

THE SUN SANDALS IN 7 SIMPLE STEPS

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Hello, I am Lougaya.

I will run you through this step-by-step tutorial to teach you how to make custom-fitted leather moccasins.

These “Sun Sandals” are a variation of a very ancient pattern that was worn in Europe in the middle age and probably even before. It is very simple to make as there is no sewing at all. We will just cut, make holes and lace it together.

You might have come across the same style but with cut petals at the front. Here I use a supple leather to be able to fold the front and in this way, I have found that it protects the feet better as less sand and stones come in. I like to wear them in the summer as they are nice and cool as much as the winter (on dry days or indoors) with a pair of woolen socks as the laces can open to adapt to this extra layer easily.

I hope you will make good use of these teachings and patterns.

The Video Tutorial

Before starting reading the PDF, know that all the following steps are available in video.

Receive access to the videos by purchasing your private link via our Etsy shop here :

https://www.etsy.com/earthingmoccasins/listing/705661796/diy-sun-sandals-video-pdf-tutorial?utm_source=Copy&utm_medium=ListingManager&utm_campaign=Share&utm_term=so.lmsm&share_time=1612109917414

Other Video Tutorials

Discover my other Video Tutorials where I teach how to make custom-fitted leather moccasins in different styles. [Have a look on my Etsy shop.](#)

So let's get started with making the Sun Sandals!

These are the main tools you will need:



- a permanent marker
(silver, white or golden if on dark leather)

- a pair of sharp scissors

- supple leather of about 1.2 to 2 mm thick
(usually chrome tanned leather. It can also be recycled from an old jacket or furniture...)

- a hammer and a hard wood tablet

- a leather punch of 3 or 4 mm diameter or a plier leather punch

Kits are available on [our store](#) as well.

1) Assembling your pattern and choosing the right size for you



Print the patterns in **full scale (100%)**, if possible on a semi-thick paper.

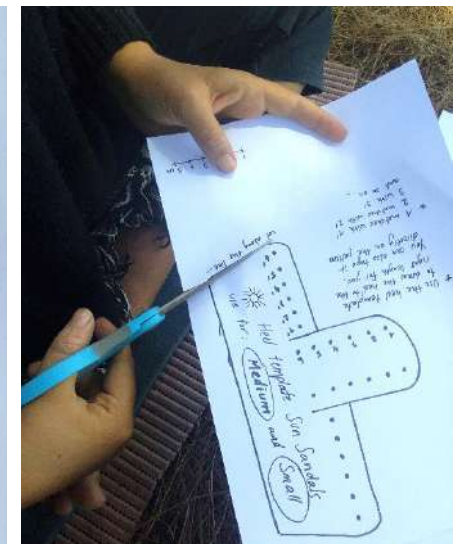
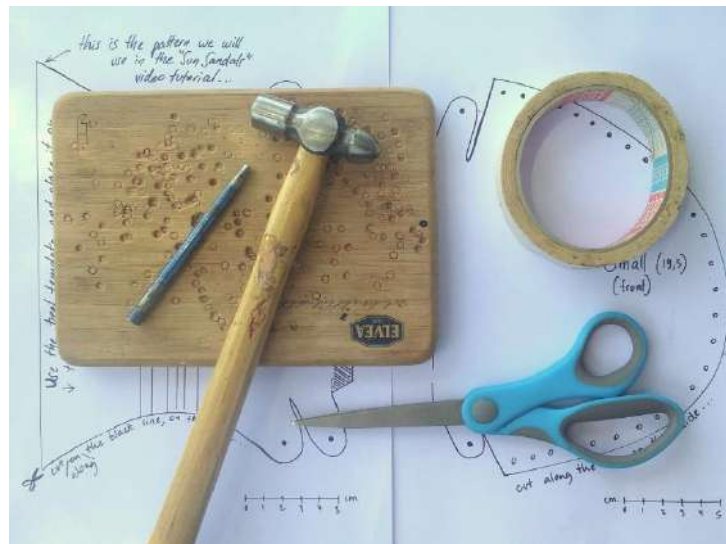
You will need :

