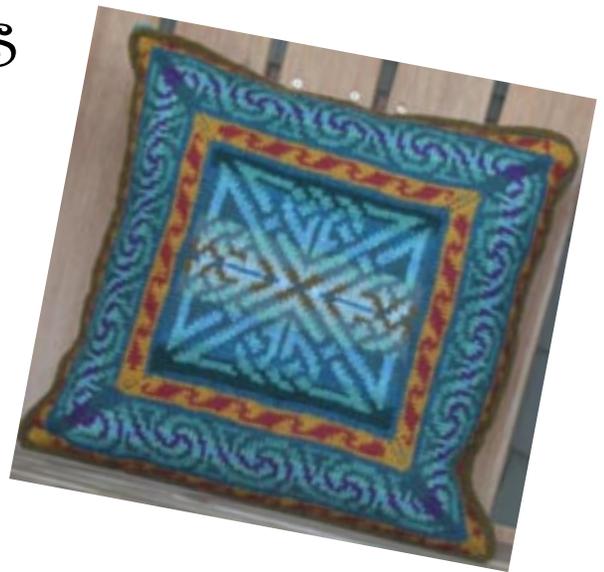


Two Colorful Pillows

An exploration of pattern and color

These two pillows were designed to make playing with the infinite options of color and pattern available to Fair Isle knitters even more fun. The first pillow is, quite simply, a large swatch. The second pillow makes the predominantly horizontal effect of two-color stranded knitting bend around a central square.



16" Sampler Pillow

Using a 16" circular needle and Shetland jumperweight wool yarn, cast on 118 stitches (109 for the pillowcase + 9 for the steek). This number of stitches should result in a 16" pillow at approximately 7 stitches per inch. If you know that your gauge is different, recalculate the cast on number. And see the note on *Needle Size* if you aren't sure what size needle to use. Join, being careful not to twist.

Pull out all your knitting books and bookmark the charts that have always interested you. Choose one, set out some colors that you think might look good, and start knitting! Step back to take a look—did that one turn out the way you had hoped? Be sure to keep records of what you did—you will probably fall in love with at least one of your colorways and want to design a garment around it.

Now try another pattern. It's a good idea to alternate pattern sizes and colors, and maybe find a very large one for the center, but the overall effect we are aiming for is one of folkloric exuberance. Try not to get too judgmental or worried.

When the knitting measures about 15.5", cast off. Stabilize your steek by machine stitching or crocheting, cut it open, and block your pillow cover to 16" square (not counting the steek stitches).

You can now add a decorative I-cord trim or any other edging you'd like. Attach to a pillow cover (I sewed mine by hand using sewing thread—there are many ways to construct a pillow, though!).

The patterns I used came from Co Spinhoven's *Celtic Charted Designs* and Joyce Williams' *Latvian Dreams*. I used the colors listed in the Mitered Celtic Pillow directions.



Colors

Don't be put off by the number of colors I used—inspired by the reproduction of a Japanese print in *Kaffe's Classics* and tempted by a wall of irresistible colors, well, I went wild. You could make a lovely pillow in as few as two colors. Use this opportunity to try something new.

Needle Size

The issue of gauge and needle size can be confusing. Gauge is the number of stitches and rows per inch in the knitted fabric. Some knitters need an American size 4 needle to knit Shetland jumperweight yarn at 7 stitches per inch. Others need an American size 1. The important thing is that you find out through experimentation what gauge results from which needle in your hands. Keep good notes!

If you have never tried stranded knitting with Shetland jumperweight yarn before, I suggest that you start with an American size 3 needle.

And remember, pay attention to your knitting! Gauge can change, seemingly without notice.

Mitered Celtic Pillow

Yarn: Jamieson Spindrift, Shetland jumperweight wool, 25g/hank. One hank each of the following colors:

135	Surf	766	Sage
820	Bottle	769	Willow
821	Rosemary	770	Mint
425	Mustard	772	Verdigris
429	Old Gold	1010	Seabright
578	Rust	1020	Nighthawk
760	Caspian	1290	Loganberry

Gauge: 7 stitches per inch; row gauge nearly the same.

Needles: 16" and 24" circular needle in size that produces this gauge (see note on *Needle Size*);
a double-point needle in the same size.

Notions: 16" square pillow form; cover for pillow form in color to complement your knitting;
place markers.

Center Squares

You will be making 2 similar squares at one time.

