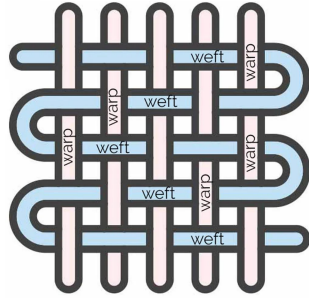
- Often mistaken for a fiber
- Has a shine to it

Image from: <https://shop.newtess.com/en/types-of-weaves-textile-glossary/>

FABRIC WEAVE

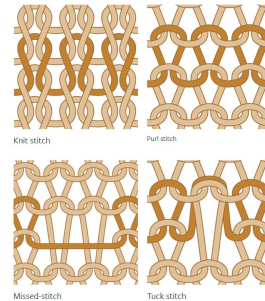
WARP AND WEFT

- Weft weaves around the warp of the fabric
- Under and over warp threads of fabric



KNIT FABRICS

- Loops that chain together
- Rows and columns of interconnected stitches



Images from: <https://khatabook.com/blog/weft-and-warp-fabrics-difference-and-types/>,
<https://www.threadsmagazine.com/project-guides/sewing-with-knits/know-your-knits>

SO...WHAT DO WE GET WHEN WE COMBINE THESE?

When we combine fiber content and fabric weave, we can more accurately search what we're looking for! We can generally...

- Know how breathable the fabric is
- Know how the fabric will flow on the body
- Know if you need to use stabilizers on fabric
- Know if the fabric has any stretch to it



OTHER THINGS TO LOOK FOR


FABRIC WIDTH

- Depending on the type of fabric it'll usually be manufactured at about 45" or 60"
- This will change the amount you need to buy

WEIGHT

- Can be measured in ounces or GSM (grams per square meter)
- May also give the thickness of the fabric depending on the seller

CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Not all fabrics should be washed in a washing machine!
 - Item description will give care instructions on how to wash and dry your fabric
-
- 

SWATCHES

- Small piece of fabric
- Most online sellers offer them!
- Usually either free or very cheap (\$1-\$3 depending on fabric)
- Useful when you aren't sure if the color is accurate
- If unsure if a website has them, ask!



