

Wren ★ Feathers

Kitsune Costume

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In September-early October I often get requests for Halloween costumes. Once in a while I also get requests for anime/cosplay costumes, and this year the two are intersecting in this kitsune!

Although any Japanese clothing is appropriate, her outfit is based on those worn by Shinto temple assistants, although the sleeves should be wider and bordered with a red running stitch. You will find this red skirt/white top combo very frequently in anime characters, often with a broom as a prop. Sometimes, for cosplay/anime the skirt is shortened, although this is NOT traditional.

What is a kitsune?

(written with this kanji: 狐 or sometimes just in hiragana as きつね)



Literally translated the word just means “fox” in Japanese, but the fox has a major role in Japanese legend, religion, literature, art...even food! There’s a delicious dish called “kitsune udon” which is chewy wheat flour noodles in a sweet soy sauce broth with fried tofu on top. Stylized statues of kitsune, called Inari, are found outside many temples, and this stylized form is similar to masks used in traditional Japanese theater. In plays and folk tales, similar to the role of coyote in southwest Native American legend, kitsune may be portrayed as a trickster and shape-shifter, often into the shape of a beautiful woman.

In the Shinto religion, foxes are the kami called Inari (稲荷大神) (kanji =Inari Okami). Inari was historically the kami of rice and fertility, in modern times that's been expanded to include business in general and many companies in Japan make some sort of token devotion to Inari.

Kami are a little hard to explain; I've seen the word translated most often as "gods" but this is really incorrect. They are more like spirits/natural forces. If you want more info there's an excellent summary here:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/shinto/beliefs/kami_1.shtml

I spent literally months on my own kitsune costume this year, and the most challenging part to make myself was the mask. Lining the kimono was also not a lot of fun. I REALLY wanted a traditional Japanese mask, but worried that ordering from overseas it might not arrive for Halloween. After a lot of failures with paper printables, papier maché, etc. I eventually turned to felt. There are dozens of patterns for paper/felt fox masks free online, but what I didn't like about them was that once you put the elastic on, the jagged face fur bits wrap around your head in an unrealistic way. I then saw a few cardboard and leather masks that had the fur sticking out better, and solved my problem as those masks did, by using a base. So the base ties around the head, leaving the upper layer free to stick out. Obviously, my human-size felt version gets trickier to make as the scale gets smaller, and also doesn't look like the stylized Japanese versions. For the doll version, I offer both "traditional-looking-Japanese-mask" as well as a felt version that looks more like a fox.

Long time blog followers may have made a kimono or other Japanese clothing for their dolls, and if that's you, the only thing you'll need to make is a mask! If you're wondering, yes, this is appropriate for a boy or girl!

This is a list of some clothing that would be appropriate to make your doll a kitsune:

<https://jenwrenne.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/free-pattern-for-february-kimono-geta-obi.pdf>

<https://jenwrenne.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/geta-and-sandal-update-for-ag-dolls.pdf>

<https://jenwrenne.wordpress.com/2013/02/03/hinamatsuri/>

<https://jenwrenne.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/hinamatsuri-crafts.pdf>

<https://jenwrenne.wordpress.com/2012/08/05/doll-hakama-pattern/>

<https://jenwrenne.files.wordpress.com/2012/08/hakama.pdf>

<https://jenwrenne.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/asian-jacket.pdf>

<https://jenwrenne.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/asian-vest-final.pdf>

<https://jenwrenne.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/ldij-6-yukata-and-pleated-skirt.pdf>

<https://jenwrenne.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/ldij-7-new-year.pdf>

<https://jenwrenne.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/ten-ping-kimono.pdf>

<https://jenwrenne.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/ldij-4-hippari-monpe.pdf>

<https://jenwrenne.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/ldij-3-aikido.pdf>

<https://jenwrenne.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/ldij-2-karate1.pdf>

If you'd prefer a fox, rather than a kitsune, combine this mask
with the animal costume here:

<https://jenwrenne.files.wordpress.com/2013/10/halloween-animal.pdf>

These pictures show how I made the human-size version. Two layers of felt are used for the white under-mask and ear/face part. The muzzle is a single layer with interfacing. Whether to use two layers for 18" doll size is up to you and depends on how thick your felt is. You only need one layer for the smallest size.





