

Izzy's Felted Bowl

This is a pattern for the bowl Izzy knit for the Lambswool Farm dinners.

Size 11 circular or double-pointed needles for the beginning, double-pointed needles for the end, when the decreases begin.

One skein of Noro Kureyon or another worsted-weight yarn. I used color #74. (If you want to double strand to make a very firm bowl, you will need two skeins or a bulky yarn instead of worsted-weight.)

Gauge is not specific, but it should definitely be very loose.

I would recommend knitting the bowl with two worsted-weight strands held together or a bulky yarn if you want to put anything heavier or bigger than coins or jewelry in it. For instance, I knit the bowl I use to keep my reading glasses in with with two strands of Noro Kureyon.

What Kind of Yarn Can You Use?

Believe it or not, you do not need to use 100% wool (or other animal fibers) in felted items. I have used Lion Brand Landscapes yarn in one of my felted bowls, which is 50% wool and 50% polyester, I believe.

HOWEVER, you should always do a test swatch on a new yarn before starting your project. If something doesn't felt successfully, there's not much you can do with it. You generally can't frog it and re-use the yarn, and if it hasn't felted, you can't cut up the felt and use it for other things.



You can also use a 100% man-made fiber as a carry-along with the natural fiber, as I did in this bowl:

I used Knitpicks Sierra, which is 70% wool and 30% superfine alpaca, throughout the whole bowl, and carried along a Joann Sensations fuzzy boucle yarn that they no longer sell, on the top and the bottom.

I would definitely not use any yarn with less than 50% animal fiber, though, and I would definitely do a swatch with any mixed fiber yarn. Also, do not use superwash wool. It's been specially treated NOT to felt in the washing machine. In addition, white or off-white yarns do not felt well, as the bleach has usually destroyed the fibers to some extent.

Instructions

Cast on 75 sts. Place marker and join to work in the round, being careful not to twist the stitches. Knit in st st until piece measures 5 1/2" from CO. Decrease as follows, changing to dpn as nec:

Round 1 *ssk, k11, k2tog; rep from * to end of row – 65 sts Round 2 Knit Round 3 *ssk, k9, k2tog; rep from * to end – 55 sts Round 4 Knit

Round 5 *ssk, k7, k2tog; rep from * to end – 45 sts Round 6 Knit Round 7 *ssk, k5, k2tog; rep from * to end – 35 sts Round 8 Knit

Round 9 *ssk, k3, k2tog; rep from * to end – 25 sts Round 10 Knit Round 11 *ssk, k1, k2tog; rep from * to end – 15 sts Round 12 *ssk, k2tog; rep from * to last 3 sts, ssk, k1 – 8 sts remain



Here is the bowl right before the decreases:

As you can see, it's essentially a hat.

Finishing

Cut yarn, leaving about an 8" tail. Using a tapestry needle, pull the tail through the remaining stitches on the needle. Weave in all loose ends. Remember that felting will make the ends virtually disappear - however, you must eliminate any largish holes or gaps by darning them before felting. Felting will not close them up completely.

If you want your bowl to be bigger, just cast on the number of stitches that will give you the size you want and decrease by ten stitches every other row till the last row. So for a bowl that's a third bigger you would start off with 100 stitches; 50% bigger, about 115.

Felting

Before you felt, make absolutely sure that there's nothing in the knitting that you don't want there. In other words, stray threads or lint, etc. It will get felted into the fabric permanently and be virtually impossible to remove.

Put the bowl in a lingerie bag or pillowcase tied at the top. Put in the washing machine with a small amount of soap, at the hottest temperature possible. Also add a pair of jeans that you don't mind shrinking. Agitation is as important as hot water for felting, and if the bowl is in there by itself, there won't be enough agitation.

Start the washer. Check the bowl every few minutes to see how it's doing. There should be virtually no stitch definition left when it's done. Keep resetting the washer if necessary. Don't let it go into spin cycle. The spinning can stretch the bowl out. When it's finished to your satisfaction, rinse in tepid water, squeeze out the water and roll the bowl up in a towel. Press out as much of the water as possible. Dry the bowl over the next couple of days. It's good to put something in it to weigh it down and flatten the bottom. I use a full coffee can.



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