Prepare your supplies.

Open your kit and carefully open up your skein of Sashiko thread. Open up your fabric and cut in half, separating the two patterns. Open your directions so you can see the fabric pattern illustration.

“Read” the visual pattern in your instructions – while they may be in a language you don’t understand, the pattern shows you which direction you will be stitching in with small arrows.

Pick a piece of thread from the unwound skein and thread your needle.

Tie a knot on just one end of your thread – pull about 4 inches of the loose thread through the eye of the needle.

Stitch the outside border of your design.

Using a running stitch, poke your needle up and down through the fabric. Locate the number “1” on the chart in your instructions. Begin at number “1” and follow the direction of the arrows to stitch around the border of your design. Once you’re comfortable with that motion, you can “stack” several stitches on the fabric at a time, covering the lines printed on your fabric to follow the pattern.

Observe traditional Sashiko “rules”:

When changing the direction of the line that you’re stitching, or meeting a line that’s been already stitched, use a loop or a carry. Flatten your project periodically to make sure the fabric doesn’t get bunched up on the stitches.

Loop: when changing direction, leave an extra length of thread on the back side of your fabric so that your thread is not pulled tight. When you add new stitches in a different direction, remember to hold on to your loop when pulling on your needle so it doesn’t get pulled in to the fabric.

Carry: leave a loose portion of thread just like a loop between the end of one line and the beginning of a new line.
Stitch!
Following the direction of the arrows in the illustration on your instructions, stitch along the pattern printed on your fabric. When in doubt, simply follow the dotted lines, being sure to stitch so your thread falls over the white lines. The printed pattern on your fabric is water soluble, so when you're done, you can wash the fabric and the white lines will disappear.

Follow the diagram in your instructions.
The different-colored lines in the diagram don't signify different colors of thread, they signify different pieces of thread. When you finish up a piece of thread, simply tie a knot on the back of the fabric, thread your needle on a new piece of thread, and begin stitching again. You may change colors when you start a new piece, but you don’t have to.

Once you’ve completed the pattern and tied off all your lose threads, your Sashiko fabric is ready to be transformed into whatever you like! It can be a coaster that protects surfaces from a hot or cold beverage, or a patch to go on a piece of clothing, it can even go in a frame!