

How to Cross-Stitch Your KONGRA Pattern

A friendly, step-by-step guide — no experience needed.

Print this at 100% (actual size) and keep it beside you as you work.

What you'll need

- Your printed KONGRA pattern (print the PDF at 100%, actual size).
- Aida cloth in the count shown on your pattern (14-count is common and beginner-friendly).
- Embroidery floss in the DMC colors listed on your pattern's color page.
- A tapestry needle, size 24 or 26 (it has a blunt tip and a large eye).
- Small, sharp scissors.
- An embroidery hoop to hold the fabric taut (optional, but it helps).
- Good lighting — and a magnifier if the small squares are hard to see.

Step by step

1. Get your pattern and floss ready.

Print your pattern PDF at 100% so the chart and the finished size come out accurate. On the color page, each color is paired with a symbol and a DMC number — take that list with you to buy floss, or use it to match floss you already have.

2. Find the middle.

Fold your Aida cloth in half, then in half again, and pinch the center. The center of the chart is marked too. Starting from the middle keeps your finished design nicely centered on the fabric.

3. Thread your needle.

Cut a length of floss about 18 inches (roughly arm's length). Floss is 6 thin strands twisted together — gently separate out 2 strands and thread those. Do not tie a knot in the end; we'll secure it as we stitch.

4. Read the chart.

Each square on the chart is one stitch. The symbol inside the square tells you which color to use — match it to your color list. The darker lines every 10 squares are just there to help you count your place.

5. Make your first stitch (an X).

Bring the needle up from the back at the bottom-left corner of a square, and down at the top-right corner — that makes one diagonal. Then come up at the bottom-right and down at the top-left to cross it into an X. Keep the top diagonal facing the same direction on every stitch for a neat, even look.

6. Work one color at a time.

Stitch all of one color in an area before moving on. To start a new thread, hold the tail behind the fabric and stitch over it to lock it down. To finish, run the needle under 3 or 4 finished stitches on the back. No knots — they make bumps.

7. Add the outlines last.

If your pattern has backstitch (thin solid lines for details like whiskers or edges), do those after the X's are finished. Backstitch is a single straight stitch from hole to hole along the line — it adds crisp detail on top.

8. Finish and press.

When the chart is filled in, trim any loose ends on the back. Lay the piece face-down on a towel and press gently with a warm iron. Now frame it, sew it into a project, or give it as a gift!

Helpful tips

- Stitch in good light, and take breaks to rest your eyes.
- A hoop keeps the fabric tight and your stitches even.
- Lightly cross off finished rows on your printed chart so you never lose your place.
- Made a mistake? Gently un-stitch with the needle rather than cutting.
- There's no rush — cross-stitch is meant to be relaxing.