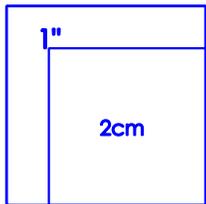
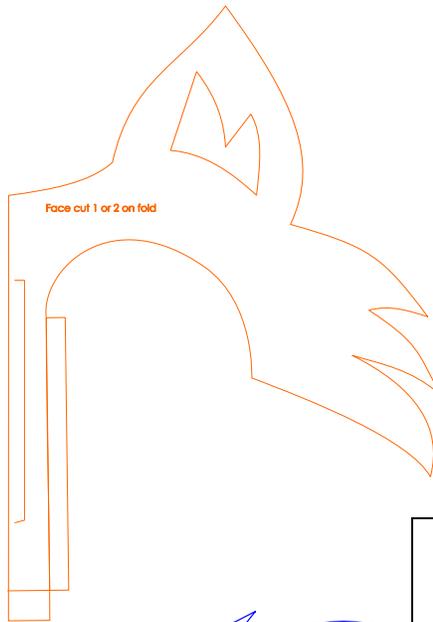
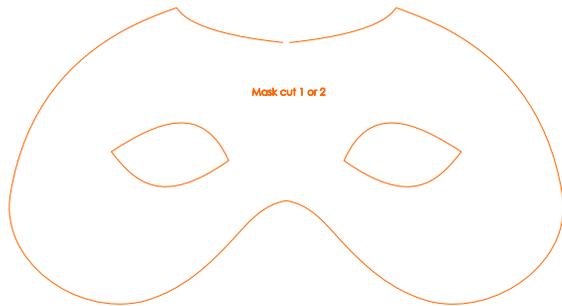
Fast, cute, easy version

I worked so hard on the 3-D face part, because a flat mask doesn't fit as well over a human nose, especially if the bridge of your nose is really high. After struggling with hand-sewing a tiny muzzle and getting exasperated, I came up with this version, and guess what? For dolls, I like it better! Most of my dolls have a fairly flat nose, so it fits them comfortably and has a look that's a little cuter.

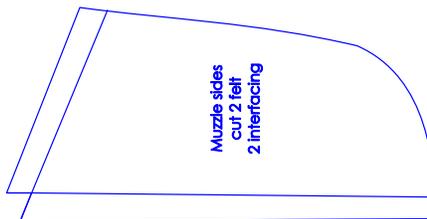
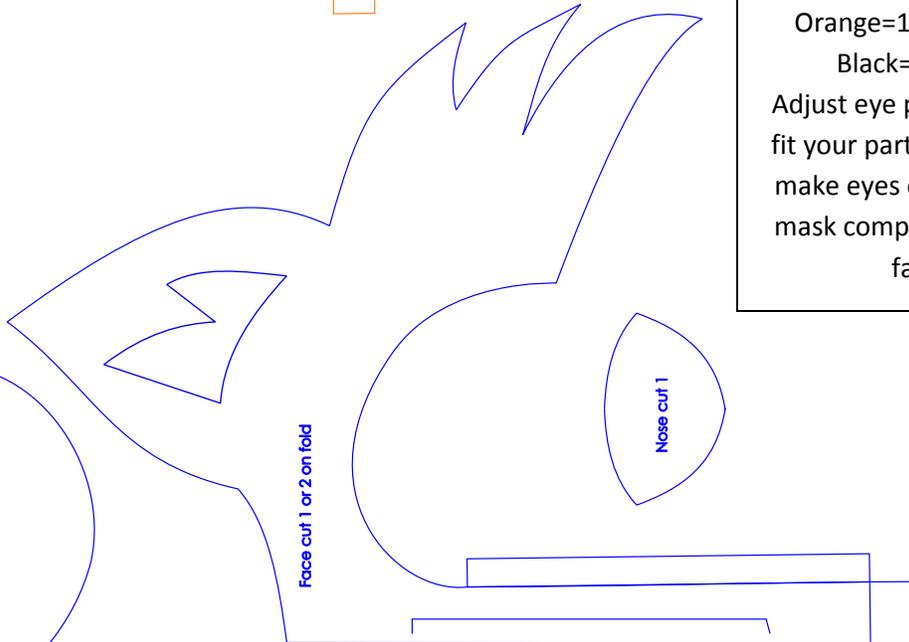
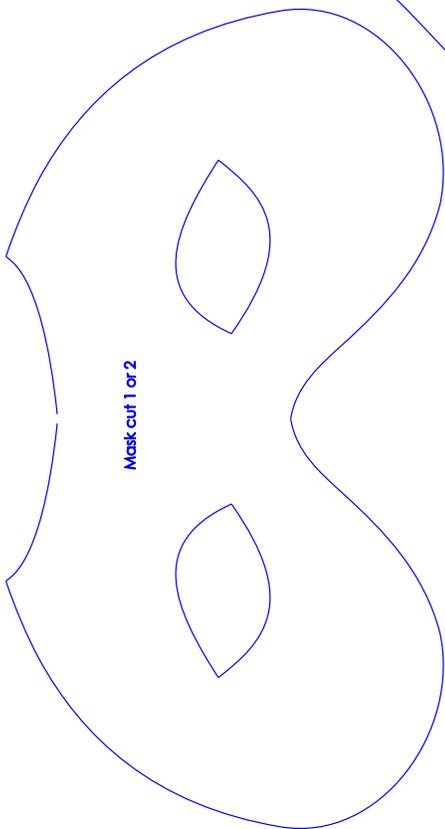
The best part is you can make it in about 15-20 minutes! It would also be an easy project to do with a child.

