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Magpie Gloves to Knit

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Angharad Thomas designed these gloves as a tribute to the skilled glove knitters of both the past and present, making use of a variety of techniques.

The Magpie Gloves owe a debt to anonymous knitters long dead, to those such as Mary Allen (1857–1924), the skilled glove knitter from Yorkshire, and to many makers very much alive! These gloves combine old and new elements—from Yorkshire, England; Sanquhar, Scotland; Kihnu Island, Estonia; and elsewhere—to make a fun-to-knit project. The gloves’ use of color reflects those found in old gloves, mittens, and socks all over Europe that have been knitted through the years—a strong dark-and-light contrast and a touch of red for luck.

The techniques include a two-color long-tail cast-on from Europe, a two-color rib from Yorkshire, and knitting in the round with two colors, a technique found all over the knitting world. Because this project is relatively small, it offers a good way to try these techniques for the first time. The asymmetric thumb gussets that give the gloves a great fit and appearance is a construction found in vintage patterns and also in some modern Japanese glove patterns. By the way, feel free to adapt as you wish; for instance, if you can’t do a long-tail cast-on, just do your usual one.

The yarn, Pip Colourwork, is a blend of pure British wool spun in Yorkshire, from a company called Baa Ram Ewe based in the Yorkshire city of Leeds. The company has put pure wool yarns from Yorkshire on the map and aims to bring Yorkshire wool to the world. The wool has plenty of character with lots of bounce and a great selection of colors, and it is forgiving of dropped stitches and a little unevenness in knitting!

M A T E R I A L S

- ♦ Baa Ram Ewe Pip Colourwork, 100% British wool yarn, fingering weight, 4 ply, 126 yard (115.2 m)/25 gram (0.9 oz) ball, 1 ball each of #008 Coal (A), #001 White Rose (B; natural), and #009 Wesley Bob (C; dark red)
- ♦ Needles, 2 size 3 (3.25 mm) circ 24 inches (60 cm) or set of 4 or 5 double pointed size 3 (3.25 mm) or size needed to obtain gauge
- ♦ Stitch markers
- ♦ Waste yarn in similar weight and contrasting color for stitch holders and, optionally, for stitch markers
- ♦ Tapestry needle

Finished size: To fit an average adult; 10½ inches (26.7 cm) length from CO to middle fingertip and 7 inches (17.8 cm) hand circumference above thumb
Gauge: 36 sts and 36 rnds = 4 inches (10.2 cm) in 2-color St st after light wash and press

S P E C I A L N O T E S

- The two-color knit one, purl one rib is more easily worked by holding one yarn in each hand. Carry the dark or main color yarn in the left hand and knit using the continental method and carry the light yarn in the

right hand and knit using the English method. Always keep the same color in the same hand throughout to ensure that the patterning stitches look even. The tensioning of the yarn may be different in each hand, so this is important for consistent results.

- The textured bands around the cuff use purl rounds flanking a round of eyelets to create decorative ridges separated by a band of two-color patterned stockinette.

- The thumb increases are worked using the make-one-right technique (M1) by inserting the left-hand needle tip from front to back to lift the strand between the marked stitches, then knitting into the back of the lifted strand.

- When marking the stitches that form the sides of the thumb gusset, I prefer to use loops of contrasting yarn because they do not get in the way as much as rigid stitch markers.

- For the top of the thumb opening and finger gussets, turn the work and use a two-needle method (such as the knitted or cable) to cast on stitches onto the left-hand needle. On the next round, knit into the back of these new stitches to tighten them.

- When picking up stitches between the fingers, pick up and knit into the cast-on stitches of the previous finger.

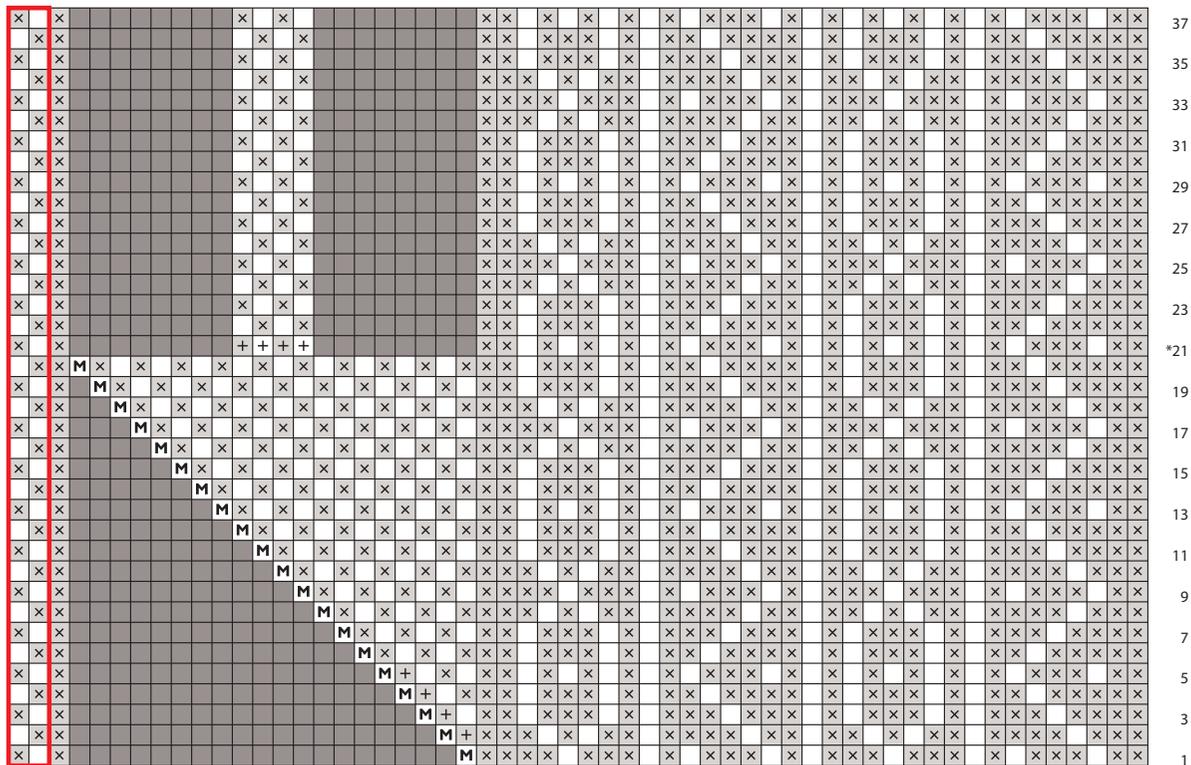
- You may find it helpful to tuck completed fingers down into the hand as you work to keep them out of the way.