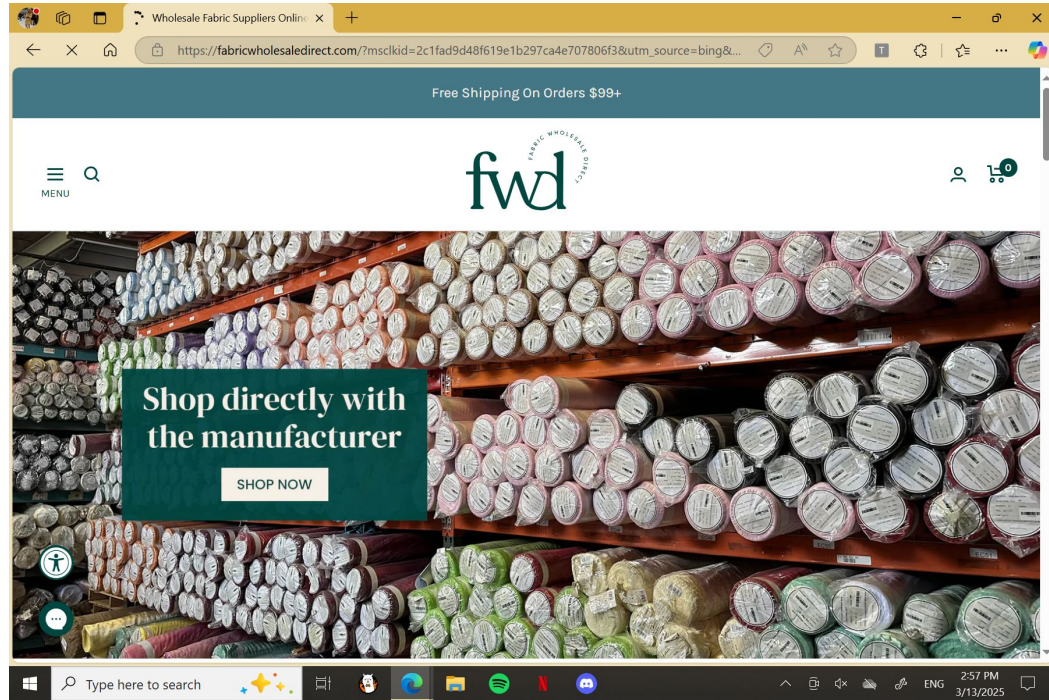


LET'S LOOK AT SOME WEBSITES!

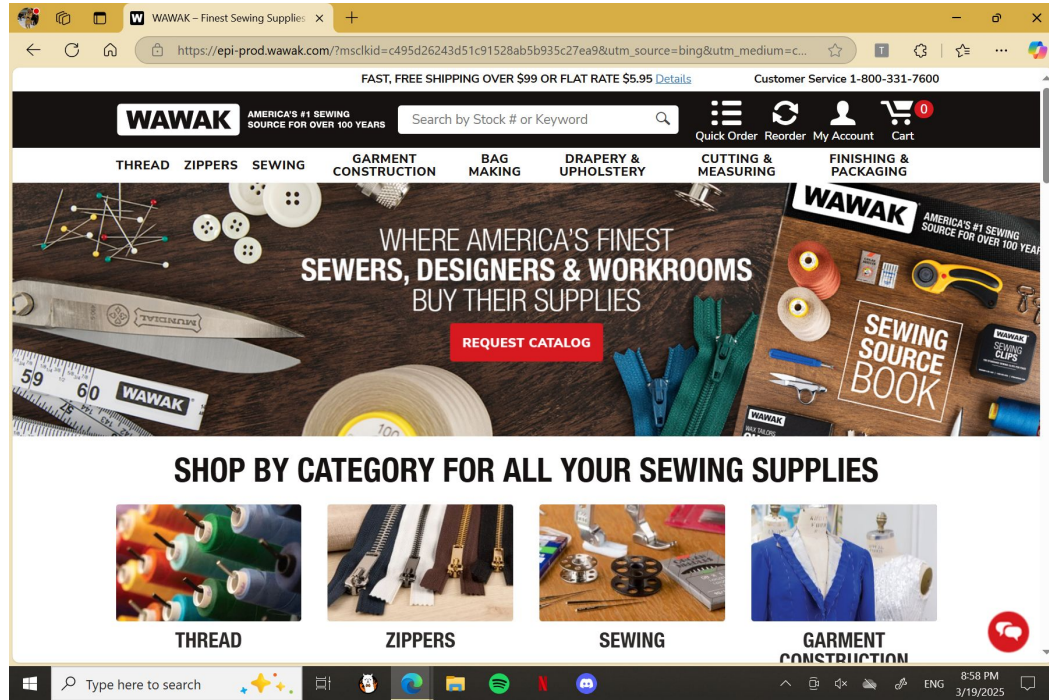
Here are some of the websites
that I like to browse when
shopping for fabrics online