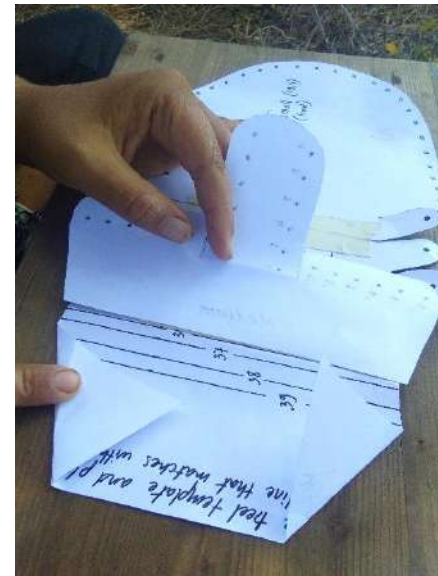
- A ruler and a piece of non-elastic thread or a tape measure
- Paper scissors (grand-ma said : "It's better to keep your leather scissors **ONLY** for leather to keep them sharp!")
- Tape or glue to join parts together.
- The leather punch and tools to go with (board and hammer)

Measure the width of your foot where the shoe will close and compare that measurement with the patterns to find the best fit in terms of width.

To do so, measure the distance between the two extreme opposite holes like in the picture. We will take care of the length after...

Once you choose if you are going to use pattern S, S+, M or L, cut the front, the back and the heel template. When you cut, follow the black line on the "inside" of the line so that the line will disappear from your patterns.





Glue or tape together the front and the back part of the pattern.

Take your heel template and place it on the line that matches with your size. Glue or tape it in place. Fold or cut the back of the pattern to hide it behind the heel template.

NB: The pattern can be used directly, without the heel template. This enables us to do a more precise fitting and also to use less leather. [This technique is explained in my other video tutorials available on Etsy.](#)

[Or on Skillshare \(for free the two first months\)](#)

Your pattern should look like this once your assembled the three parts. You can improve the curve that joins the back part and the heel template (yellow circle).



Poke holes on the black dots with your leather punch... Make sure you place your holes at equal distance from the edge.



It's now ready to use!

You might notice that I don't have a work place but anyway I love working outdoors.

2) Tracing on the leather

Place the pattern on the leather and draw all around it with a permanent marker. Draw the holes too.

Flip the pattern over to have a left and a right foot.



3) Cut the leather



Cut along the line. **Follow the inside of the pen mark so that the line will completely disappear from the shoe.**



4) Punch the holes



Place yourself on the wooden tablet and follow the marks to punch the holes. **Make sure you keep the same spacing from the edge, try to be as regular as possible.**



5) Cut a leather lace from off-cuts



Take a piece of leather and round-up the edges to turn it into a “potato shape”

Decide of the thickness of your lace, here, 3 to 4mm is good, and start cutting in a spiraling manner (clockwise if you are right-handed, and anti-clockwise if left-handed) while **keeping an eye on the spacing between your scissors and the edge.** If the angle gets to narrow, round-it up again until only a little nugget is left.

Prepare about 60cm to 75cm of lace for each shoe.



6) Lacing the front



Place the outside side in front of you and start lacing going **inside the first hole and outside the next hole.** Continue in and out...

Once you have finished lacing the front, pull tight and center your lace. This will bring the front part of the shoe together. Make a double knot to secure the front part tightly.

Then, lace the top 3 petals in a cross pattern.



7) Lacing the heel

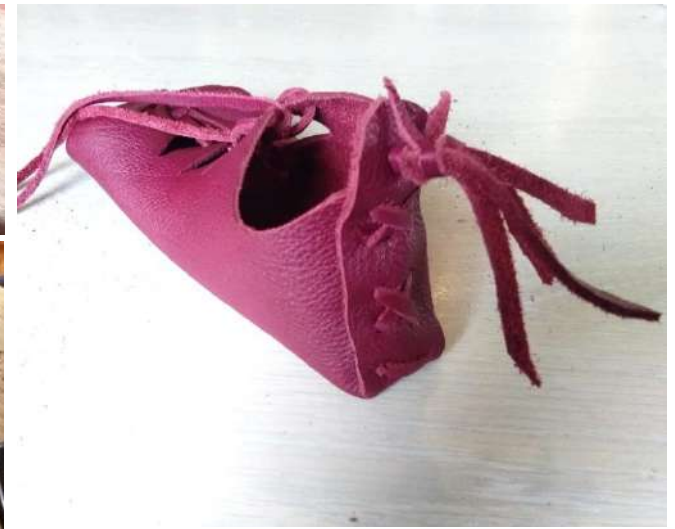


Like in the picture, lace the heel for the tongue to join the sides.

