how to make a dirndl skirt (gathered skirt)

Materials & Notes:
- How much fabric you need will of course depend on your size, but I think about 1 yard of 45" wide fabric should do it for most people. If your waist measurement is larger than 33 ¾ inches, then you will probably need to buy a little more fabric. I have also based this tutorial on assuming a max skirt length of about 19 inches. If you want it longer you’ll also need to get more fabric. And lastly, if you are a little obsessed with making things out of pillowcases, like me, then you could quite easily make this skirt out of a standard or king size sham, you would just need to do a bit of tweaking.
- 1 zipper (invisible or standard, whatever you feel comfortable with) about 8 inches long. (If you are using a standard zipper remember to check out my tutorial on how to centre a zipper)
- 2 Trouser hooks or 2 buttons

Steps:
1. Measure your waist, then add on ½ inch for ease (you want to be able to breath!) 1 inch for the closure & 1 ¼ inches for seam allowances. This is the length of your waistband
2. Cutting your fabric. Cut your fabric as below: This will give you 2 skirt pieces (36”x20”) and 1 waistband piece (36”x5”). Cut the waistband piece to be the length you just calculated above.

If you are using a pillowcase, then do the following instead:
   a. Cut open your pillowcase at the seams & open it flat, then cut it along the fold line (ie the line where the edge of the pillowcase used to be before you flattened it out) so that you now have 2 smaller rectangles. Unpick the hemmed edge & iron it flat. Note: your pillowcase will be a bit smaller than the fabric requirements, that’s ok, your skirt just won’t be as poofy, and your waistband won’t be quite as wide)
   b. Cut off 3 inches of the edge of each rectangle, and sew them together at the short end. This will be your waistband. Cut the strip to be length you calculated in step 1.
3. Take your two skirt pieces and place them right sides together. Sew one of the shorter sides together. Match up the remaining two sides & sew 6 inches down from the top of the skirt (that’s the space where the zipper will go):

4. Insert the zipper. If you are using a standard zipper and need some help, check out my tutorial on centered zippers.

5. Sew ½ inch from the edge along the top edge of the skirt using the biggest stitch on your machine. Don’t cut off the loose threads, you are going to need them to gather the skirt.
6. Now you will have two loose threads on each end of your line of sewing. Pull one of the threads on either end, keeping the other stationary, so that the fabric gathers up like so:

You want to gather the fabric up so that it is the same length as your waist + ½ inch
Note: you could gather the fabric before inserting the zipper if you find that easier, I just like to do it this way.

7. Match up the gathered edge with the waistband (with right sides together) so that the waistband is 5/8 of an inch past the zipper on one end and 1 5/8 inch past the zipper on the other side. And sew!

8. Now fold the edge of the waistband in 5/8 of an inch and iron.
Then fold the waist band in half, with right sides together so that the folded over edge is in line with the seam that joins the waistband to the skirt. Sew the edges of the waistband as below:

9. Clip the corners off the waistband, and turn it right side round. So that the raw edges of the skirt gathers are enclosed in the waistband.

10. Now you can either hand stitch the inside of the waistband to close it all up, or you can gutter stitch it in place.
11. Now add the closures. If you feel ok doing button holes, then make 2 button holes on the overlapping part of the waistband, and sew the buttons on the other waistband edge.

12. Hem the skirt! I made a really wide hem because I like wide hems, plus I'm short! But if you are trying to use as little fabric as possible you could just turn under a very small amount of fabric & topstitch.