

Gifted

by Deb Barnhill



Who doesn't love a nice felted tote? At last count I had five of them in circulation, and had made at least two dozen more for family and friends. I also love a nice gift bag, an environmentally-friendly alternative to holiday wrapping paper. Combining my two loves, could there possibly be anything better than the gift bag actually being the gift?

This one will be hard to give away, especially if you regard your felted totes as lovingly as I do. Swap the shades in the pattern, and you'll easily have sufficient yardage to complete a second one, without shelling out another dime.

GAUGE

15 sts/21 rows = 4" in stockinette stitch before felting

FINISHED MEASUREMENTS

Before felting:

Height: 13 inches

Width: 11.5 inches

Depth: 1.25 inches

After felting and blocking:

Height: 10 inches

Width: 7 inches

Depth: 3 inches

I blocked my bag on a box that was deeper than the original measurement, so the depth encompasses about a stripe-width of MC on each side of the strap. Depending on how you choose to block the bag, your finished measurements may vary.

MATERIALS

- [MC] Patons Classic Merino Wool [100% wool; 223 yd/204 m per 100g skein]; color: Peacock; 1 skein
- [CC1] Patons Classic Merino Wool [100% wool; 223 yd/204 m per 100g skein]; color: Leaf Green; 1 skein
- [CC2] Patons Classic Merino Wool [100% wool; 223 yd/204 m per 100g skein]; color: Old Gold; 1 skein
- 1 US #10.5/6.5mm circular needle, 32 to 40 inches in length
- 1 US #10.5/6.5mm circular needle, 20 inches in length, or a pair of straight needles
- Two buttons of your choice

PATTERN NOTES

Grafting instructions can be found [here](#).

ssksk: slip next 2 sts as if to knit, then knit them together tbl. Slip next st as if to knit, then knit it together, with the st just made, tbl. 2 sts decreased.

Double i-cord: k5, move yarn to front, slip remaining 4 sts from left needle to right needle. Turn. Repeat.

I chose to do a striped back and a solid front, but using the general shape of this bag, the options are limitless. Wider, thicker or no stripes at all, flashes of the strap color elsewhere on the bag, or a striped flap are all possibilities. Move the strap button by changing the position on the strap where you begin picking up stitches. Just be sure to [send me a photo](#) of your finished creation!

Patons Classic is the yarn that felts the most readily for me in my front-loading washer, but you can substitute any worsted weight felting-friendly wool. (Cascade 220 comes immediately to mind).

A self-stripping yarn would look terrific, as the structure would produce dramatic vertical stripes. Although I have yet to test this pattern with Noro Kureyon, I would estimate 4 skeins as a good amount to purchase. Any leftovers could be used to add a [felted flower](#) or other embellishment.

PATTERN

Strap

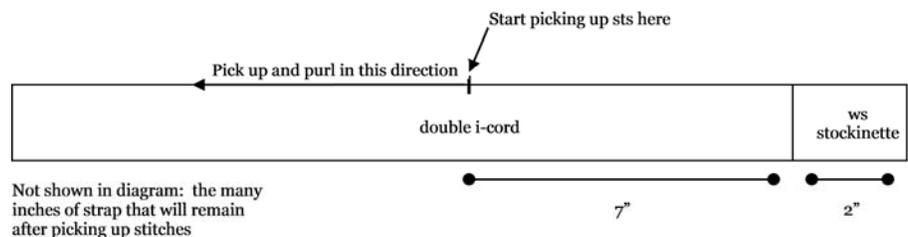
With CC2 and short circular or straights, cast on 9 sts. Work 2 inches stockinette, slipping the first st of each row purlwise.

Work in double i-cord until work from beginning measures 68 inches, ending with right side facing for next row.

Work 2 inches stockinette, slipping the first st of each row purlwise. Bind off and break yarn.

Back

Hold the long double i-cord with the ws of the stockinette flap facing up (see diagram). Measure 9 inches from the end of the cord to determine where to start picking up sts for the bag back.



With MC and long circular, pick up and purl 50 sts (one st in every row of i-cord) along strap edge, place marker, pick up and purl 110 sts in the same manner. Turn.



Vertical rows:

Right side: sl1, k48, ssksk, turn

Wrong side: sl1, p to end

Work a total of 60 vertical rows, starting and ending with MC and alternating between MC and CC every 4 rows.

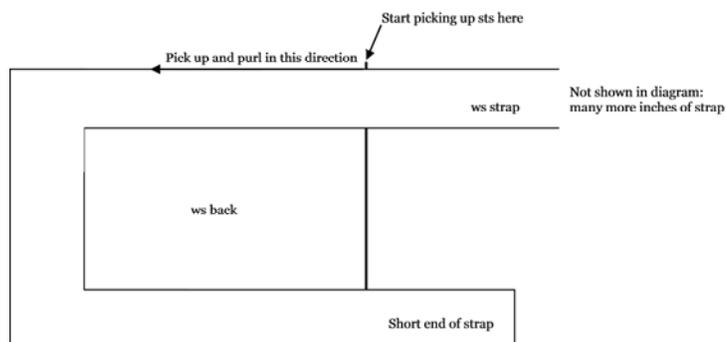
Do not break yarn when changing colors. Rather, prior to working the second pair of vertical rows for each color, loosely twist the resting yarn around the working yarn. This will bring the correct yarn into position when it is needed. When the final stripe of CC1 has been worked, do not break it! Twist it into the final MC stripe (as though you will be working another stripe) so it will be properly situated at the top edge. It will later be used to pick up the flap stitches.

You will have 50 sts on each side of the marker. Pull out a length of the long circular's cable at the point of the marker (effectively moving each group of 50 sts onto its own needle) and graft the back to the strap.

Front

Using diagram as a guide, with ws of bag facing, MC and long circular, pick up and purl 50 sts (one st in every row of i-cord) along strap edge, place marker, pick up and purl 110 sts in the same manner. Turn.

Work vertical rows as for back, omitting color changes. Graft as for back.



Flap

With ws facing, the waiting CC1 and short circular or straight needles, pick up and purl 44 sts along top edge. Work 6 inches stockinette, slipping the first st of each row purlwise.

Decrease rows:

Right side: sl1, k1, k2tog, k to last 4 sts, ssk, k2

Wrong side: sl1, p to end

Repeat decrease rows 7 times more. 28 sts on needle, right side facing.

Place buttonhole:

Right side: sl1, k1, k2tog, k8. Cast off 4 sts, k to last 4 sts, ssk, k2

Wrong side: sl1, p to buttonhole gap, cast on 4 sts over gap, p to end. 26 sts on needle

Repeat decrease rows three times more. 20 sts on needle, right side facing. Cast off loosely and break yarn.

FINISHING

Weave in ends. Felt by your usual favorite method. Block by inserting an appropriately sized box or book in the bag. When dry, sew button on front to correspond to buttonhole on flap. Hold layers of stockinette on strap ends together and sew other button through both thicknesses.

ABOUT THE DESIGNER



Deb Barnhill
chases toddlers and works as a pharmacist in Nova Scotia.

She promises to give her next felted tote as a gift. Or maybe the one after that.