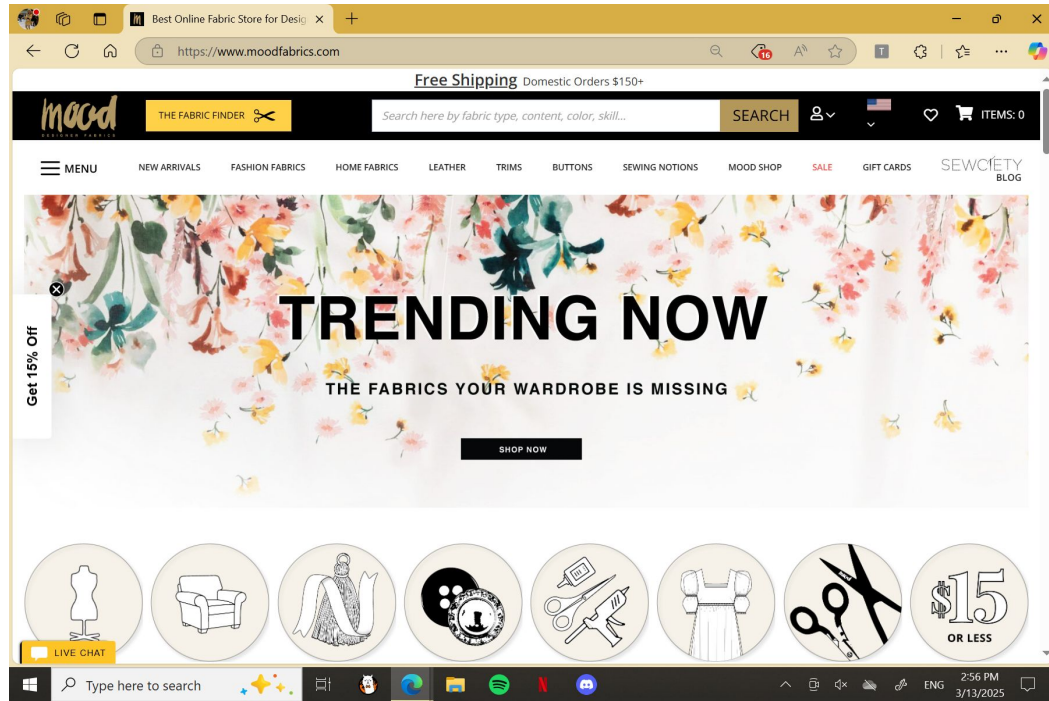
FABRIC WHOLESALE DIRECT



WAWAK



MOOD FABRICS



DHARMA TRADING COMPANY

The screenshot shows the Dharma Trading Co. website homepage. The browser address bar displays "https://www.dharmatrading.com". The website header includes a navigation menu with categories like "Browse by Craft", "Dyes", "Paints", "Markers", "Clothing & Dyeables", "Fabric", "Scarves", "Yarn & Fibers", "Chemicals", "Resists", "Tools", "Kits", and "Learning Center". A search bar is present with the text "Search the site" and a "FIND IT!" button. A shopping cart icon is in the top right corner. The main content area features a large banner for "TEXTILE CRAFT SUPPLIES & DYEABLES" with a sub-header "Introducing a new Dharma Fiber Reactive Dye color" and a product image for "Psychedellic Sunshine" (PR420). A sidebar on the left contains links for "55 YEARS OF EXCELLENT SERVICE", "New Stuff", "Sale Stuff", "Clearance Items", "How-To Instructions", "Dharma Tutorials", "Featured Artists", "Group Project Supplies", "Home", "New Stuff", and "Gifts & Tutorials". A bottom section highlights "55 YEARS" and "LOW PRICES". A right sidebar mentions "At 2024's end, Dharma made possible the repair of almost 350 little hearts!" and includes a photo of a child. The footer shows a Google rating of 4.9 stars and the text "BETH Customer Reviews". The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the time as 8:56 PM on 3/18/2025.

55 YEARS OF EXCELLENT SERVICE
Call us!
800-542-5227
8-5 PST / M-F
Send us a note!
CLICK HERE >

New Stuff
Sale Stuff
Clearance Items
How-To Instructions
Dharma Tutorials
Featured Artists
Group Project Supplies
Home
New Stuff
Gifts & Tutorials

55 YEARS

SINCE 1969, textile craft supplies, fabrics & clothing blanks to artists, craftspersons, & industry with fast, friendly service at fair prices. [MORE >](#)

LOW PRICES

WE AIM FOR LOW PRICES. First we discount from list price, then we add further discounts as your quantities in your order increase. [MORE >](#)

