

Ella's Fabric Knitted Bag



When Ella travels through the mirror, she brings her knitting bag with her, filled with what she thinks she'll need for her adventure. If you've read [Ella and the Panther's Quest](#), you know there's another reason this bag fits Ella's story. In any case, this bag is a way to use up scraps from other projects, even the non-knitting ones, into something to carry supplies for your own adventures, even if they're just a quest for the perfect yarn.

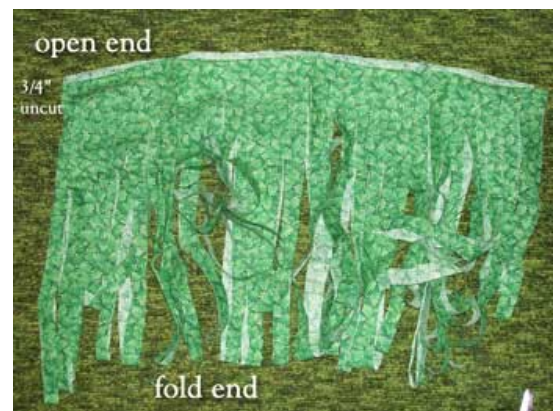
Materials needed: 150-200 yards of fabric strips (approx 3.5-4 yards of 45" wide fabric total, but use whatever you have) size 11 circular needle plus an extra needle for 3 needle bind off	sewing needle and thread (for attaching handles) 4 stitch markers optional: store bought handles
Finished bag measures 10"x10"x2"	Gauge= 3 stitches/1"

Preparing the fabric. It's a good idea to pre-wash any new fabric to get out any sizing and make sure it won't shrink later, and remove the salvages if there are any. Using scissors or a rotary cutter, cut the fabric into 1/2" strips. Tie the ends of the strips together. You can use a double knot but an overhand knot seems to work better (you've probably tied one at the end of a piece of thread to stop it pulling through the fabric), then wind them into a ball.

If you're using rectangles of fabric, you can cut down on the number of knots you need by cutting one continuous strip. Fold the fabric so the selvedge edges meet (if using knits, you may want the cut edges to meet if that will let you cut between stitches instead of rows). Cut off the salvage, especially if it's a different color than the rest of the fabric. Start cutting at the fold, and stop approximately 3/4 of an inch from the open end of the fabric. Continue cutting from the fold and stopping before the open end every half inch until you've cut the entire piece. Unfold. You should have a series of strips that are held together at either end by the uncut 3/4 inch of fabric. At one end, cut through the fabric between every other strip (between 1st and 2nd, 3rd and 4th, etc). At the other end, cut the opposite strips (between 2nd and 3rd, 4th and 5th, etc)

You should end up with one long strip of fabric, with little tags of fabric holding them together.

You can prepare all of the fabric at once, or just tie on a new ball when you need it. Now you're ready to knit.



abbreviations

ssk- slip, slip, knit. Slip the next stitch as if to knit, slip the stitch after that as if to knit, insert the left needle back into these two stitches to hold them open, use the left needle to catch a loop of yarn and knit the two stitches together and complete the decrease

k2tog- knit two together. Insert needle into next two stitches and knit them together

3 needle bind off- Divide the remaining stitches onto two needles (or two ends of a circular needle). Holding right sides together, use a third needle to knit first stitch off the front needle together with first stitch off the back needle. *Knit the next stitch off of the front needle together with the next stitch off the back needle. Pass the stitch already on the right needle over the new stitch* continue between * until one stitch remains. Pass the tail of yarn through the last stitch and fasten off.

The pattern

Cast on 78 stitches. Place end of round marker, join and begin working in the round. Work 1" of garter stitch (approx 6 rounds). Work even in stockinet stitch until bag measures 10" from the cast on row. Shape bottom of bag. Purl 1 round. Knit 8, place marker, knit 31 place marker, knit 8 place marker, knit 31. You should be at the beginning of the round.

