

# The Little Coco Bag:

A felted tote with  
a  
tailored look



## Materials:

2 skeins Cascade 220 (or comparable yarn) in Main Color  
1 skein Cascade 220 (or comparable yarn) in Contrasting Color  
#13 24" circular needles  
a box about 4" x 10" x 12"  
eight 1/4" (6mm) grommets or eyelets, with setter tool and hammer

## Gauge:

Since this is a felted project, gauge is unimportant. The large needle size ensures your knitting will be very loose, essential for successful felting.

The base and body of this felted bag are worked with two strands of yarn. If you prepare your yarn as a center-pull ball, you can knit from both the inside and outside of the ball to make a double strand.

## The Base:

With the Contrasting Color yarn, cast on 30 stitches.

Row 1: \*Knit 1, slip 1\*, repeat between \*s until 2 stitches remain, knit 2.

Row 2: With yarn in front, slip 1 (as if to purl), purl to end.

Row 3: With yarn in back, \*slip 1 (as if to purl), knit 1\*, repeat between \*s to end.

Row 4: as row 2

Row 5: With yarn in back, slip 1, \*slip 1, knit 1\* repeat between \*s until 3 stitches remain.

Slip 1, knit 2.

Row 6: as row 2

Row 7: as row 3

Row 8: as row 2

Repeat rows 5-8 five times for a total of 28 rows.

Row 29: With yarn in back, slip 1 (as if to purl), knit all.

### **Picking Up Stitches All Around the Base:**

Because you have slipped the first stitch of each row, you now have neat and tidy stitches along the edges of your work – perfect for picking up! You should be able to count 14 stitches along each side of the base.

Pick up 14 stitches along the left side of the base. Pick up 30 stitches along the original cast-on edge of the base. Pick up 14 stitches along the last side of the base. Place marker. You should have a total of 88 stitches and be set to knit the body of the bag in the round.

### **The Piped Edge:**

To give the base a nice, crisp edge and a little more strength, we will make a piped edge along the base using the contrasting color yarn.

Continuing with the Contrasting Color, knit two rows in the round, ending at the marker.

Switch to the Main Color.

\*With the right needle, pick up the back of the stitch 3 rows below the first stitch on the left needle. (see photo) (This stitch will be from the “knit all” row before you began picking up stitches around the base of the bag.) Place this stitch on the left needle. Knit 2 together.\* Repeat between \*s around the base of the bag until you reach the marker.



### **The Body:**

Continuing with the Main Color, knit all rows until the height of the bag is about one-and-a-half times as long as the front of the base of the bag (the original 30 cast on stitches. You should have very little yarn left. Stop at the marker, break off yarn.

The bag may seem too tall, but remember you lose about one-third of the height of the bag and only one-fourth of the bag in width when you felt.

### **The I-Cord Cast Off:**

With two strands of the Contrasting Color, cast three stitches on the left needle.

\*Knit 2. Slip 1 (as if to purl). Knit 1 (this will be a stitch from the body of the bag.) With the left needle, pass the slipped stitch over the last knit stitch. Slip the three Contrasting Color stitches back onto the left needle.\* Repeat between \*s all around the top of the body of the bag until all body stitches have been knitted. Cast off the three stitches, leaving a long tail. With the tail, weave the ends of the I-cord cast-off together as seamlessly as you can so there is not lump when the felting is complete.

### **The I-Cord Strap:**

With Contrasting Color and continuing to double-strand, cast on 2 stitches. \*Knit 2. Slip these two stitches back onto the left needle.\* Repeat between \*s until your I-cord measures about 9 feet without stretching.

### **Felting:**

Place your bag and the I-cord in a zippered pillowcase or in a regular pillowcase held closed with a snug rubber band. Set your top-loading washer on the smallest load size. Add just a few tablespoons of laundry soap. Set the water temp to hot wash/cold rinse. Place the loaded pillowcase and one or two pairs of jeans in the washer. Do not use towels or other types of fabric, because they will release lint that will lock itself into your felt. Start the washer.

You might want to check on the progress of your felting during the cycle while you become more familiar with the felting process. Fully felted fabric should no longer have visible stitches, and should not stretch much when pulled on the bias.

The cold water rinse gives an additional shock to the wool and helps the felting process along. With Cascade 220 yarns and the hottest water I could muster, the handbags in the photo took two complete cycles.

Some felting guides recommend skipping the spin cycle, because it can create creases in your finished product. These creases can often be steamed out with an iron. If you opt not to use the spin cycle, squeeze the handbag in a thirsty towel to get out as much water as possible, so the bag will dry within your lifetime.

### **Blocking:**

To give the Coco Bag its distinctive rectangle shape, you need a box that is just the right size: 10" x 4" x 12". Amazon often ships in a perfect box, so save your packages! I was able to purchase shipping boxes at an office supply store that measured 10" x 4" x 6", and stacked two high.

Cover the box(es) with a plastic grocery sack and stretch the damp, shriveled, felted bag over the box. Stretching is good! The snugger the fit, the crisper the shape of the final bag. (You might even decide at this point to run the bag through an additional wash cycle.) Put the bag near a radiator or heat vent and let dry. This might take a few days, depending on how wet your bag is to start.

Stretch out the damp I-cord, and hang it to dry. Really stretch it!

### **Finishing:**

When the bag is perfectly dry, trim off any excess ends of yarn that have worked free. They will look like little rainbow dreadlocks. **DO NOT CUT OFF THE TAILS OF YARN AT EITHER END OF YOUR I-CORD!** Those ends will help you thread the I-cord through the eyelets.

With the #13 knitting needle, poke holes right through the top edge of the handbag to make pleats at either end. (In the picture, double-pointed needles were used.) Once the holes are in, you can enlarge them by forcing a larger needle through each opening. Following the package instructions, place a grommet/eyelet in each of the eight holes.

Using the tail of yarn on the end, lace the I-cord through the grommets. Tie the two ends together at one end of the bag with an overhand knot. NOW trim off the ends of the I-cord.

Adjust the straps so they are even, and snug up the pleats. Wear proudly!



This pattern was developed especially for:

**Knit 1**

3823 N. Lincoln Avenue

Chicago, IL 60613

773/244-1646

[www.knit1chicago.com](http://www.knit1chicago.com)

They stock a delicious collection of Cascade 220 yarns.

The bags in this photo were made with the following Cascade 220 yarns:

Magenta bag

Main color #9434

Contrasting color #9420

Turquoise Bag

Main color #9440

Contrasting color #7802

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