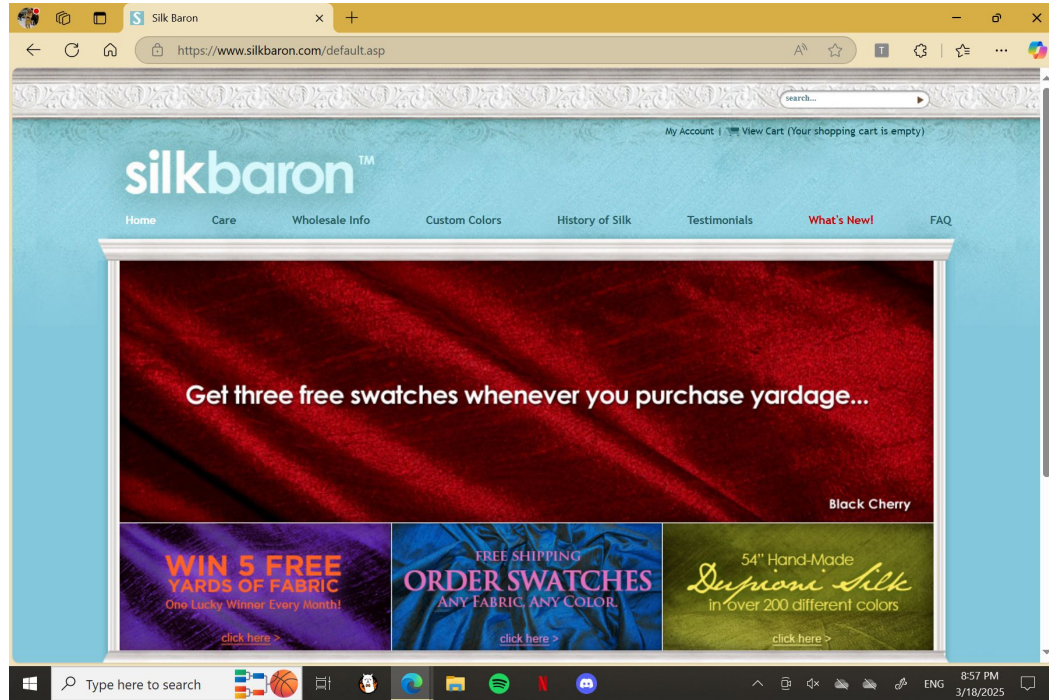
At 2024's end, Dharma made possible the repair of almost 350 little hearts!

This work is made possible by the purchases of Dharma customers like you.
DHARMA SOCIAL PROJECTS
[LEARN MORE >](#)