- Knit-three-together decreases are used to shape the fingertips to avoid interrupting the alternating color pattern. The first and third stitches of the knit three together will be the same color; work the knit-three-together decrease using the color of the center stitch.

I N S T R U C T I O N S

Notes: See above and visit www.piecemagazine.com/abbreviations/ for Abbreviations and Techniques. Traditionally, gloves have been made on a set of double-pointed needles, but using two circular needles is an alternative method, with each needle holding about half the stitches. Some knitters may find that the magic-loop method works well for the fingers. The glove can be tried on at any stage to check for fit. If worked using size 2 (2.75 mm) needles at a tighter gauge, these instructions will produce a glove to fit a slimmer hand.

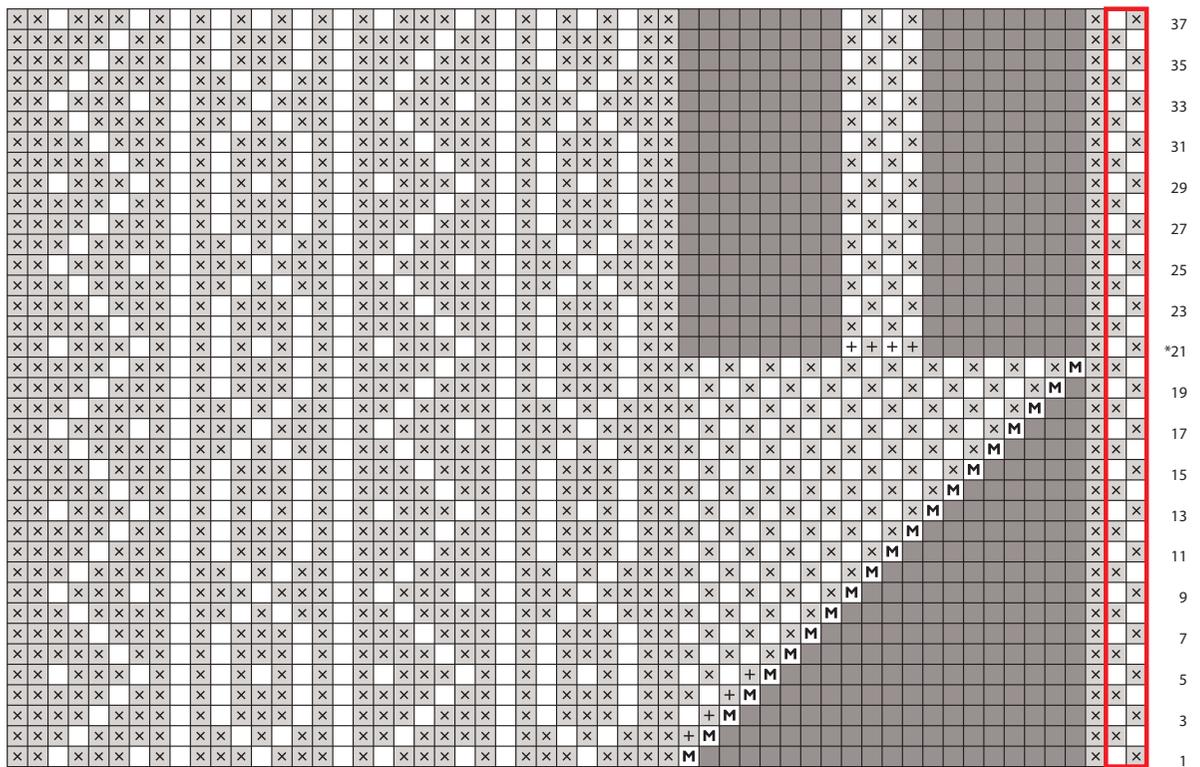
Right Hand



2-st rep
work 16 times

*see instructions

Left Hand



*see instructions

2-st rep
work 16 times