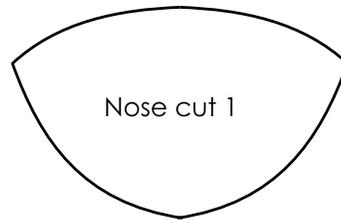
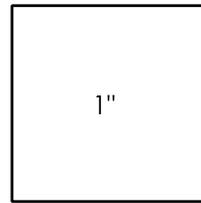
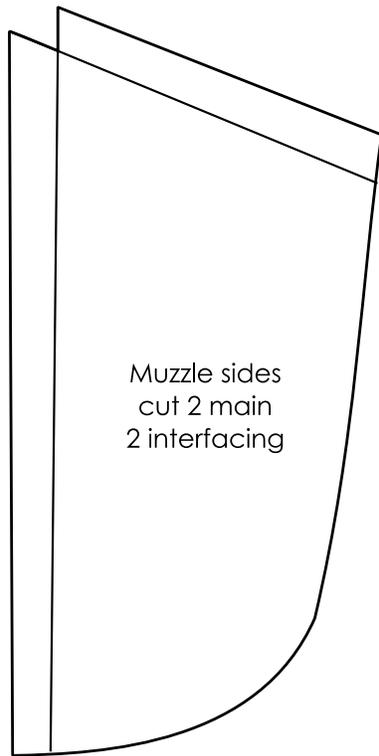
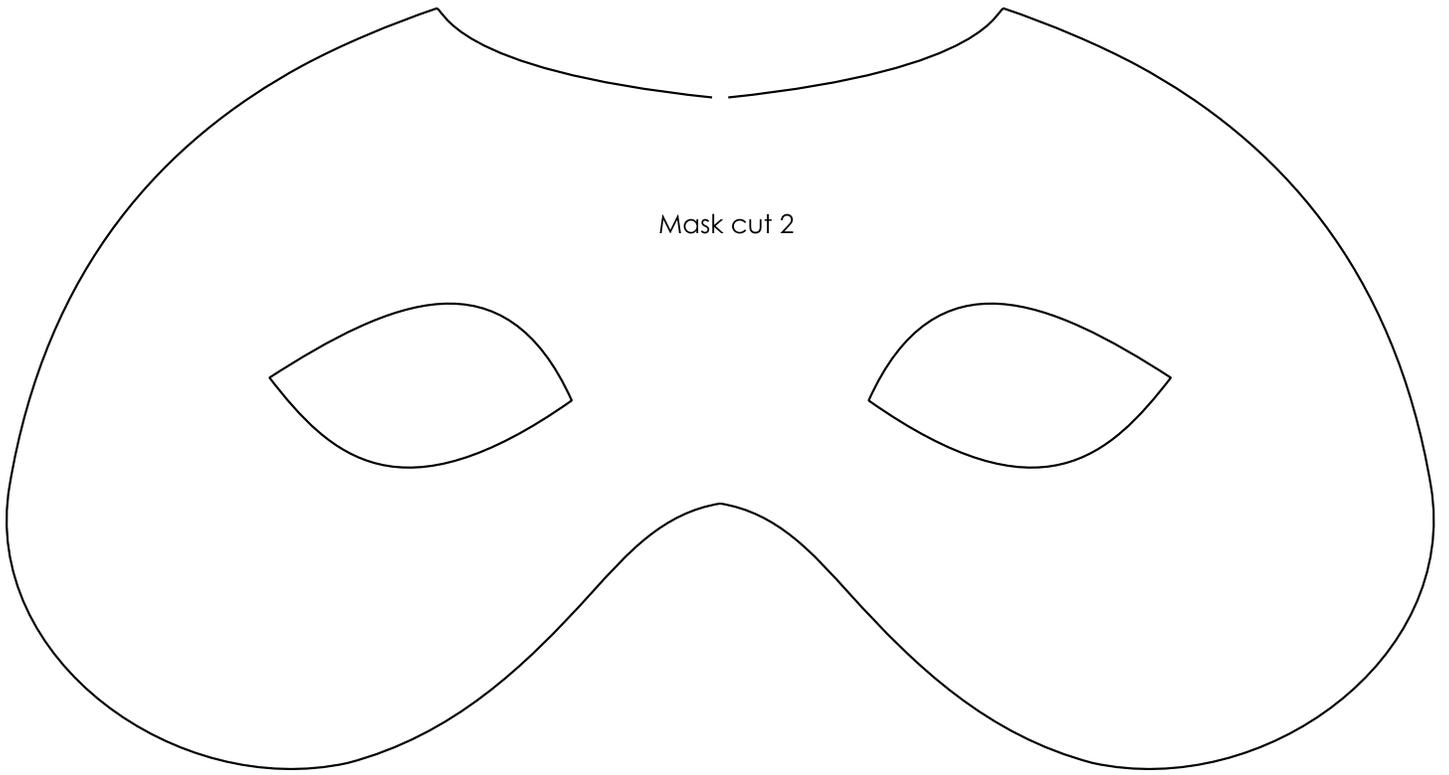