Using any cast on you prefer, cast on 112 stitches (two patterns @ 47 stitches + 2 steeks @ 9 stitches). Join, being careful not to twist.

Start Chart A at the point where it says "Start here." When you reach the end of that row continue along the fraternal twin chart where it says "Continue here."

- Note on color changes: Change your colors in the middle of the steek (which is the start point of Chart A).

Knit to the end of Chart A.

- Note on steeks: I used speckled steeks because they make crocheting the steek much easier, but you can, of course, use striped steeks.

Cast off.

Secure steeks by machine stitching or crochet. Meg Swansen offers good directions for crochet steeks at www.schoolhousepress.com.

Block your squares.

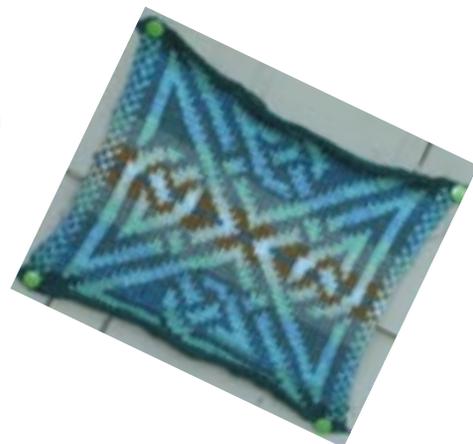
Note to Independent (i.e., cussed) Knitters: Clearly, this pattern can be changed in many ways. The center square can be any size so long as it is smaller than the finished pillow size you are aiming for. I prefer to work on circular needles, so the minimum circumference of my work is 16". In this case, I made two 7.25" squares separated by steeks. You can make as many squares as you want: for example, three 5" squares or four 4" squares. The only limitation is that all the squares need to have the same row count.

Mitered Border

Using a 24" circular needle and Nighthawk yarn, make a new stitch by the loop method. This stitch will be the center of your miter. Starting at any corner, knit up into every stitch.

- At the top and bottom of the center square, knit up between the cast on/cast off row and the next knit row; on the sides, knit up between the last pattern stitch and the steek.

When you reach the corner, place a marker and make a new stitch by the loop method. Knit up stitches on the next side. Repeat until you reach the first loop stitch; place a marker. (This is row 1 of Chart B.)



- You should have 48 stitches between each marker; if you don't, adjust the number of stitches by increasing or decreasing somewhere in the middle of the side in row 2.

Beginning with row 2 of Chart B, knit the border as follows: Knit into initial loop stitch (this is the center stitch of the miter); make a new stitch using the right-slanted loop method (see *Neat Miters*); knit the pattern as shown in Chart B, which should bring you to the marker; make a new stitch using the left-slanted loop method; and move the marker. Repeat the process for the remaining three sides of the square.

- The mitered border chart looks pretty complex, with all the special symbols. As you work, though, you will find that you intuitively understand how the stitches relate to each other as the border grows outward. Don't be afraid!

Continue knitting Chart B.

Note to Independent Knitters: You can choose any patterns you want for the border. Keep in mind that the miters look neater with patterns that do not have long floats. Center your pattern, but don't worry about how the pattern will look at the bend—I guarantee that whatever emerges will be interesting! Knit until the pillow is the size you like. Standard pillow forms come in many sizes.

I-Cord Border

When you have completed Chart B, cast off using the I-Cord cast off method as follows:

Turn your pillow so that the wrong side is facing you. (This is my favorite way to hide the color "blip" that occurs when the I-cord contrasts strongly with the body color.)

Using a double-point needle and Old Gold yarn, cast on 3 stitches. *With the yarn held behind, transfer these stitches to the left needle on your pillow. The result of this maneuver is that the working yarn will be 3 stitches in on the left needle. Pulling the yarn across the back of the work, knit the first stitch; knit the second stitch; knit the third cast-on stitch together with the first pillowcase stitch through the back loops.*

Repeat this process until you think you will just have to scream.

- To make the border fit better, rather than knit two together to join the I-cord to the pillow, I would knit 3 together—1 I-cord stitch and 2 pillow stitches—every 10th stitch.
- At the exact corners I knit one "free" row of I cord as follows: knit 3 I-cord stitches, return to left needle. I also used the knit 3 together maneuver within 3 stitches of either side of the corner to control the tendency of a knitted corner to flare out.

Block your pillow cover to a 16" square.