Round 1: K2tog, *knit to 2 stitches before next marker, ssk, slip marker, k2tog* repeat between * 3 times, k to two stitches before last marker, ssk. Round 2: knit. Repeat rounds 1 and 2 until 54 stitches remain. Last round, knit 1, ssk removing the marker between the stitches, *knit to 1 stitch before next marker, ssk removing the marker between stitches*

Repeat between * until you are 1 stitch from the end of the round. Ssk the last stitch together with the first stitch. There will remain 50 stitches. Divide these stitches evenly on the two points of the needle 25 on each side. Turn the bag inside out and use a three needle bind off to close the bottom of the bag.

Handles (make 2) Cast on 3 stitches. Work i-cord for 18 inches or desired length. Sew ends of handles to the bag approx 3 inches from each end.

To make i-cord, cast on 3 stitches. Slide stitches back to left needle. *Knit 3 stitches. Slide stitches back to left needle* Repeat between * until desired length. Bind off.

Variations:

The pattern as written makes a bag with a flat bottom. If you prefer, you can stop just before the purl round and use a three needle bind off. This will make more of a tote bag shape.

You can replace the three needle bind off with grafting if you prefer. The three needle bind off just seems faster to me.

If you don't like i-cord handles, you can use store bought ones, knit them in garter stitch (cast on 54 stitches (18" x 3sts/inch), knit 1" in garter stitch, bind off. They will stretch less than if you knit 3 stitches for 18 inches), or sew them from fabric (take a piece of fabric 18"x4", fold in half lengthwise to get a 2" strip and press then fold the raw ends into the center and press again then sew along both long ends to hold it together.)

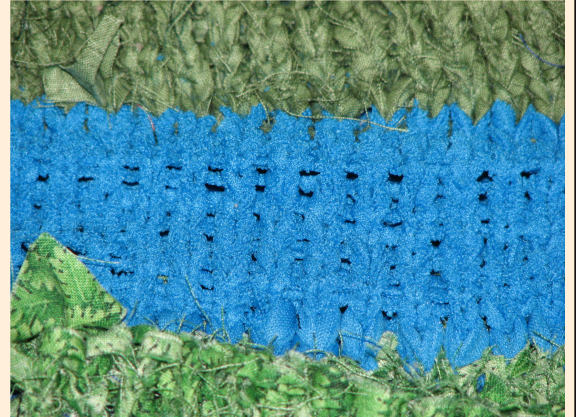
Notes on different fabrics.

Cotton: Most of the sample bag was knit using cotton fabric, like what you'd find in the quilting department. It's easy to find, comes in lots of colors, and makes a sturdy bag, but does not have a lot of stretch when you knit. Softer fabric is easier to work with. There are also a lot of little strings from the cut ends.

Knits: Knit fabrics, like t-shirt material, stretch more so they can be easier to knit with, but the finished bag will also have more stretch than one knit in cotton. If you cut between the rows of knit stitches, there will be some raveling and loose threads. If you cut between the stitches (usually this is cutting parallel to the salvage edge, or you can look closely at the fabric) there will be less stretch and less unraveling, similar to steeking a sweater. The large turquoise blue stripe on the sample bag is knit fabric.

Faux suede: Fabrics like ultra suede have a little lint but do not unravel. When you stretch the strips, the ends will curl in and form a tube which is very similar to knitting with a chenille or suede type yarn, but the finished product looks less scrappy. The handles of the sample bag are knit with faux suede.

This bag could also be knit using long scraps of yarn from other projects tied together. Thinner yarns can be held doubled. A general rule of thumb is to add together the recommended needles sizes of your yarns in mm to find the correct size needle to knit with. For example, a size 11 needle is 8mm, so combinations of yarns that would work could be: two yarns calling for size 6 (4mm) needles or 1 yarn calling for size 7 (4.5mm) and 1 yarn calling for size 4 (3.5mm). For this project gauge isn't essential, so you could probably get away with say 1 yarn calling for size 8 (5mm) and 1 yarn calling for size 5 (3.75mm)



For more information, pictures, and an excerpt from the book this pattern was inspired by, visit my web site at www.LisaAnneNisula.com