

Parcheesi Afghan

The Parcheesi Afghan is a variation on the traditional log cabin quilt in which 6 log cabin squares are flanked by striped strips. I wanted something light and not too big, ready to be tossed over my shoulders or lap while watching TV or knitting. It can easily be resized by choosing a heavier yarn or by adding more squares and strips.

Yarn: Some 30 colors of traditional Shetland wool were used (see the *Notes on Color Choices* below): Jamieson & Smith 2-ply jumperweight and Jamieson's Spindrift. This size afghan takes a little more than 1 pound of yarn.

Gauge: 6 stitches per inch and 6 ridges (12 rows) per inch. It is not important that you get this stitch gauge, but it *is* important to get a squared stitch to row gauge.

Needles: Use the needles that will get you a nice, squared stitch/row gauge. I used a US #3, but I am a very loose knitter.

Size: 35" x 54"

Stitch pattern: Garter stitch (knit every row).

Original colors:

The bad news is that I did not keep records of the colors that I used for this project, and many of the colors are no longer available.

The good news is that you will be forced to choose your own colors, and the resulting afghan will be a reflection of your own spirit!

Notes on my color choices:

- I chose a warm palette that ranged around the color wheel from red to chartreuse. Most of the colors fell into the rosy red-orange and orange color groups. I found every iteration of the colors that I could—pure colors, tones, shades, browns. I used tints (lighter values) sparingly. All told, about 30 colors were used.
- All the focal squares are red (Jamieson Spindrift #525 Crimson). Making each square the same color gives this otherwise random design a sense of cohesiveness—especially important if you choose to use colors from the entire spectrum! To highlight this effect, I didn't use this red anywhere else in the afghan.
- I wanted the log cabin squares to stand out a bit from the striped strips, so I used bold colors and made the building blocks slightly wider than the stripes in the connecting strips.
- To make the stripes recede visually, I toned down bold colors with lots of dull, heathery yarns.

- As an accent, I chose a cool blue-violet (Jamieson & Smith jumperweight Shetland #131). I used this accent color sparingly—once in a log cabin square and 8 times in the striped strips. This periwinkle was always flanked by browned colors to keep it from overwhelming the design.
- The other stand-out color, a chartreuse green (Jamieson Spindrift #791 Pistachio), was used twice in the log cabin squares and nowhere in the striped areas to emphasize the log cabin squares.

Instructions

1. Knit 18 squares (Square A) as follows:

Cast on 22.

Knit 22 ridges (44 rows)

Cast off.

2. Knit 6 log cabin squares as follows:

Take a Square A. Pick up and knit 22 stitches along one side (any side).

Note: There are many ways to pick up along these edges—check a good reference book or an online tutorial for details if you are unsure of yourself.

Knit 6 ridges (12 rows). This is Band B on the log cabin schematic.

Cast off.

Now turn the knitting one-quarter turn counterclockwise. (And yes, you *could* rotate clockwise—just be consistent.)

Pick up and knit 28 stitches along the one side (6 stitches from the 6 ridges on Band B and 22 from Square A).

Knit 6 ridges (12 rows). This is Band C on the log cabin schematic.

Cast off.

Continue in this manner as shown on the schematic. The schematic shows how many stitches should be picked up for each band. Each log cabin square uses 4 different colors in addition to Square A.

3. Knit 17 striped strips as follows:

Cast on 22 stitches in any color.

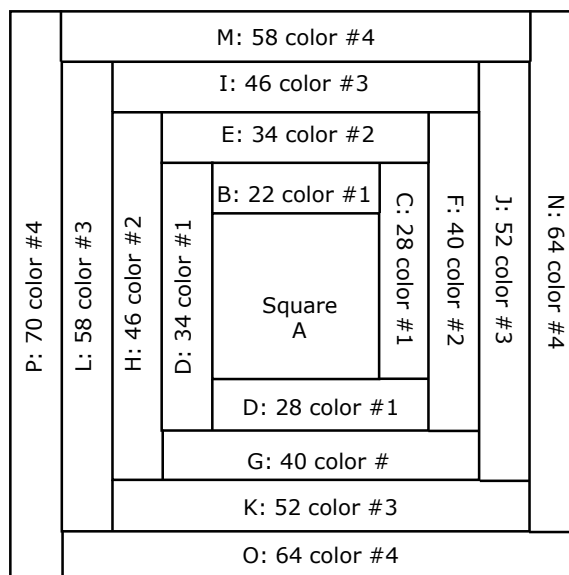
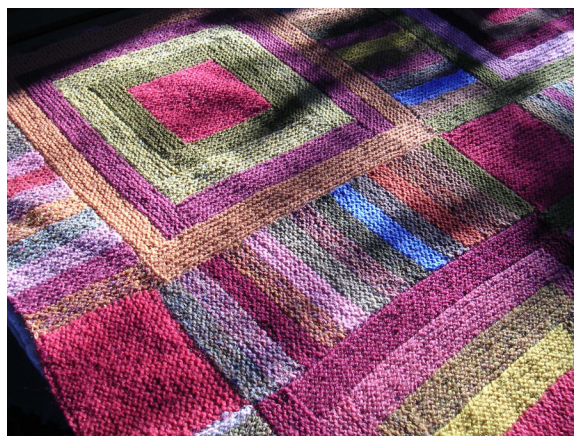
Knit 5 ridges (10 rows).