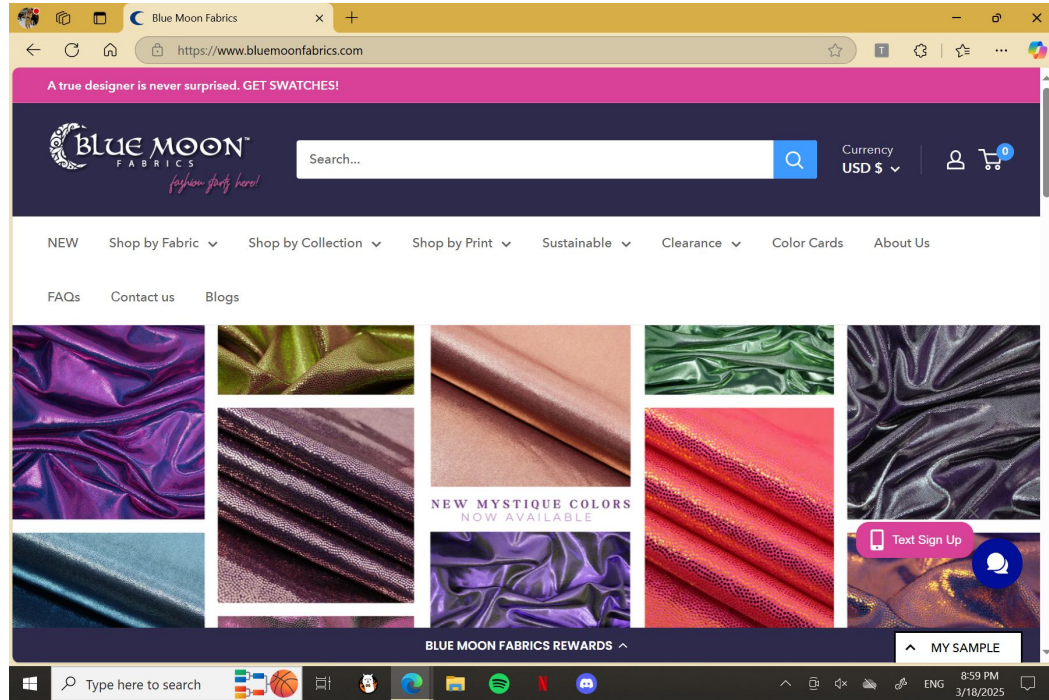
4.9 ★★★★★
Google Customer Reviews

BETH Customer Reviews

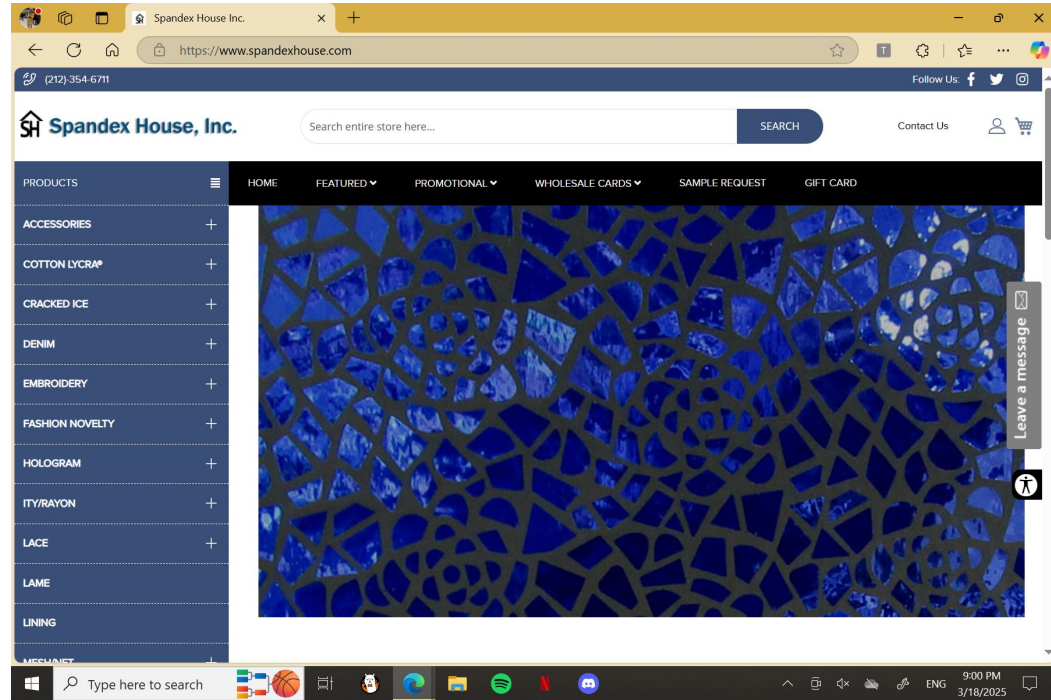
SILK BARON



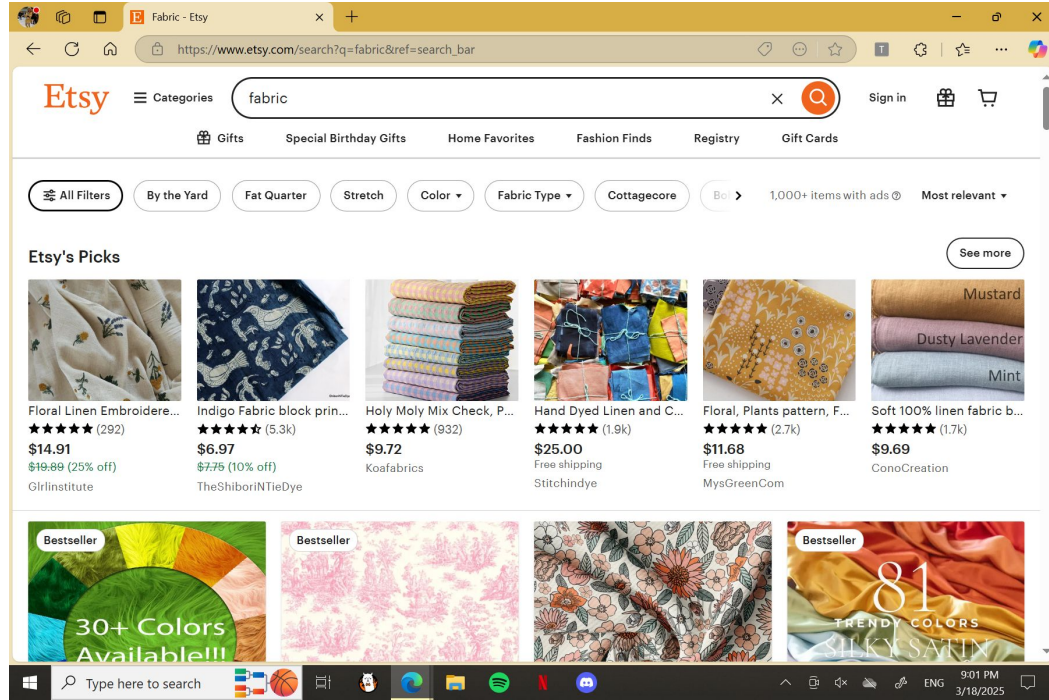
BLUE MOON FABRICS



SPANDEX HOUSE



ETSY





IN-PERSON STORES

Some Chicagoland Brick-and-Mortar Stores



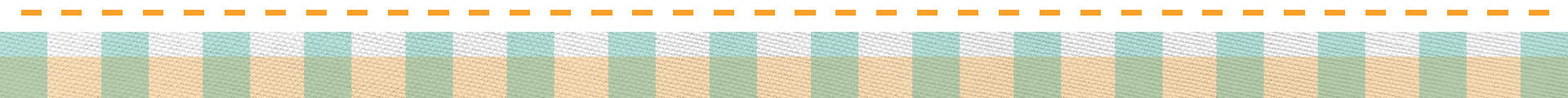
TEXTILE DISCOUNT OUTLET

- 13 room warehouse (2 stories and basement with elevator)
- Apparel, Draperies, Leather, Trims/Appliques, Notions/Hardware, etc.
 - Many affordable options depending on what you're looking for
 - 10% discount with student ID!
 - <https://textilediscountoutlet.com/>
 - 2121 W 21st Street Chicago, IL. 60608
- Located in Pilsen, small lot and lots of street parking
 - Open Sunday-Thursday (Closed Friday/Saturday)





NEW RAINBOW FABRICS

- Apparel fabrics and trims
 - Lots of prom fabrics
 - Sequin and rhinestone fabrics can also run pricier
 - I believe they have a parking lot
 - If not, there are parking garages/lots nearby
 - <https://www.newrainbowfabric.com/>
 - 612 W. Roosevelt Rd. Chicago, IL 60607
 - Located in the Loop
 - Open Sunday-Saturday
- 



FISHMAN'S FABRICS

- Higher end fabrics
- Many suiting fabrics
- More expensive than TDO/New Rainbow
- Literally right around the corner from New Rainbow
 - <https://fishmansfabrics.com/>
- 1101 S Desplaines St. Chicago, Illinois 60607
 - Also located in the Loop
 - Open Monday-Friday