Attach to a purchased 16" pillow cover using sewing thread, stitching in the ditch where the I-cord and the knitted cover join, and stuff with a pillow. Now, lounge.

- There are many ways to construct a pillow. I chose to sew mine to a cloth cover because this method seemed to put the least stress on the knitting. However, knitting two pillow squares and fusing them together using a three-needle bind off or a three-needle I-cord bind off would work very well.

Neat Miters

Because we are increasing every row (taking advantage of the tendency of two-color stranded knitting to knit up at a nearly square gauge), we cannot use an increase method that pulls yarn up from the row below. The Make a New Stitch by Forming a Loop (Make One) method works well when the new stitches are stabilized by having stitches of the same color on either side. In other words, you will have 5 stitches in a row of the same color.

Experimentation proved that, at least in my hands, using Make Ones that lean *INTO* the miter worked much better than using Make Ones that parallel the miter. This method produces a tidier and tighter miter.

Here's how they look:



Right-slanting Make One Center Stitch Left-slanting Make One

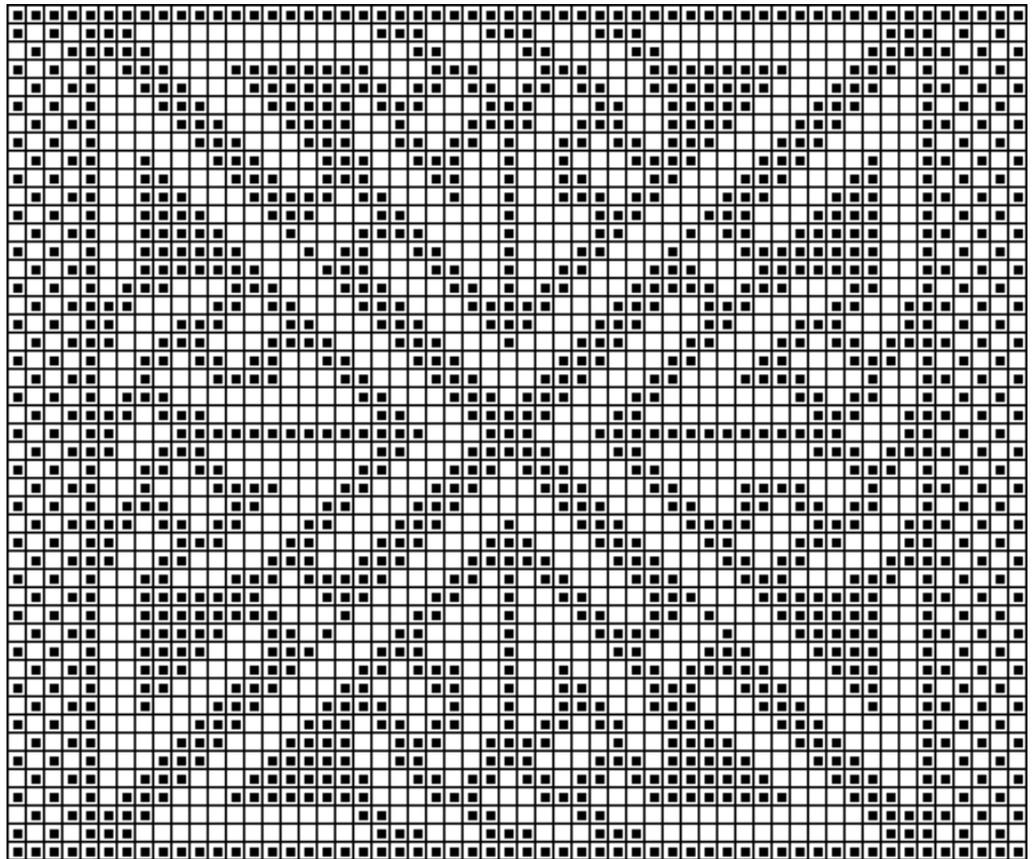
Be sure to snug up your increases as you make them.

When you knit into the Left-slanting Make One on the next round, knit into the back of the stitch.

It is a bit difficult to calculate the necessary length of the float behind the miter. Remember that longer is better than too short, and the pillow back will never be seen!

Be warned that the miters bunch up on the needles in an irritating way. Just breathe deeply and look forward to pulling the finished pillow off the needles, when you will finally get to see the lovely radiating lines.

