



2009: The Year of the Afghan — The December Square

By Sharon Emery

Finished Measurements

Approximately 11" x 11" depending on gauge

Materials

Any worsted weight yarn that gets between 4-5 sts/inch, US size 7-9 needles depending on gauge

Pattern Notes

Fair Isle is the technique of using more than one color in a row of knitting, carrying the unused color(s) on the non-public side of the piece. This is sometimes called 'stranding'.

A few of the basic guidelines for Fair Isle include:

- When using only two colors on a Fair Isle piece, the more contrast between the colors of the two yarns, the better.
- The yarn isn't usually carried behind more than five stitches at a time. In other words, you won't have more than five sequential stitches of the same color.
- It is easier to knit Fair Isle in the round than it is to knit it back and forth. No purling!
- Fair Isle is knit from a chart.
- Fair Isle is usually knit from the bottom up.

Yarn Dominance: When working Fair Isle, the yarns won't be 'locked' when the colors are changed as they are in Intarsia knitting. As you hold the yarn, one color will always be on top, and the other color will always be on the bottom. Contrary to how it sounds, the dominant color yarn (Usually the foreground/contrast color) is held to the bottom. It is the dominant color yarn that will be more pronounced in the Fair Isle pattern. It is important that the two colors aren't switched back and forth from being the dominant and non-dominant colors.

Instructions

Using main color, cast on 57.

Rows 1-3 – Knit using main color.

Row 4 – Knit three stitches in main color. Knit row one of chart reading right to left. White stitches will be knit in the main color; grey stitches will be knit in the contrasting color. (You might find it helpful to place a stitch marker after this first chart repeat.) Repeat row one of chart, stopping at heavy line. Knit last three stitches in main color. Turn work.

Row 5 – Knit three stitches in main color. Bring main color yarn to front. Beginning at the heavy line, purl row two of chart reading left to right. Repeat entire row two of chart. Knit last three stitches in main color.

Turn work.

Rows 6-29 – Continue working chart in this manner, knitting the even rows and purling the odd rows, maintaining the stitch garter stitch border on each edge.

Rows 30-55 – Repeat rows 4-29.

Row 56 – Repeat row 4. Cut contrast color.

Row 57 – Using main color, knit 3 stitches, purl across to last three stitches, knit last three stitches.

Rows 58-60 – Knit in main color.

Bind off, weave in ends, and block.