VOGUE FABRICS

- Apparel, Trims, Silks, Notions/Hardware, etc
- In a new location (warehouse location) for anyone who hasn't been in a few years
 - Has parking lot and street parking
- Fabrics range in pricing but they have good options for a lot of different price points
 - Believe they also have a 10% discount for students
 - www.voguefabricsstore.com
 - 618 Hartrey Ave, Evanston, IL 60202
 - Open Monday-Saturday



QUILTING BY RUTHANN

- Located near DeKalb
 - Quilting shop
- Carries quilting fabric and some notions
 - Not as suitable to find cosplay fabrics
 - No website
- 9341 Shady Ln, Kingston, IL 60145
 - Open Monday-Friday (?)
 - (815) 784-5927



THE WASTESHED

- Non-Profit Crafting Material Shop
 - Have a small selection of fabrics
- Have many other miscellaneous crafting supplies
 - <https://www.thewasteshed.com/>
 - Chicago Location
 - 1754 N Kimball Ave, Chicago, IL 60647
 - Open Wednesday-Sunday
 - Evanston Location
 - 1245 Hartrey Ave, Evanston, IL 60202
 - Open Wednesday-Sunday

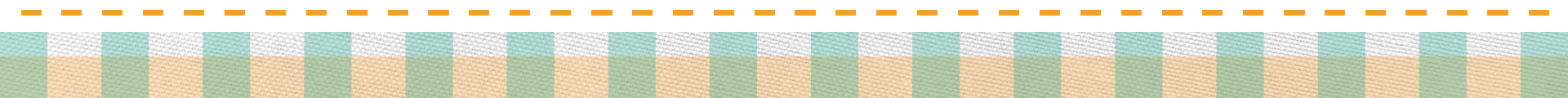


CHICAGO FABRIC YARN AND BUTTON SALES

- Packed with fabric
- Mixed with buttons and other notions
 - Large selection, mainly apparel
 - No website
- 208 S Wabash Ave, Chicago, IL 60604
 - Open Monday-Saturday



EVANSTON STITCHWORKS

- Focus on fabric and yarns
 - Apparel and quilting fabric
 - Classes available to take
 - <https://evanstonstitchworks.com/>
 - 906 Sherman Ave. Evanston, IL 60202
 - Open Sunday-Saturday
- 

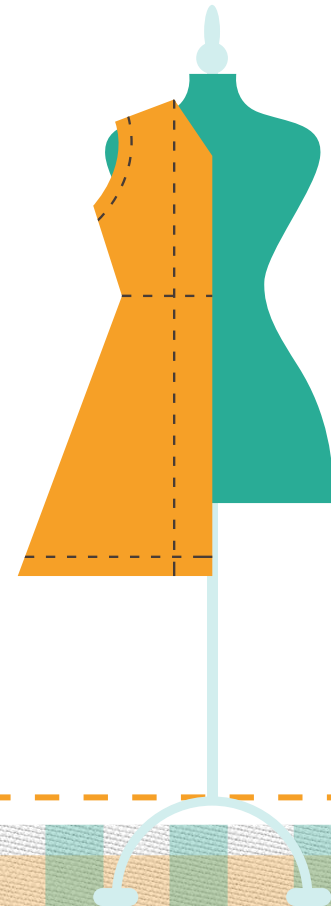
SEWING MACHINE STORES

- Linda Z's
 - 1216 E Central Rd, Arlington Heights, IL 60005
 - <https://www.lindazs.com/>
- Bernina of Naperville
 - 2764 Aurora Avenue, Suite 100, Naperville, Illinois 60540
 - <https://www.berninaofnaperville.com/>
- Goldblatt Machines
 - 1511 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, IL 60622
 - <https://sewinggold.com/about-us/>

So

NOW THAT I KNOW HOW
TO SEARCH FOR FABRIC ...