Change color and knit 5 ridges.

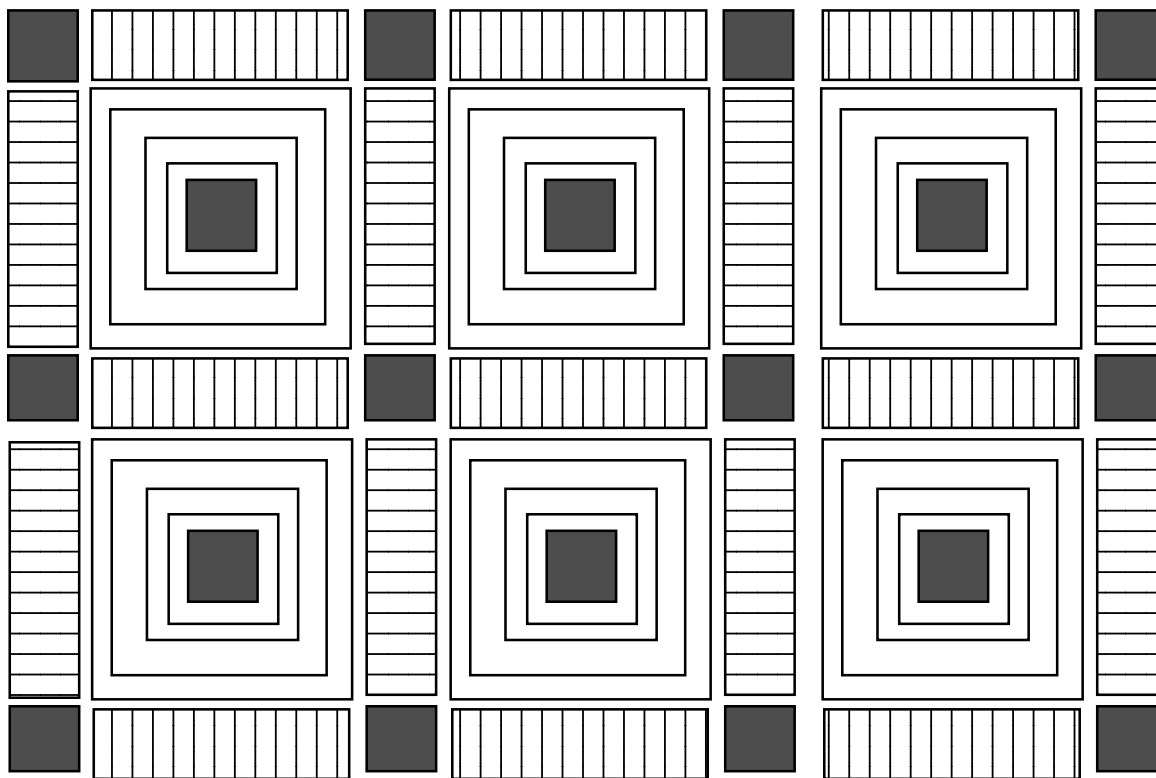
Note: If you weave in the ends as you go, you will save yourself a lot of sewing in ends when you are done!

Repeat until you have completed 70 ridges.

Cast off.



4. Assemble pieces this way:



Now, the analytical among you will notice immediately that you could save a *lot* of seaming if you were to knit the strips in one long go (for example, knit Square A and, without casting off, knit a striped section, knit Square A, knit a striped section, knit Square A, knit a striped section, and finally knit another Square A—there, you have a long strip that saves you 6 short seams!). Exactly right. When I knit this afghan, I didn't want to plan my colors very carefully ahead of time, so I chose to play with them at the assembly stage. Do what suits you!

Variations

- Use a different weight yarn to make a bigger afghan.
- Make the stripes in the strips random widths—a good way to use odds and ends.
- Add more squares and strips.
- A border would be a nice touch!

I hope you enjoy your Parcheesi Afghan!

You can contact me at www.feralknitter.typepad.com

This pattern is offered free of charge in exchange for a donation of any amount to Heifer International (www.heifer.org), an organization that works to combat poverty, hunger, gender inequity, lack of education, and environmental degradation throughout the world (a large order, but they are doing it!).

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