Start from the base of the heel.

According to the pattern,
Hole 1 will join on top of 1', 2 matches with 2' and so on...

You can lace it in a cross pattern, going from one side to the other.
Finish up like you feel... There is no special technique here...



And here it is! Well done! Let's finish the second one now....



Here is the same pattern with cut petals at the front.

In the top right corner, you can also see how to stitch the heel which is demonstrated in the video tutorial of the Sun Sandals. Stitching the heel allows a more precise fitting.

Thank you for following this tutorial.

It would be great to receive a picture of your creation.

I invite you to share it on my facebook page and/or support group :

[Earthing Leather Moccasins by Lougaya](https://www.facebook.com/earthingmoccasins)

(www.facebook.com/earthingmoccasins)





My little story : How I became shoe-maker...

These Sandals were the first kind of shoes I made. I was 18 and travelled for the first time in Spain to visit a friend for Christmas. I had taken nothing else than my big hiking boots with me and of course I got tired of going around in them on a daily basis; especially under the sunny weather of south of Spain. He had a beautiful pair of these sandals made out of a rich brown nubuck leather. They looked natural and precious. I was lucky to be able to wear them to give my feet a relief from my big heavy boots and soon enough, I did not want to wear my hiking shoes anymore. Of course it didn't take me long to think: "Hang-on a minute! These are actually really easy to make!" and there I was, in an op-shop, looking for the perfect leather vest that I could use for my next creation. I found this beautiful beige leather jacket for 2 euros and when I got back to our camp, I opened-up my friend's sandals to copy the pattern and make myself a pair straight away.

When I got back to Paris where I was studying design, I did not want to wear anything else anymore! I was so in love with my new sandals. Friends started commenting it and they wanted me to make them a pair too! Even my uncle suggested: "why not starting your own shoe business instead of working for unworthy student jobs?" I was surprised, I did not think this design was a "professional shoe design" and I thought that I could live from it. I knew it was mass-produced in India for 2 euros, sold 10 and that if I wanted to make a business out of this, I needed to find something better. At this point I only made a few pairs for friends and gave up.

2 years later, after quitting my studies and travelling for a year I was back to the point where I desperately needed money and I was horrified by the idea of falling back into a crappy unqualified job... I was in Asia and decided to head to Australia with my New-Zealand boyfriend to find some work. On our way, we stopped in Bali. In a tropical holiday setting, I was stressed, my money was finished. I was praying to find something meaningful and creative for work. I knew I had the talent to make beautiful things with my hands and I was fed-up with computer work. I wanted something I could travel with, something that would match with my ethics, something I could make by myself from A to Z! I had to find something!!!

The answer was dancing around me on the feet of a Balinese man. When we ended the dance workshop, he sat next to me. Almost everyone was dancing barefoot but he had shoes. Unusual shoes, they were more like a second-skin. They looked like they were perfectly molded on his feet. I stared. I had never seen such beautifully-designed shoes ([The Heart Moccasins, available in tutorial on my shop here](#)). When I saw them, I had an urge to get rid of my old and dirty rubber flip-flops. I quickly enquired the man where he had found such beautiful shoes and he took

them off for me to look closer. The world stopped, I was IN the shoe. Straight-away my mind was trying to understand how I could make it. He said "It's a friend of mine; he makes them and sometimes comes to sell them here. I heard he should come sometime soon..." Soon when? I did not have much time before leaving the country, would I get the chance to meet him?!

A day or two before my departure, the volcano next to Bali started erupting, releasing massive ash clouds into the sky and the airport was closed. Our flight to Australia was delayed until the volcano would stop, impossible to know when... so we continued to go dancing...