HOW DO I DECIDE
WHAT FABRICS TO
USE?



COSTUME DESIGN CAN TELL A STORY



ENVIRONMENT

What is the world of the character like?



ELEMENTS OF DESIGN

What makes this design visually interesting?



CHARACTER PERSONALITY

What aspects of the character are highlighted in the design?



HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Does the costume take historical/cultural inspiration?

WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU?

PICKING A FABRIC CAN BE OVERWHELMING, SO
HOW DO I KNOW WHAT TO PRIORITIZE?

- Comfort
- Visual Cohesion
- Price
- Mobility
- "Accuracy"
- Skill Level

There is no single or "correct" answer to picking a fabric.

You know yourself best, what works well for someone else may not work for you and that's okay!

MOMO AYASE

- School uniform
- Teenage girl
- Confident

How can this be reflected in her cosplay?



MOMO AYASE

- School uniform
 - Utilitarian, not much control over a school uniform
 - Cotton for skirt and shirt, sweatshirt fleece or interlock knit for sweater (or thrift a sweater!)
 - Bow made of cotton or polyester satin if we want to get fancy
- Confident teenage girl
 - Legwarmers
 - Made of fleece or a knit fabric with a texture if we want to add some personal flair



HATSUNE MIKU

- Performer/Idol
- Futuristic
- Inspired by computers/keyboards

How can we translate this to real life?



HATSUNE MIKU

- Shiny Materials
 - Holographic Spandex, Polyester Satin, Latex-like Pleather, Glittery Fabric
- Applied Details on Gloves
 - Heat-Transfer Vinyl, Ribbon, LED Light-Up Pieces if we're feeling techy
- If embellishing a premade cosplay
 - Adding trims or painting details on pre-existing pieces, adding glitter, etc.



FALIN TOUDEN

- Environment:
 - Fantasy world
 - Influence from Dungeons & Dragons
- Elements of Design:
 - Texture in how cloak is rendered
 - Gathers implied at waist of white tunic
- Character Personality:
 - Cleric and Traveler
 - Easygoing and Mediator
- Historical Research
 - Cellulose and natural fabrics likely used
 - Emphasis on using what would be available in the world



FALIN TOUDEN

Main things I focused on for this cosplay:

- Wanted to add more texture in my fabric choices
- Tried to put myself in the world of Dungeon Meshi; What materials would be available to the characters?
 - Likely cottons, linens, animal hides
- Wanted to make the cosplay comfortable and easy to move around in





Navy Faux Suede

White Textured Cotton

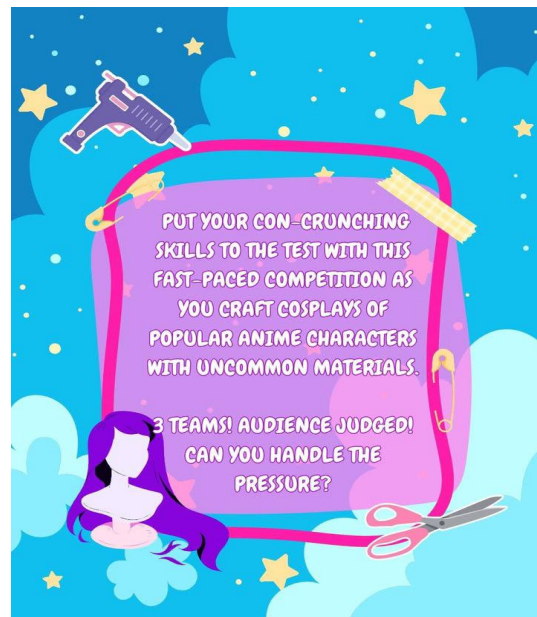
Brown Vinyl

White Faux Fur

Black Brushed Tencel



CHECK OUT PLANET PIERROT'S PANEL



THANKS FOR JOINING!

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at

@neutralgoddex
on Instagram, Twitter, BlueSky



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