Mitered Celtic Pillow Chart A: Centers From Co Spinhoven *Celtic Charted Designs*

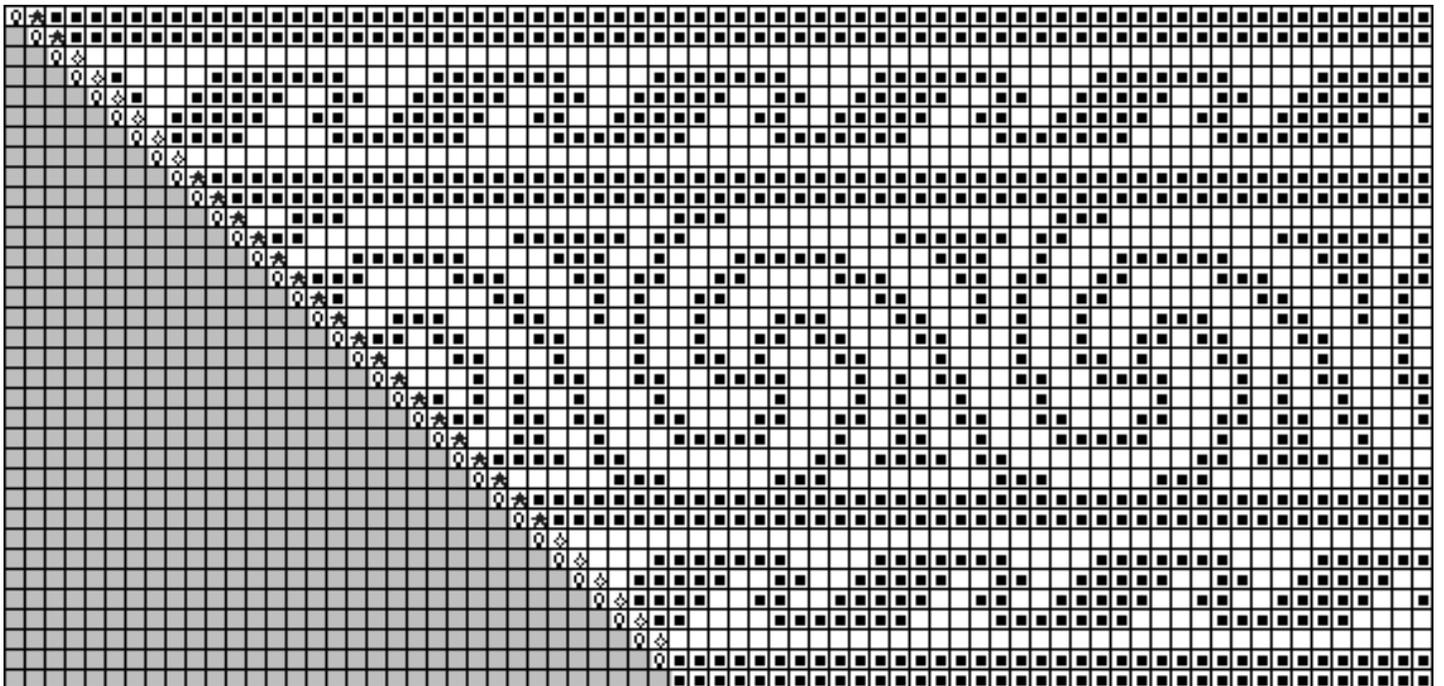


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Symbols

-  Make One
-  Knit in back of stitch with  yarn
-  Knit in back of stitch with  yarn
-  No stitch (go directly to the next stitch)

Mitered Celtic Pillow Chart B: Mitered Border Patterns from Co Spinhoven *Celtic Charted Designs*





	Bottle	Verdigris
	Nighthawk	Caspian
	Rosemary	Seabright
	Sage	Mint
	Old Gold	Willow
	Nighthawk	Surf
	Old Gold	Willow
	Sage	Mint
	Rosemary	Seabright
	Nighthawk	Caspian
	Bottle	Verdigris

Start here

Warning: Please remember the center miter stitch and the increase stitch at the start of the round!



	Nighthawk	
	Rust	Mustard
	Nighthawk	
	Rosemary	Verdigris
	Loganberry	Mint
	Rosemary	Caspian
	Nighthawk	Mint
	Rosemary	Verdigris
	Nighthawk	
	Rust	Mustard
	Nighthawk	

Start knit-up round here