A convertible dress is a perfect wardrobe staple for summer travel. Not only does it save space in your carry-on bag, but the jersey fabric doesn’t wrinkle and is easy to care for. Wear the extra-long straps dozens of ways to always have a new look.

1 DRESS, 5 WAYS

{ by Jory Smith-Snyder }
Supplies
- 3 yards of 60”-wide jersey knit fabric (See “Sources.”)
- 1 package of ¼”-wide elastic
- All-purpose thread
- Size 75/11 ballpoint or stretch needle
- Butcher paper or other pattern tracing cloth
- French curve
- ½”-wide fusible web tape
- Hand sewing needle

Draft
Take your waist measurement; record. Determine the desired skirt length up to 26”; record. (The featured dress has a 26”-long skirt.)

On a large flat work surface, spread out a piece of paper twice the recorded skirt length. Draw a line 2” from and parallel to the paper right side edge; label the line “Side Seam”. Label the line upper-edge point “X.” Divide the recorded waist measurement by 3.175, and then round up to the nearest ⅛” to determine the skirt radius. For example, if the measurement is 30”, the radius is 9½”.

Using the radius measurement, draw a line from X perpendicular to the side-seam line. Mark the line end point “Y.” Using the recorded length measurement, draw a line extending from Y. Mark the line end point “Z.” Label the Y/Z line “Side Seam.”

Make several marks denoting the radius length from point X to create a quarter-circle. Connect the marks using a French curve to the hemline. This is the waistline.

Mark the waistline and hemline midpoints. Connect the points, and then label the line “Center Front/Center Back” (CF/CB).

Mark the skirt hemline by drawing a second curve, denoting the length measurement from the first curve.

Add ¼” seam allowances to the side seams and lower edge (1).

Cut
Cut out the skirt pattern. From the jersey, cut two skirts, placing the CF/CB line parallel to the fabric selvages.

To determine the strap width, divide the waist measurement by two, and then divide the resulting number by two. Add 1½”; record. For example, the strap width for a 30” waist measurement is 8¼”. Cut two straps according to the width measurement x 90”.

To determine the elastic length, multiply the waist measurement by .75. For example, a 30” waist measurement requires a 22½”-long piece of elastic. Cut the elastic to the required length.

Construct
Use ¼” seam allowances unless otherwise noted.

Set the machine to a narrow zigzag stitch (.5mm width and 2.5mm length). Stitch the skirt side seams with right sides together.

Fold the skirt lower edge ¼” toward the wrong side; pin, and then topstitch close to the raw edge.

Double-fold the strap long edges ¼” toward the wrong side, and then topstitch close to the first fold.

Fold the strap short edges ½” toward the wrong side; press. Cut two fusible web pieces the according to the strap width. Fuse each short-edge fold, following the manufacturer’s instructions.

Beginning at one side seam, pin the elastic to the skirt wrong side along the front waistline, ending at the opposite side seam. Don’t stretch the elastic.

Pin the free remaining elastic along the back waistline, stretching it to gather the fabric. Overlap the elastic ends by ¼”; pin.

Add ¼” seam allowances to the side seams and lower edge (1).

Stitch the elastic to the skirt, making sure not to stretch the front. Stretch and pull the elastic as needed to fit it to the back waistline.

Fold the skirt waistline ½” toward the wrong side, concealing the elastic. Stitch the waistline ¼” from the fold to secure.

With the wrong sides facing up, position one strap end ½” beyond the skirt-front waistline. Align the strap right long edge with the skirt right side seam; pin (2). Stitch the strap end to the waistline, following the previous stitching. Repeat to attach the left strap, aligning it with the left side seam. (The strap long edges may overlap at the center front.) Tie and twist the dress straps around the body as desired to create a variety of different looks, referring to the photographs for inspiration.

SOURCE:
The Cloth Merchants provided the jersey fabric: (918) 664-4480, theclothmerchants.com.