



Practical Messenger Bag

Debbie Tomkies has designed a gorgeous satchel in Artesano Aran

This large and lovely bag was featured in The Little Book of Bags, which was free with the March issue of Let's Knit. Perfect for carrying all your daily essentials, it knits up fast in Artesano Aran, a blend of alpaca and Peruvian Highland wool. The yarn costs £7.99 per 100g (132m) hank from Dragon Yarns. Click on www.dragonyarns.co.uk to buy yours now.

Pattern Tension

12sts and 21 rows to 10 cm over garter stitch on 7.5mm needles

Front and back

Make two pieces as follows:

Using 7.5mm needles and A, cast on 60 sts

- Work 40 cm in garter stitch
- Cast off

Flap

Using 7.5 mm needles and yarn A cast on 74 sts

- P one row
- Row 1 (RS): change to yarn B, k1, * sl 1, k2, rep. from * to last st, k1
- Row 2: using yarn B, k1 * p2, sl 1, rep from * to last st, k1
- Row 3: change to yarn A, k1, * k1, sl 1, (k2, sl 1) three times, k3, (sl 1, k2) three times, sl 1, rep from * to last st, k1
- Row 4: using yarn A, k1, * sl 1, (p2, sl 1) three times, p3, (sl 1, p2) three times, sl 1, p1, rep from * to last st, k1
- Row 5: change to yarn B, k1, * k2, (sl 1, k2) three times, sl 1, k1, sl 1, (k2, sl 1) three times, k1, rep from * to last st, k1
- Row 6: using yarn B, k1, *p1, (sl 1, p2) 3 times, sl 1, p1, sl 1, (p2, sl 1) 3 times, p2, rep. from * to last st, k1
- Row 7: as Row 1, but working in A
- Row 8: as Row 2, but working in A
- Row 9: as Row 3, but working in B
- Row 10: as Row 4, but working in B
- Row 11: as Row 5, but working in A
- Row 12: as Row 6, but working in A
- Rep rows 1-12 until work is 54 cm long
- Cast off

Base

Using 7.5mm needles and yarn A, cast on 14 sts

- Work 55 cm in garter st
- Cast off

Strap and side gussets

Using 7.5mm needles and yarn A, cast on 14 sts

- P one row
 - Row 1: change to yarn B, k1, *sl 1, k2, rep from * to last st, k1
 - Row 2: using yarn B, k1, *p2, sl 1, rep from * to last st, k1
 - Row 3: change to yarn A, k2, sl 1, k2, sl 1, k3, sl 1, k2, sl 1, k2
 - Row 4: using yarn A, k1, sl 1, p2, sl 1, p3, sl 1, p2, sl 1, p1, k1
 - Row 5: change to yarn B, k3, sl 1, k2, sl 1, k1, sl 1, k2, sl 1, k2
 - Row 6: using yarn B, k1, p1, sl 1, p2, sl 1, p1, sl 1, p2, sl 1, p2, k1
 - Row 7: as Row 1, but working in yarn A
 - Row 8: As Row 2, but working in yarn A
 - Row 9: As Row 3, but working in yarn B
 - Row 10: As Row 4, but working in yarn B
 - Row 11: As Row 5, but working in yarn A
 - Row 12: As Row 6, but working in yarn A
 - Rep rows 1-12 until work is 156 cm long
- Cast off

Felting

Neaten off all loose threads before felting. Felt all pieces twice in washing machine using 30°C programme on half load with a fast spin speed (1400rpm or closest available). Include a small number of heavy items such as jeans, clean flip-flops, washballs, or lint-free towels in the wash to give additional agitation. Use a wool-friendly, non-biological wash liquid, powder or flakes, choosing one without bleach or optical brighteners. Do not add fabric conditioner. When washed, measure and re-shape pieces as required and allow to dry (do not tumble dry). See also felting tips below. (Note: the pieces are felted twice to increase density of fabric and make it more durable in use. If your pieces have the correct measurements after one felting, and are sufficiently stiff, the second wash may be omitted).

Finishing

With RS together, pin long edges of base along long edges of back and front pieces. Cut base piece shorter if necessary to match length of front and back. Oversew long edges of front and back to base. With RS together, oversew short edge of strap/side gusset to short edge of base. Oversew strap/side gusset to short side edges of front and back. Making sure strap is not twisted, repeat on other side of bag.

Turn bag RS out and firmly oversew cast off edge of flap to RS of main bag, 8 cm from top edge of bag. Still with RS facing, mark position for buttonholes, 4.5 cm in from edge and 4 cm up from cast on edge, one at each side edge of front flap. With very sharp scissors, cut a horizontal buttonhole in flap, 2.5 cm long (or size appropriate to fasteners). Blanket stitch around edges of buttonholes to neaten and reinforce edges. Mark position for toggles on RS of front piece beneath flap and stitch firmly in place.