

Kulshan hat

by Sarah Pope

Whistling Girl Knits



Kulshan was born from the gift of a handsome skein of Aran-weight farm yarn from coastal Maine and a stitch pattern that had bewitched me: a delicate single honeycomb forming the large panels on a friend's Irish cardigan. "It's the family cable," she told me as we breathed on our fingers and stamped our feet and watched our children clamber up the play structure at the park. "My great-aunt has knit a sweater with it for all the women in our family." The stitch stayed with me long after we'd bundled our shivering toddlers home. The creamy Maine yarn seemed to call for just such a pattern. I began with a

band of the single honeycomb, joined with a button band for versatility in styling. Next came a warm and lofty fisherman's rib, knit generously oversize so it could slouch and trap heat. The salt-and-pepper pompon offered itself as the solution when I had used up every last inch of the original skein—I happened to have some stash yarn that perfectly matched the buttons I'd purchased from Jenny the Potter.

Kulshan is the original name of Mt. Baker, which rules the eastern skyline from my home islands. It is among the snowiest places on the planet and certainly calls for a hat like this one.

Size

The hat can be easily tailored to any size head and to other yarn weights. The sample measures 21" and fits a large adult head.

Materials

Yarn

275 yards of Aran- or worsted-weight yarn, including a small amount of a contrast color if desired for the pompon, is enough for a large adult hat. I used a Columbia-Romney-Merino wool from Bridge Farm in Dresden, Maine.

Needles

US #9 (5.5 mm) needles for the single honeycomb band, or size to give you a pleasingly sturdy fabric
US #7 (4.5 mm)—or size about 1 mm smaller than the larger needle—16" circular for the fisherman's rib
cable needle (optional)

Sundries

4 buttons, about 1/2" diameter
darning needle
pompon maker

Kulshan hat Whistling Girl Knits

Kulshan hat

Whistling Girl Knits

Gauge

Gauge over single honeycomb:
22 sts x 26 rows = 4" on larger needles

Gauge over fisherman's rib:
20 sts x 20 rows = 4" on smaller needles with fabric relaxed.

Fisherman's rib is identical to brioche, but is worked by knitting or purling into the row below rather than with slipped stitches and yarnovers. As such, each stitch is knit twice. For simplicity's sake, I've counted the stitches that look like knit v's for the "row" gauge rather than the actual number of rows worked (twice as many), just as you might count ridges in garter stitch. Brioche is a very loose, spreading fabric and is best worked on a needle a couple of sizes smaller than you'd normally use for stockinet in the same yarn.

Construction notes

The honeycomb section is knit sideways, beginning and ending with a twisted rib button band. (If you do not intend to wear the hat unbuttoned, you may omit the button holes and stitch the buttons through both layers for decoration only.) Stitches are picked up along the edge of the band for the fisherman's rib crown, which is worked in the round. The pick-up number must be a multiple of two. For children's sizes or to substitute bulkier yarn, subtract six stitches from the cast-on to make a narrower band.

Abbreviations

CO = cast on
RS = right (exterior) side of the work
WS = wrong (interior) side of the work
sl = slip st(s) to the right needle without knitting them
k = knit
p = purl

k1tbl = knit through the back loop to twist the stitch
p1tbl = purl through the back loop to twist the stitch
hold x back = with a cable needle or pinched fingers, remove the given number of stitches from the left needle and hold them to the back of the work as you knit the following st(s)
hold x fwd = remove the given number of sts and hold them to the *front* of the work as you knit the following st(s)
yo = yarn over
BO = bind off
k2tog = knit two stitches together



Directions

Work twisted rib button band

With larger needles, CO 28 sts with long tail cast on.

WS: Sl 1, *p1tbl, k1; rep from * to last st, end p1.

RS: Sl 1, *p1, k1tbl; rep from * to last st, end k1.

Repeat these two rows twice more, then work WS row once more.

Begin single honeycomb

R1: Sl 3, *hold 2 back, k1, k2 held sts, hold 1 fwd, k2, k held st;
rep from * to last st, k1.

R2: Sl 1, purl.

R3: Sl 3, knit.

R4: Sl 1, purl.

R5: Sl 3, *hold 1 fwd, k2, k held st, hold 2 back, k1, k2 held sts;
rep from * to last st, k1.

R6: Sl 1, purl.

R7: Sl 3, knit.

R8: Sl 1, purl.

Repeat Rows 1-8 until you can wrap the band around your head and touch the live sts to the CO edge. End with Row 1 or Row 5.

Work twisted rib button band with holes

RS: Sl 1, *p1, k1tbl; rep from * to last st, end k1.

WS: Sl 1, *p1tbl, k1; rep from * to last st, end p1.

Repeat these two rows once more, then work a row of button holes: Sl 1, *p1, k1tbl, p1, k1tbl, yo, sl 1 to right needle, twist the next st and replace it on the needle, return the slipped st to the left needle, k2tog; rep from * three more times, p1, k1tbl, p1.

WS: Sl 1, *p1tbl, k1; rep from * to last st, end p1.

RS: Sl 1, *p1, k1tbl; rep from * to last st, end k1.

Work WS row once more, then BO in pattern. Do not break yarn.



Work fisherman's rib crown

Overlap the two button bands and insert smaller needle through both edges to pick up sts, picking up 3 sts for every 4 rows and continuing along the edge of the honeycomb band. (It's easiest to make the cable crossing rows the ones you skip.) Be sure to pick up a multiple of two sts. Place a marker at the end of the round. Knit one round, then begin fisherman's rib:

R1: *P1, knit into the st below the one on the needle and let the upper st slide off; rep from *.

R2: *P1 into the st below the one on the needle and let the upper st slide off, k1; rep from *.

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Kudsharan hat

Kulshan hat

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Repeat these two rounds until the hat measures 10" or desired height from the brim.

Decrease by k2tog all the way around on next 2 rounds. Cut the yarn and draw the tail through the live stitches, then pull them closed. (I like to make two passes through to ensure the closure will be sturdy.)

Make a whopper of a pompon

Using a pompon maker or a ring of cardboard, make a large pompon to top your hat. (Go big or go home, I say; the pompon in the sample measures 4" across.) I held a strand of the main yarn and a strand of the contrast color together as I wound them around the pompon maker. Leave tails on the strands you tie around the middle of the pompon long enough to use in tying the pompon as tightly as you can to the top of the hat.

Finishing

Weave in ends, sew on buttons. Block lightly without stretching.



Questions or comments?

Please don't hesitate to contact me! I'd love to see pictures of your Kulshan, too.

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