

IDEAS AND HINTS FOR MAKING A REGENCY GOWN

Design Considerations

1. **Design** The overall look of what makes your clothing or costume reflect period fashion.
2. **Fit** The key to true period fashion is how garments fit the body.
3. **Pattern, Tools & Notions** The supplies to create your design.
4. **Fabric & Trim** The physical components of your design.
5. **Construction** How to put it all together

Taken from Jennifer Rosbrugh's website

Patterns and Helpful Websites:

1. Spencersmercantile.com: Canadian Spencer Jacket, Empire gown and Drop Front Dress
2. Hungarican.blogspot.ca/2010/04/benefits-of-bib-front-and-happy-friday.html
Bib Front dress – has all the directions and what to watch for when making the dress
Blog explains how to get rid of that maturity look!
The dress pattern is a download which will need to be printed at Kinko's (Staples?)
3. Simplicity Pattern **4055, 8399** are the best the others look like a costume for Halloween.

Historicalsewing.com/regency-fitting-tips - this is Jennifer Rosbrugh's site and she is fabulous. She has workshops, books etc. Lots of tips.

Regencydances.org/costume3.php A site called *Purchasing your Costume*. This site has a list of sites to go to for gloves, fabric, accessories, shoes etc. (some don't work – most do)

Purchase costumes on sites like: www.etsy.com/shop/MattiOnline or just go on etsy and type in the search box Regency and several options will come up. Read the reviews before ordering a dress!

Oregon Regency Society: good reference page: orsmain.blogspot.ca/p/period-links-and-resources.html

Fabric Stores:

Fabric Land: 4 locations

Apni Hatti #14 - 5700 Falsbridge Drive NE, Calgary 403-273-6905 Not open on Tuesdays. Sheers for \$5.00 a yard (45" w), striped satin \$2.00 yd (45" w) and crepe \$5.00 yd – 100 colours.

Fabric Depot: #5 – 3500 27th St. NE, Calgary info@fabricdepot.ca lots of stock of fabric and accessories – buttons – ribbons – trims you didn't think you could buy in Calgary!

Fabric Choices for Regency Gowns

First look for a fabric that saves quality – it might not cost a lot but it should look like it does.

Pick a colour that flatters your complexion.

Cottons are great but look for ones that don't have a shine to them. If you are choosing a pattern pick one that is rather sparse. There were some overall patterns but these would be more suitable for a morning dress than the afternoon dress you are looking for. Strips are fabulous and look good on most people. Small-dotted (like a swiss dot), lawn or subtle plaid cottons; for winter linen or light weight wools work well.

Silk – watch for it to go on sale; don't purchase ones like Shantung or Dupioni as they have slubs and will not give the look you want.

AVOID – heavy fabrics except for cloaks, spencer jackets or pelisse; shiny fabrics except silk; large floral prints, nylon blends, artificial colours.

Trims: use these to dress up your costume and make it your own. Add lace, embroidery, beading or even tassels or fringes.

Buttons: use imitation glass, shell or metal as long as they are period appropriate. Mother of pearl or covered buttons also work. Pick buttons with a full back piece with shank. Also, use hooks and eyes for closures – do not use zippers!

Sheers: look in the home decorating departments for curtain material that will work – find one with a minimum of 'whitework' embroidery to use as the bottom of your dress.

HINT: always pre-treat your fabric by washing it before construction.

Petticoats: these make your dress hang correctly. Regency ladies would have worn a chemise then the light corset, a petticoat and then the dress.

Corsets or stays – these dresses are designed so the bosom is pushed up! A corset would be best but as most of us don't have one maybe lift those bra straps up.

Dress designs –hundreds – may be thousands of pictures on Pinterest – you have to sign up to look at these designs so may be use a synonym rather than your real name – you do have to give a real email though. One of my sites is All Things Jane.

Jane Austen to Cassandra May 5, 1801

Wednesday.— Mrs. Mussell has got my gown, and I will endeavour to explain what her intentions are. It is to be a round gown, with a jacket and a frock front, like Cath. Bigg's, to open at the side. The jacket is all in one with the body, and comes as far as the pocket-holes — about half a quarter of a yard deep, I suppose, all the way round, cut off straight at the corners with a broad hem. No

fulness appears either in the body or the flap; the back is quite plain in this form , and the sides equally so. The front is sloped round to the bosom and drawn in, and there is to be a frill of the same to put on occasionally when all one's handkerchiefs are dirty — which frill must fall back. She is to put two breadths and a-half in the tail, and no gores — gores not being so much worn as they were. There is nothing new in the sleeves: they are to be plain, with a fulness of the same falling down and gathered up underneath, just like some of Martha's, or perhaps a little longer. Low in the back behind, and a belt of the same. I can think of nothing more, though I am afraid of not being particular enough.

JASNA Calgary, March 2015