

# **\*The Ultimate Bandana\***

*By: RollingHitch*

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It feels sort of presumptuous to write an article about bandanas. I just did a web search and found thousands of hits about bandanas. Most are what you would expect. "101 uses for a bandana", "57 uses...", "41 ways to use..." etc. and blah, blah, blah.

Just like many of you, I've carried a bandana for years. Backpacking, hunting, fishing, camping, boating and always to the office. I spent 30 days in the Pecos Wilderness of New Mexico on an Outward Bound trip. Oddly enough, I valued my bandana the most for wiping my tail end. (They wouldn't allow us to carry TP) Bandanas are universally recognized as handy things to have. They are versatile, aren't they?

But before I begin I'd like to share a story to keep this in context.

I knew a guy once who bought a canoe. It was a square stern canoe and he permanently mounted an outboard motor complete with external gas tank. It had a trolling motor mounted on the front. Rod holders, two bass boat swivel seats, running lights, live well with battery and he even made a cedar planked deck that went from stem to stern. He had a trailer made to carry his canoe from place to place. It was one tricked out canoe! The only problem was that it would tip if you sneezed. The purpose of the canoe was totally defeated by gadgetry. (It sort of hurts deep inside to say that anything could be tricked out too much.) But being the inventive type and never leaving well enough alone, I started experimenting with the bandana a long time ago and I'd like to share a simple alteration. It is decidedly simple, effective, and useful and the bandana is still a bandana when you get finished.

The first idea came to me when I was walking on an island beach wearing nothing but shorts, a hat and a bandana. I was carrying a Swiss Army knife in the little mesh pocket of my shorts. It was uncomfortable. I thought how nice it would be to have a pocket elsewhere. See below...

The second idea came to me when I was trying to keep the sun off my neck while out on a charter boat. Everyone knows about the "cap over the bandana" trick. Laurence of Arabia style, but I found myself adjusting it constantly and I couldn't get full neck and shoulder coverage. See below...

The next idea came to me in various forms and sort of landed on the seam of my bandana. Picking up spent 45 ACP brass at the range, picking wild black berries, disassembling a pair of binoculars while sitting in a climbing deer stand and trying not to loose those three little screws that have the word "micro" in their name. See below...

If you'd like to supercharge your bandana like mine, here's all you have to do. You need:

-Two matching bandanas (They cost \$1.99 or less around here.)

-a pair of scissors

-some way to sew (If you don't sew, it is a simple process to draw out the dimensions and take it to a seamstress. See diagram below)



The back of the bandana looks normal from one side.



The other side has an elongated pocket in one corner and a triangle shaped pocket in the opposite corner. As you can see, the modifications are hard to detect.



It still rides handily in your back pocket. Just like a normal bandana.

If you are like me and never want to be without a pocket knife, the long pocket makes a discrete place to carry when your clothing is at a minimum. Even in the camp shower. A mini-mag light fits fine, too.



There's a pocket knife in there



Tuck the bandana in the waistline of your britches and you have a practical pocket for collections of all kinds of stuff. It's one of those "use your imagination" things.



The large triangle pocket makes it easy to get shade on your skull, even if you don't have a hat. I find it allows for more neck and shoulder coverage. It does look stupid unless you flip a cap over it, though. Hey, when you need some relief, who cares what you look like!





By putting your head in the triangle and tying the two sides under your chin you get a pretty good balaclava effect or it keeps blowing sand out of your ears.

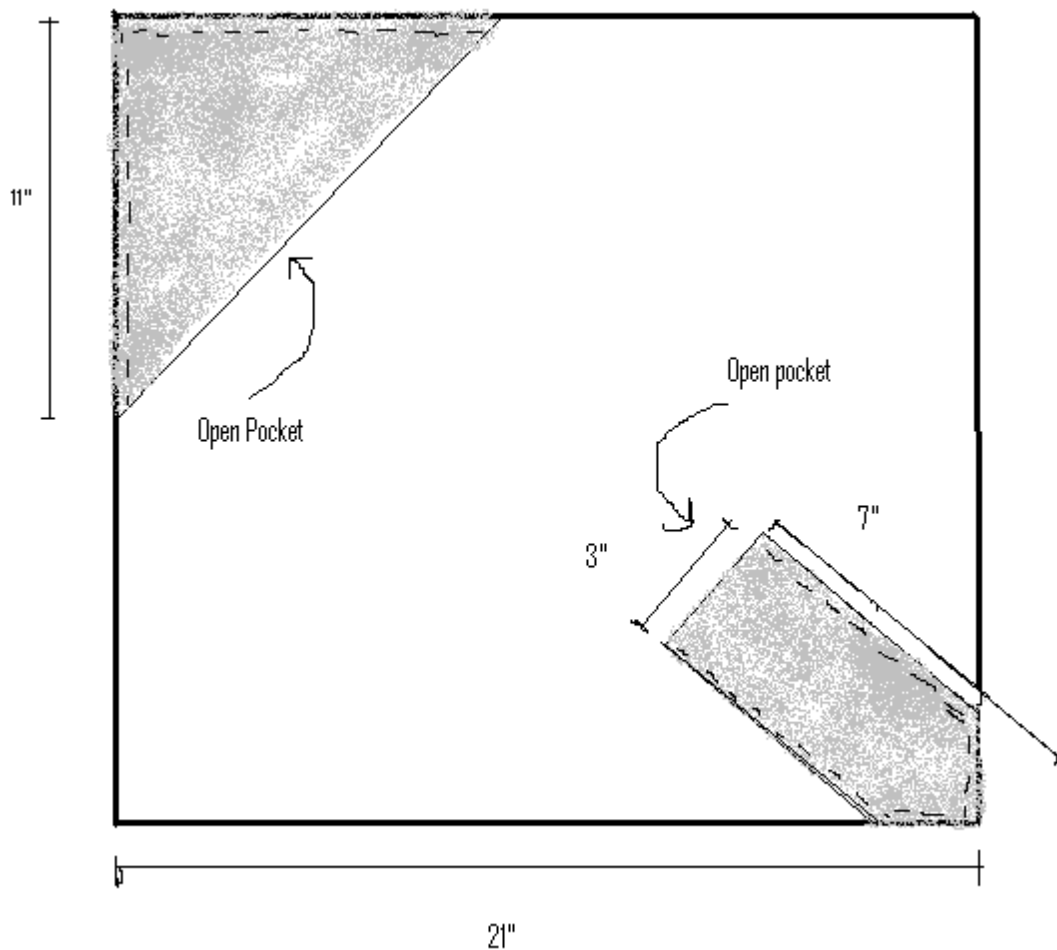
And lastly, somewhere in my diabolical mind, I wanted to make it useful for self preservation. Insert weighted object of your choice and you have one expedient weapon. Nine pennies weighs in a just about an ounce, so for 18 cents you could put a wallop on somebody's noggin.