Two weeks later, beside the dance hall, an old skinny man with a white hat and two braids was stitching leather under a kiosk. "IT'S HIM!", I jumped!!! I landed straight in front of him, the shoe-maker, and before even thinking, I was asking eagerly: "Can you teach me?!" He stared at me from head to toes, surprised. I heard customers were sometimes waiting in front of his doorstep at night for him to come home but I guess that he was not used to see young women like me, asking so enthusiastically to learn his skill. He did not say much, yet he invited me to meet him in the afternoon to "see what I could do, maybe stitch a pair". I was EXCTATIC! I did not really know why yet but something in me felt so right!



I stitched my first pair for myself and he said: "You're doing quite good!". He had too many customers and was going to leave, volcano or not, a few days later so he offered me to help him for a few days and get to learn a bit more. During three days, I gave my best, trying to be precise and fast, and most of all to remember everything he would show me. "Down three and back two...and cut!".

I tried not getting any blisters on my fingers and get along with this curious man called Jory. Before leaving he invited me to join him in Australia to be his apprentice and help him to restock for the Summer season. I could not believe it! YEEEESSSS ! There was my new job! I was not even in Australia yet that it was being presented to me!

So I landed, a few days after him in Australia. It was in December 2015. He dropped us in the bush behind the beach in Brunswear Heads, a trendy fish-and-chip town on the river bank. Me and my boyfriend had nothing but a tarp and a blanket for two to sleep and a small back-pack with a few clothes, our wallets were fully empty. We had nothing and seemed like homeless, sleeping on the ground with the bush turkeys and the wallabies but I was happy. I was going to learn how to make moccasins and even be paid for it! I spent the next month meeting Jory on the public tables near the beach, making a small production line of moccasins. He would show me for an hour or two what to do and leave me with a big bunch of shoes to work on for the next day. During one month, I probably made over a hundred pairs for him. I got to practice and learn almost all the mistakes and how to fix them... I went on the markets with him and became a good moccasin maker.

When I decided it was time for me to take off, I had the skill and the patterns but not enough money to get started to buy any leather so I made a crowd-funding to gather some orders upfront to buy my first batch of skins. The problem was that I was used to custom-fit the moccasins straight on the people's feet.

And for the crowdfunding, I was asked to make them from measurements. This was tricky! On 20 pairs, only 2 or 3 did not fit well, it was a satisfying rate of good fittings and I had super positive feedbacks but I was not satisfied with this way of working. What I liked more than everything was to see the smile and the spontaneous dance of my customers when they were putting their new moccasins on. When I was sending them, I was not able to see that... I was just stressed to mess-up and to send a pair that will never be used... A year later, after more practice on my own customers on local markets, I thought: "why not making tutorials, if people make them on their feet, I would be released from that stress of fitting them at distance? So I started giving workshops and writing these tutorials that are now available on my Etsy shop (www.etsy.com/shop/earthingmoccasins).

Since then I shared my skills in live workshops as I travelled and online. I also started designing my own boot patterns that you can see on our Pinterest or Instagram page (@earthingmoccasins).



To finish, I would like to acknowledge my dear husband, Joa, who started making moccasins with me since 2018. Without him, I would have not been able to give you access to all this knowledge as he has created our website (www.earthingmoccasins.com), was editing most of the video tutorials and is actively working behind the scene to keep up with your orders, questions and much more.

I would also like to mention Nadege (third person on the right in the top picture), our dear colleague since 2019, who takes care of shipping leather and tool kits (available on etsy) from France for us. This way, anyone can receive their full starter kit on their doorstep and get started with everything at hand no matter where Joa and I are travelling.

I hope that you will make good use of the information that I share and of your handmade moccasins.

“For the Lord gave you shoes to walk in his ways.”





For now, there are 6 different style of moccasins available on my Esty shop (The SUN, the MOON, the HEART and the LEAF and the BOOTS and BABY size) but I am working on other boot patterns as well as another one that you can easily make yourself in case your feet have too weird shapes to fit any others ;)

Baby and kids moccasins are now available...



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