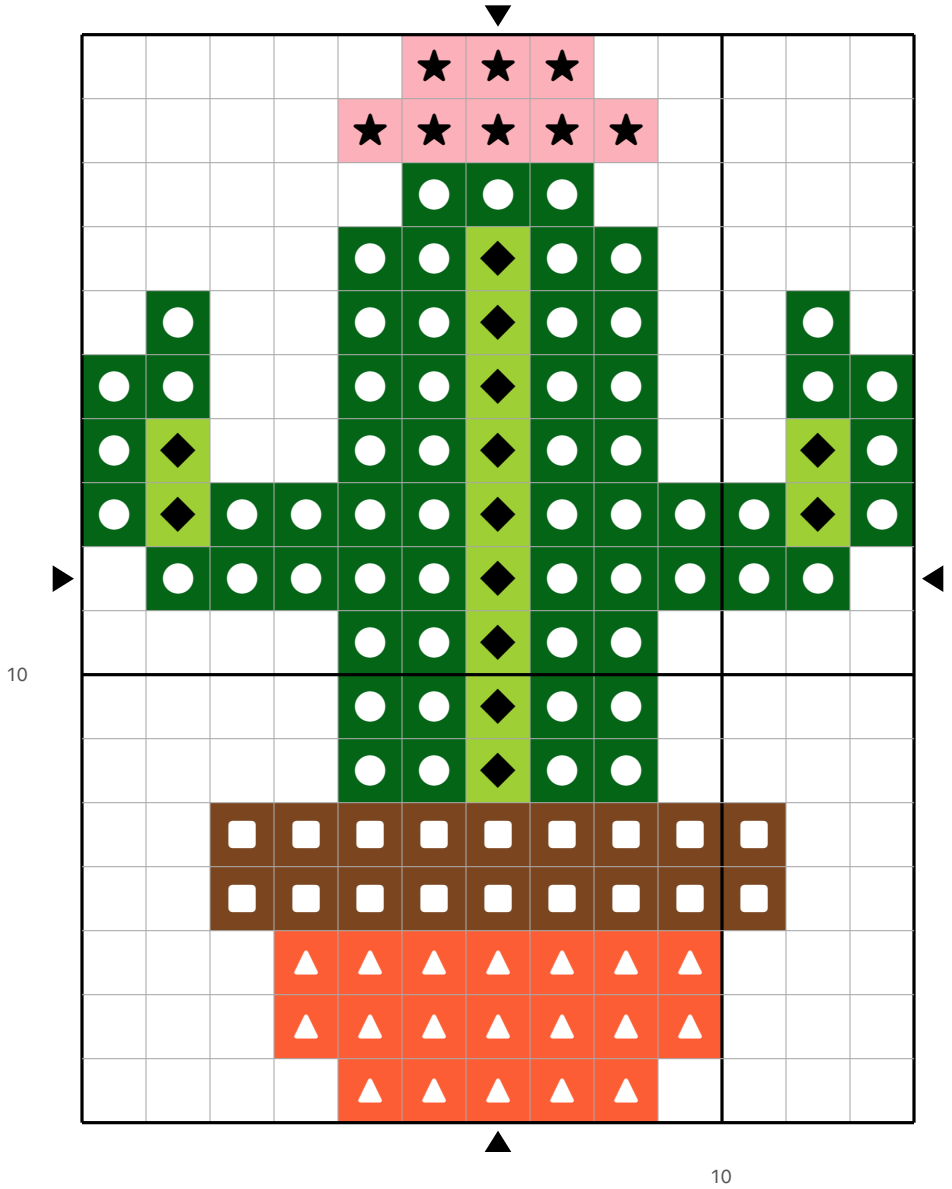
Little Cactus

Designed by StitchKeep · Beginner · 13 × 17 stitches · ≈ 0.9 × 1.2 in on 14-count



Thread Key (DMC, 2 strands, full cross stitch)

●	DMC 699 Green	59 stitches · 1 skein
▲	DMC 608 Burnt Orange Bright	19 stitches · 1 skein
■	DMC 433 Brown Medium	18 stitches · 1 skein
◆	DMC 704 Chartreuse Bright	13 stitches · 1 skein
★	DMC 776 Pink Medium	8 stitches · 1 skein

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How to Stitch Little Cactus

13 × 17 stitches · 117 stitches in 5 colors · finished design about 0.9 × 1.2 in on 14-count

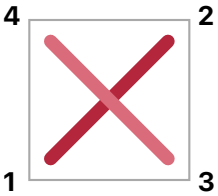
What you need

- Fabric: 14ct Aida, white. Cut a piece 7 × 7.5 in (18 × 19 cm). That's the design plus 3 in (7.5 cm) on every side for hooping and framing.
- Thread: the 5 DMC stranded cottons in the thread key, 5 skeins in all. Stitch with 2 strands.
- Needle and tools: a size 24 tapestry needle (blunt tip, large eye), small sharp scissors, and a water-soluble pen for marking the center.
- Hoop: a 4 in (10 cm) embroidery hoop, or a small frame.

Before you start

- Find the center of the fabric: fold it in half one way, then the other, and mark where the folds cross.
- Find the center of the chart: follow the four arrows around the grid to where they meet, at column 7, row 9. Start your first stitch there, so the design ends up centered.
- Tape or overcast the edges so they don't fray, then hoop the fabric with the center in the middle and pull it gently taut, keeping the weave straight.
- Cut a length of thread about 18 in (45 cm) long. Pull out the strands one at a time, then put 2 back together. Separated strands lie flatter and cover better.

How to make a cross stitch



Bring the needle up at 1 and go down at 2 to make a half stitch. Come up at 3 and go down at 4 to cross it. Each square on the chart is one complete cross over one square of the fabric.
For a row of the same color, work all the half stitches (1 to 2) along the row first, then come back crossing them (3 to 4). Keep every top stitch slanting the same way: it's what makes the finished piece look even.

Starting and ending a thread

- Don't use knots: they show through and make lumps when the piece is framed.
- Loop start (for 2 strands): use 1 strand twice as long, fold it in half and thread the two ends. Come up for your first half stitch, go down, and pass the needle through the loop on the back to anchor it.
- Or leave a 1 in (2.5 cm) tail on the back and hold it so your first few stitches cover it.
- To finish, run the needle under 4 or 5 stitches on the back and trim close. Don't carry a thread more than ¾ in (2 cm) across the back; end it and start again.

Reading the chart

- Each square is one cross stitch. Its symbol and color match a thread in the thread key; empty squares stay unstitched.
- Bold lines mark every 10 stitches, and the numbers along the edges count them, so you can find your place quickly.
- Work one color at a time in an area, counting squares from stitches you've already made. Mark finished stitches on a printed copy, or with Mark Stitches in the StitchKeep app.

Finishing

- Check the back for loose tails and trim them.
- If it has marks or creases, wash it gently in lukewarm water with mild soap and roll it in a towel (don't wring it). Press it face-down on a thick towel so the stitches keep their texture.
- Frame it, or finish it in the hoop: trim the fabric 1 in (2.5 cm) outside the hoop and gather or glue the edge on the back.

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