

CH'ULLU HAT

A knitting pattern

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Catherine Vardy, the KnitList's traveling, knitting biologist collected a few on her journeys through Bolivia. Her stories of how she came upon her hats and how she managed to buy them are legend¹. At least among the people of Potosi.

I fell in love with one of the designs she collected, and was determined to make something of it. I came up with this almost-ch'ullu hat. It's not as conical as Catherine's hats, and at only 8.5 stitches to the inch, is not even half as finely knit as the Potosi originals. Still, I haven't seen any other ch'ullu hat patterns that come even this close to authentic gauge.

My hat is knit in four natural colors of a 100% wool Shetland style fingering weight yarn. I wish I could pass on the yarn's specifications, but it came to me as part of a dead project started by someone else

given to me to ravel and re-use. It's similar in look and feel to Jamieson's 2 Ply Jumper Weight . Because I was knitting from dribs and drabs, my yardage estimates are generous, but approximate. I had enough of my darkest color left over from a 50 gram ball to make a nice overstuffed tassel. Depending on the yarn you use, if you want a tassel of similar size you might have to combine several color leftovers instead.

Skills required: Provisional cast, on - preferably worked directly onto a knitting needle; k2tog; following a simple chart; knitting in the round; plaiting a 4-strand spiral round braid²; and making a tassel.

¹ <http://www.needleartsbookshop.com/attic/aecvhats.html>

² A Google search on "4-strand round braid how-to" will turn up dozens of video instructions.

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Materials

- A traditional two-ply jumper weight yarn, sort of a rustic-finish fingering weight - approximately 1 ounce/140 yards (28 grams/128 meters) each of four different colors
- Two 24-inch US #0 (2mm) circular needles, or one 16-inch US #0 (2mm) needle, or a set of five US #0 (2mm) double pointed needles
- Scrap yarn or smooth cotton string for working the provisional cast-on
- Spare circular needle for use in fusing lining to hat body
- Crochet hook for working provisional cast-on. Exact size is unimportant, but I used a US #C - about 2.75mm
- Tapestry needle for finishing yarn ends and sewing up
- A marble for stuffing the tassel head (optional)
- Small button for attaching the tassel (optional)

Gauge and Measurements:

- Before blocking: About 18.75 inches (47.6cm) in diameter at bottom edge.
- Blocked to a final measurement of around 22 inches (55.9cm) in diameter - will stretch for a snug fit on a head circumference of up to 23 inches (58.4cm).
- Length from tip of ear flap to top of hat (exclusive of tassel) approximately 16.5 inches (42cm) after blocking.
- Length from brim to top of hat approximately 12.5 inches (31.75cm) after blocking.

Gauge: 8.5 st = 1 inch (2.5cm) measured over stranded patterning

Pattern

Lining and Bottom Edge

Cast on 150 stitches using provisional cast on. Because the needle size is small, it is easier to crochet the waste yarn directly on to the knitting needle rather than to make a chain and try to pick up stitches along the bumps on its underside.

Using Color 4 (white in my knitted example), knit three inches of stockinette in the round. Purl two rounds, then continue with the five rows of the repeat shown in Chart A, using Color 4 and Color 2 (dark gray in my sample). It's a 4 stitch repeat, and 150 isn't evenly divisible by 4, so you will end up with two white blocks next to each other. I placed that bit in the center back, and it isn't noticeable.

Hat Body

Now take up Color 1 and Color 3, and begin working Chart B. Switch colors where indicated on the chart. When the solid white section and the patterned part are the same length when folded along the two row purl welt, place the stitches from the provisional cast-on onto a spare circular needle.

On the following row, still working from the pattern chart and holding the work with the two needles full of live stitches side by side, knit a stitch from the patterned part and a stitch from the white lining together. This will fuse the lining and the hat body together. If you find this too difficult, you can leave the provisional cast-on alone, then go back when the hat is completed and sew the cast-on row stitches to the reverse of the piece. Take care though not to limit the hat's stretch when you do the seaming otherwise the hat will not block out to the final measurements, and will be uncomfortable while being worn.