I ordered James Keating's "Fighting Bandana" video series to see if I could pick up any new ideas. If you are into Martial Arts, it's an excellent set of instructional tapes. He makes the wet

towel in the locker room look like child's play. (I suppose it is.) By tying a large coin in the corner of a bandana, you have a devastating improvised weapon. He uses it in a flicking motion. (Like the wet towel.)

Here's a diagram of the dimensions that suite me best. You can make the triangle smaller if you have a very small head. You can also take this to a seamstress and get a few made easily.



So in addition to the 101, 57, 41, or however many uses there really are for a bandana, you can do this simple modification and truly have a cool do-rag. For the true budget minded I have found that cotton muslin material makes the best home-made bandana. It cost about \$1.99 a yard. Just hem it up to a 21 inch square. A jumbo size of 34 inches on each side is about max. Anything bigger and you have made something other than a bandana.

Please resist the temptation to add more junk to a perfectly good bandana. I've tried buttons, snaps, zippers, brass rings, plastic hooks, grommets and various other things. My efforts all turned out to be way overkill on gadgetry. (Like the canoe above.) This design seems to be a happy blend of practicality and simplicity. I use it all the time.

Since we are all about completeness here, I've distilled all the lists into a pretty thorough one. Some of them aren't bad ideas, many are obvious. I'm sure there are many more.

\*To blow your nose\*as a head cover\*western style for dust and grit\*wet, for escape from a smoky fire\*headband\*sweat rag\*under cap for sun protection (aka Foreign Legion sun shade\*tourniquet\*sling\*mark a trail\*signal flag\*diaper\*washcloth\*dish rag\*napkin\*eye patch\*bind a splint\*ice pack\*pre-water filter\*pot holder\*cover food to keep bugs away\*coffee filter\*emergency toilet paper\*sink drain plug\*hand wrap for jar and bottle opening\*hobo lunch box\*hang flashlight from tent ceiling\*neckerchief\*tie up a pony tail\*shine shoes\*clean glasses and other lens\*wrap a gift\*canine bandana\*table cloth\*feminine hygiene\*ear muffs\*wrap up tiny or rattling pieces and parts\*1<sup>st</sup> aid bandage\*mark luggage at airport\*blindfold for sleeping or surprises\*temporary gas cap\*wrap breakables in backpack or luggage\*flag for lumber or building materials that are too long for trailer or truck\*pillow cover\*all terrain sitting cloth\*waving down a taxi\*wipe away a tear\*distract a charging animal\*disguise\*whisk away pestering insects\*muffle a sneeze\*pad shoulders for carrying a load\*pad a tumpline\*self defense with a rock in it\*bind a stone and toss a line over a limb\*place mat\*hot/cold compress\*scarf/ascot\*as a gag to shut someone up\*bikini top/bra\*watch fob\*belt\*bookmark\*bib\*salad spinner>window shade\*whip\*garrote\*handcuffs\*parachute for toy soldier\*dog mussel\*chafe protector\*show your gang colors\*flag football\*lamp shade\*alarm clock muffler\*to show someone what paisley is\*patch material for muzzleloaders\*drink cozy\*sunglasses retainer\*  
OK! OK! That's enough!

We could all think of more especially when you consider having more than one. (When I travel, I carry several.) The topic makes a decent campfire discussion.

Let's just say that this should be the last word on 441 some odd square inches cotton. But then, that would be presumptuous of me, wouldn't it? And speaking of the last word, I ask my wife if she could think of any more uses for a bandana. To quote her, "It's basically a rag but decorated." (Such a sense of humor)

*Rolling Hitch*

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