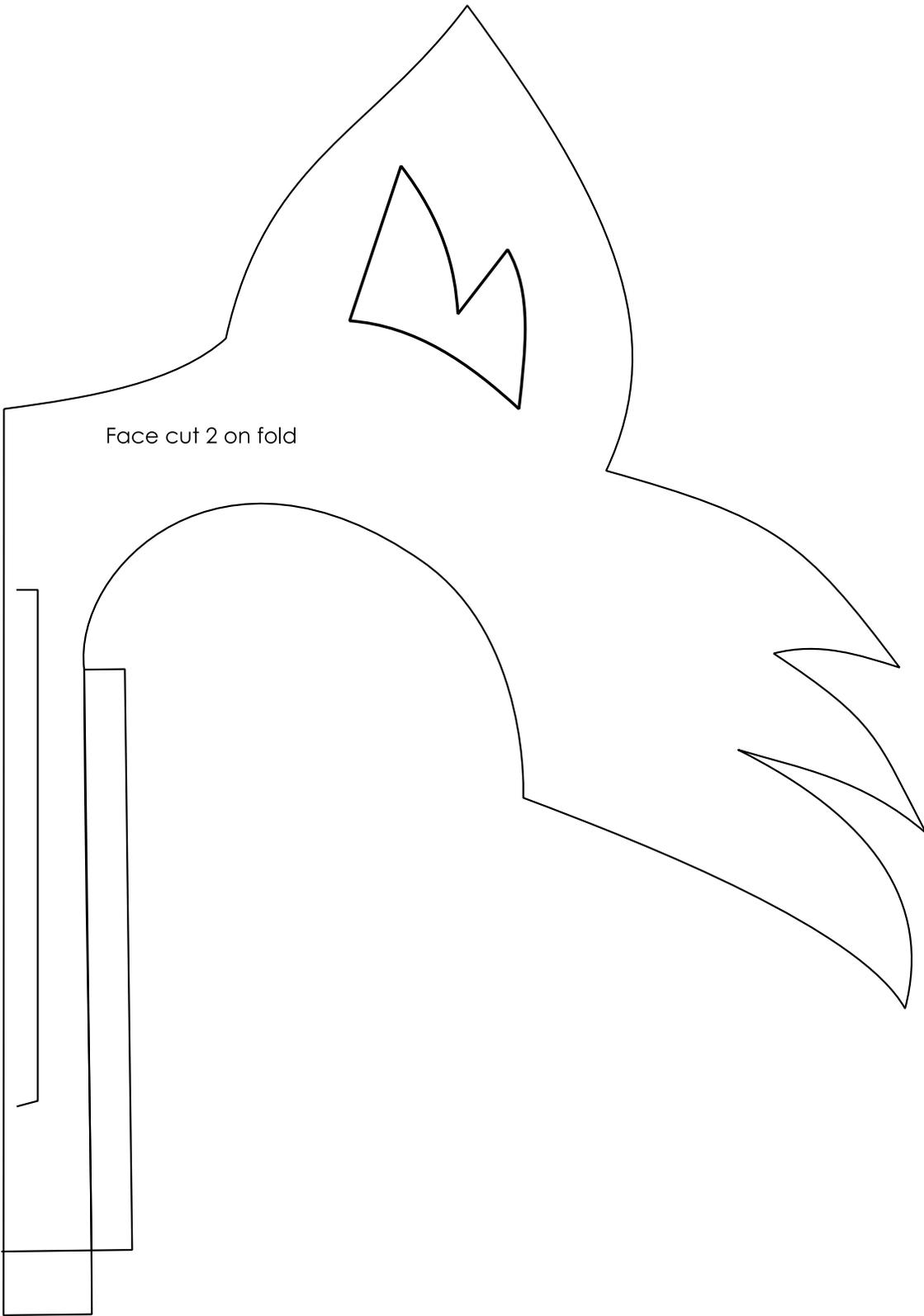
Trim center of muzzle piece to fit under-mask. You may need to trim nose a little smaller too. Sew or glue everything together and sew on ribbon/elastic.



Blue=18" dolls
Orange=12-14" dolls
Black=human
Adjust eye placement to fit your particular doll or make eyes out of felt so mask completely covers face







Face cut 2 on fold

These are a printable version of something that looks more like traditional Japanese masks. Print on photo paper or cardstock and choose the size that fits your doll best.