Continue working the remaining rounds in Chart B, following the color placements indicated, until you have completed Round 31. Round 32 is a decrease row:

- **Round 32:** (K13, K2tog)10x [140 stitches will remain]
- **Work Chart B, Rounds 1 through 15.** The next round - Round 16 - is a decrease row:
- **Round 16:** (K12, K2tog) 10x [130 stitches will remain]
- **Work Chart B, Rounds 17 through 26**
- **Work Chart B, Round 31.** The next round - Round 32 - is a decrease row:
- **Round 32:** (K11, K2tog) 10x [120 stitches will remain]
- **Work Chart B, Rounds 1 through 10**
- **Work Round 15.** The next round - Round 16 - is a decrease row:
- **Round 16:** (K10, K2tog) 10x [110 stitches will remain]
- **Work Chart B, Rounds 17 through 22**
- **Work Round 31.** The next round - Round 32 - is a decrease row:
- **Round 32:** (K9, K2tog) 10x [100 stitches will remain]
- **Work Chart B, Rounds 1 through 6**
- **Work Round 15.** The next round - Round 16 - is a decrease row:
- **Round 16:** (K8, K2tog)10x [90 stitches will remain]
- **Work Chart B, Rounds 17 through 22**
- **Work Round 31.** The next round - Round 32 - is a decrease row:

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- **Round 32:** (K7, K2tog) 10x [80 stitches will remain]
- **Work Chart B, Rounds 1 through 6**
- **Work Round 15.** The next round - Round 16 - is a decrease row:
- **Round 16:** (K6, K2tog) 10x [70 stitches will remain]

Using Color 2 (Light gray in my sample) finish decreases as follows:

- **Round 1 and 2,** plus all even numbered rounds: Knit
- **Round 3:** (K5, K2tog)10x [60 stitches remain]
- **Round 5:** (K4, K2tog)10x [50 stitches remain]
- **Round 7:** (K3, K2tog)10x [40 stitches remain]
- **Round 9:** (K2, K2tog)10x [30 stitches remain]
- **Round 11:** (K1, K2tog)10x [20 stitches remain]
- **Round 13:** (K2tog)10x [10 stitches remain]
- Round 15: (K2tog)5x [5 stitches remain]

Break off the yarn leaving a 6 inch tail, thread the tail through the remaining five stitches, and draw them up purse style to close. Darn in the yarn end.

Earflaps

The earflaps were problematic. I liked the look of the Potosi originals, plus I wanted to avoid having them curl up from the bottom point over time. Catherine Vardy confirmed that the earflaps of her collected hats were knit separately and sewn on later.

I tried casting them on in one piece, using a central set of paired decreases or short-rows to achieve the V-shape but I never could get them to work out right. So I settled for a fussy, but effective second best. I knit identical triangles, seaming two together along one side to make a larger ear flap unit. Since I needed two finished earflaps, I ended up making four triangles.

Make 4 as follows:

Using Color 4 (white in my sample) cast on 38 stitches. The cast-on row is shown on Chart C as Row 1.

Follow Chart C, for Rows 2-3.

Start Row 4 and all even numbered rows after it with ssk, and end it with a k2tog.

After completing Chart C, continue working the earflap using Color 4, starting every even numbered row with a ssk, and ending it with a k2tog until only two stitches remain. Break off the yarn and pull it through these last two stitches.

Finishing and Blocking

Sew the earflap triangles together. I used whip stitch, feel free to experiment. Once the flaps were assembled, I sewed them to opposite sides of the bottom edge of the hat. I used Color 4 (white) to graft them to the purl welt edge.

To make a string, I cut a two-foot length of each yarn color. I doubled them and using a crochet hook, fastened them onto the bottom point of the earflap. Then I separated the strands by color, and worked a spiral four-strand braid. When the string was about 8 inches long (20cm), I tied off the strands in a standard overhand knot and trimmed the ends.

To make the tassel, I first cut foot long lengths of all three colors. I laid these across the top of a DVD box. Before wrapping the box heavily with all my leftover Color 1 yarn. I tied the four strands tightly to make the top of my tassel, and tied an extra bit of Color 3 yarn to make the tassel's waist. (Secret hint: to make the tassel's head extra fat and give it some weight, I stuck a marble inside just before tying off the waist).

After the tassel was formed, I worked about an inch of spiral four-stranded braid. Then I threaded half the strands of the braid into a tapestry needle, and plunged it through the top of the hat and on through an old spare button, releasing the strands on the inside of the hat. I threaded the other half of the strands onto the tapestry needle, plunged it thorough the hat top and through the other hole of my spare button. Then I tied the ends securely on the inside of the hat. Using the button this way helps avoid pull-through if the tassel is yanked.

With the hat fully assembled and any dangling ends darned in, it's time to block. Because my yarn was a bit stiff, I washed my hat gently but thoroughly. I squeezed out any excess water in a towel, avoiding twisting and wringing the hat. Then I took a dinner plate and stretched the hat over it. I tied the strings at the base of the plate, then stood the plate up in the dish drainer until the hat was dry.

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Charts

