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CHURCHMOUSE YARNS & TEAS

SLOW SEASON

MAKING TIME FOR GOOD CHEER



Churchmouse Classics 'Simple Tee.'

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CONTENTS

A NOTE FROM KIT, P5.
We wish you a season of renewal and perhaps a little rest.

HOLIDAY HUES, P6.
What are the colors of our moods?

MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT, P8.
Knitting for others is our favorite way to get into the holiday spirit.



BUNDLE UP, P14.
We're seeking warmth in all the familiar places.

MAKE TOGETHER, P20.
We're thankful we can bring our loved ones together through the act of making.



HELLO, HOLIDAY, P28.
Churchmouse welcomes a new brew blended for us by Smith Teamaker.

CONVERSATIONS WITH A CUPPA, P30.
For a comforting moment, you just need a hot beverage and some company.

SMALL BATCHES, P34.
Bake our 'Dried-Fruit Fruitcake'!





A NOTE FROM KIT

Dear friends,

These next several weeks—from American Thanksgiving through a cornucopia of diverse celebrations, both religious and secular—we’re celebrating in a new, refreshed way. We’re thankful for a newly strengthened ability to stay flexible, gracious and accepting in times of uncertainty.

It’s a grand time to express our gratitude for the hard-working people who make our yarns—from shepherds to millworkers, dyers to designers. And for the people who put tea in our cups—growers, pluckers, blenders, and purveyors. We’re most grateful to our own much smaller in-house team who bring it all together and deliver what you need, in one way or another, while staying safe and patient and kind.

And our most devoted appreciation to you, our readers. We wish you a season of renewal and perhaps a

little rest. I’m reminded of a teacher who spoke about the difference between *chronos* time (think clocks, calendars, “on time”) and *kairos* time (think timing, the right moment). While *chronos* is linear, sequential, chronological and quantitative (never enough!), *kairos* speaks to the ineffable quality of both eternity and the present (perhaps “God’s time”). Or as someone once wrote, don’t ask “What time is it?” but rather “What is it time for?”

We have learned (again and again) in these last months that we cannot promise what we can’t control. So this year we are approaching the holidays not as days or dates or deadlines, but as a season of giving. We’re relaxing our grip on getting it right, leaving room for the unexpected and the miraculous.

Blessings in these remarkable times,

Kit
Kit Hutchin



HOLIDAY HUES

We often think of a color palette as a mood setter. The way we combine or contrast different shades can really set the tone (pun intended) for a season, design story, or even different rooms in our home. However, this December, we're finding the reverse to be true. Our moods (sometimes calm, sometimes nostalgic, sometimes excitedly expectant) pull us to different combinations as they shift.



Wool and the Gang Crazy Sexy Wool, Alpachino Merino.

FROSTY PALETTE

Soft, gentle pales bring moments of serenity. We seek out creamy whites, sweet pinks, wintry blues, and silvery greys to soothe away the busyness of the season and give ourselves space for quiet and rest. They sparkle and shimmer, refreshing our spirits like sunshine on snow.

CLASSIC PALETTE

Deep, timeless tones resonate season after season. Inky navy, lush olive, glowing ochre, and vibrant rust comfort us as we step outside for brisk walks and winter picnics. These hues—the colors of parkas and plaid shirts, duffle coats and watch caps—are hearty and enlivening, with a reassuring familiarity.



Clockwise from top left: Rowan Big Wool; Shibui Silk Cloud; Blue Sky Fibers Woolstok.



Blue Sky Fibers Woolstok Bundles.

TRADITIONAL PALETTE

Typical holiday colors always awaken our nostalgia. The bright, cheerful reds and fresh, forest greens remind us of holidays past and spark anticipation for the holidays to come. With a few cozy, sheepy naturals added in, we're ready to settle in and celebrate.

MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT



With a tight shipping schedule and a lot left to do before the holidays arrive, we're finding comfort and satisfaction in quick, chunky knits and tiny, bite-sized projects. There's just something so fulfilling about those pieces that fly off the needles.

And what great gifts they make! We can knit up a bunch quite quickly and send them off to family and friends—cuddly caps and cowls for the nieces and nephews (we call them 'nibblings'), perhaps a silky-soft something or a hardy, rustic woolen for the grown-ups. And with easy accessories and fun, little ornaments we don't have to worry too much about fit!

