

Elisa's Nest Tote

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a free pattern from the purl bee!

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This pretty tote bag was designed by Elisa, an Italian knitter and blogger who saw the Climbing Trellis Lace Pattern here on the Purl Bee. She calls it her "No More Plastic Bag, Thank You!" It is a fast knit that takes only a few hours to complete.

Elisa's Nest Tote can be made from just about any cotton yarn (linen or hemp yarn work nicely, too). The stretchy lace stitch makes this bag practical and quite durable. We would choose this dainty and durable tote over a plastic bag any day!

FINISHED SIZE

Elisa's Nest Tote measures about 8 inches wide and 12 inches long when empty. Depending on the size of the yarn you use, the bag may be bigger or smaller. It will stretch when filled.

MATERIALS

one skein or approximately 175-200 yards cotton yarn
We used Rowan 4-ply Cotton in Tutti Frutti

one pair straight needles a few sizes larger than recommended for your yarn
We used US size 9 needles.

double pointed needles in the size recommended for your yarn
We used US size 3 needles.

crochet hook in the size recommended for your yarn
We used a 3.5mm hook.

tapestry needle

NOTES

k2tog decrease; knit two stitches together
pssso pass slipped stitch over
ssk decrease; slip, slip, knit
yo increase; yarn over

STEP ONE: KNITTING THE BAG

Cast on 41 stitches.

Rows 1 and 3: Purl.

Row 2: K1, *yo, k2tog, repeat from * to end of row.

Row 4: *Ssk, yo, repeat from * to last stitch, k1.

Repeat Rows 1 - 4 until fabric measures approximately 24 inches, or twice desired length of the finished bag.
Bind off loosely.

STEP TWO: JOIN SIDES TOGETHER

1. Fold the bag in half, right sides together so that the cast on and bind off edges form the top of the bag. You will join together the parallel long edges of the bag using a crochet hook.

2. Using a 1 yard length of the same yarn that you used to knit the bag, make a slip knot on the hook. Leave a 6 inch tail of yarn.

3. Insert your crochet hook under the loops of the first edge stitch on the front side, at the corner with the top edge of the bag. Then insert the hook through the first edge stitch on the back side.

4. Wrap the yarn around the hook, then draw the hook back through the two edge stitches. You now have two stitches on the hook.

5. Wrap the yarn around the hook and draw it through both stitches on the hook. You have just one stitch on the hook now.

Continue joining the front and back edges of the bag, repeat steps 3 - 5 along the length of the bag. When you reach the bottom of the bag, where the knitted fabric is folded in half, draw the remaining yarn all the way through the final stitch to secure it. Weave in your ends using a tapestry needle or your crochet hook. Repeat for the second side of the bag.

STEP THREE: KNIT APPLIED I-CORD BORDER & I-CORD HANDLE

This Applied I-Cord makes a nice finished edge for the top of the bag and a strong handle, too! You'll need only two of your double-pointed needles, plus a tapestry needle for joining the circular handle together.

APPLIED I-CORD BORDER

Cast on 6 stitches.

Round 1: K5, sl 1. Beginning at the right front edge of the top of the bag, pick up one stitch and place it on the left needle. Knit it onto the right needle, then pass the slipped stitch over it and off the right needle. You have six stitches on the right needle, and the yarn is coming from the last stitch on the left, closest to the point of the needle.

Round 2 Preparation: Without turning the needle, slide the stitches down the needle to the opposite end and move the needle to your left hand. The yarn is coming from the last stitch on the left, now furthest from the point of the needle.

Round 2: K5, sl 1. Pick up the next edge stitch and place it on the left needle. K1, pssso.

Repeat Round 2 until all of the edge stitches along the front of the bag have been incorporated into the I-Cord.

I-CORD HANDLE

Once you have completed the Applied I-cord Border, continue knitting the I-cord handle until you reach the desired length. Remember that the handle will stretch a lot when the bag is full. For a hand bag, we recommend knitting an 8 inch long I-cord handle; for a shoulder bag, knit until the I-cord is about 16 inches long.

STEP FOUR: JOIN BEGINNING AND END OF I-CORD USING KITCHENER STITCH

Kitchener stitch is a seamless way to join "live" stitches, or stitches that are still on the needle. For this project, one end of the I-cord is live, but the other end is the cast on edge. To set up for Kitchener stitch, pick up six stitches from the cast on edge on one needle. Now you have six stitches on each needle.

1. Break the yarn, leaving a 20 inch length. Thread it onto a tapestry needle.
2. Hold the needles parallel, so that the stitches on the front needle come from the I-cord border, and the stitches on the back needle come from the I-cord handle.
The yarn is coming from the first stitch on the back needle.
3. Draw the tapestry needle through the first stitch on the front needle, as if to purl.
Leave the stitch on the knitting needle.
4. Draw the tapestry needle through the first stitch on the back needle, as if to knit.
Leave the stitch on the knitting needle.
5. Front Needle
 - a. Draw the tapestry needle through the first stitch on the front needle as if to knit.
Slip the stitch off the knitting needle.
 - b. Draw the tapestry needle through the following stitch on the front needle as if to purl and leave it on the knitting needle.
6. Back Needle
 - a. Draw the tapestry needle through the first stitch on the back needle as if to purl.
Slip the stitch off the knitting needle.
 - b. Draw the tapestry needle through the following stitch on the back needle as if to knit and leave it on the knitting needle.

Repeat Steps 5 and 6 for remaining stitches.

Draw the yarn through the last stitch to secure it, then weave in the tails.

STEP FIVE: MAKE THE SECOND HANDLE

Knit the Applied I-cord Border and I-cord Handle for the back of the bag. Make sure the handles are the same length!

BELLINA!

We hope you use your Nest Bag for groceries, books, yarn, and all the bits and pieces that make up your life. Enjoy!