With each small batch of hand-made gifts wrapped up and posted, our hearts are lifted. Making for others is really our favorite way to get into the holiday spirit. ❁



Mini Loopy Tree Skirt (free Churchmouse pattern); Churchmouse Classics 'Simple Tee'.



From top, left to right:
 Churchmouse Classics 'Shoulder Cozy' (child's version, worn as cowl) ; Churchmouse Classics 'Ferryboat Mitts'; Super Quick Hat (free Churchmouse pattern); Fisherman's Rib Muffler (free Churchmouse pattern); Quick Mistake Rib Cowl (free Churchmouse pattern); as above.

TWICE AS NICE

Stranded colorwork in a chunky-weight yarn makes for a cuddly, cozy combo! A pillowy strand makes for poofy stitch definition, while on the inside, yarn 'floats' double the fluff.



AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 27

Three/One Colorwork Cowl
 (free Churchmouse pattern).



Wool and the Gang Crazy Sexy Wool, Alpachino Merino.



Raffia Stars & Snowflakes (free Churchmouse pattern);.



Holiday Egg Ornaments.

BUNDLE UP

With the approach of winter, we're bundling up and burrowing in, seeking warmth in all the familiar places—in the steam rising from a freshly poured cuppa, in the touch of soft wool around our ears and necks, and in the cheer of good company.



Minimalist
Hat; Chunky
Handwarmers;
both free
Churchmouse
patterns.

COZY ELEMENTS

How marvelous that it can take just a simple, wool accessory to chase away the cold! They say that if you keep your pulse points warm, the rest of you stays warm, too. So not just wool sweaters, but cowls, handwarmers, socks, and hats are all mighty defenders against winter's chill—perfect for a year when we'll be spending more time outdoors together. Keep a basket of woollies by the door!



Bundle of Stripecy Hats (free Churchmouse pattern); Churchmouse Classics 'Better-Than-Basic Pullover'.



Left, from top: Super Quick Hat, Pure Cashmere One-Skein Cap, Pure Cashmere One-Skein Cap; Bundle of Stripecy Hats; all free Churchmouse patterns. Right, from top: Super Quick Hat; Churchmouse Classics 'Better-Than-Basic Pullover'; Baggu Duck Tote.



NATURAL WARMTH

Have you ever picked up a hand-knit and instantly felt it warm in your hands? That's the power of natural fibers like wool, cashmere, and alpaca. Working solo or in concert, these clever fibers—shorn from animals well adapted to high altitudes and damp, chilly weather—are innately warm and insulating. What efficient, practical, cozy instruments we have at our fingertips! 🌿



AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 27

Churchmouse Classics 'Studio Beret'; Last-Minute Cowl (free Churchmouse pattern); Simple Colorwork Slouch Hat (free Churchmouse pattern).



Super Quick Hat; Rowan Big Wool, Shibui Silk Cloud, Shibui Haven; Churchmouse Classics 'Woolly Loop Accessories,' mittens.



MAKE TOGETHER

We've been thinking a lot about holiday traditions. At Churchmouse—newly online-only—we're revisiting ours with a new perspective, just as so many other families are doing in this time of change.

But with just weeks until Hanukkah begins and Christmas a month away, we're starting to get a clearer picture of how the holidays will look. We'll find comfort and joy in many of the same things we do every year. We'll decorate gingerbread houses, light the candles, send cards to loved ones, stuff stockings, bake sooo

many cookies and cakes and pies, and sip on mugs of something steaming and spiced!

And of course, our holidays will have those same, hand-made touches we love year after year. In fact, all the fun projects and crafty bits are even more precious. Making gifts and ornaments, sharing sweet treats and memories, are moments that we're thankful for. As we stay at home this season, we'll have more time with family and friends. Whether we're around the table or on a video call, we can make merry together.



Churchmouse Classics 'Flora's Cap'



Pure Cashmere One-Skein Cap (free Churchmouse pattern); Churchmouse Classics 'Saddle Shoulder Men's Pullover.'



Churchmouse Classics 'Shoulder Cozy'



From left: XOXO Pillow Cover (free Churchmouse pattern); Faux Fur Pillow Cover (free Churchmouse pattern); Churchmouse Classics 'Big & Bigger Basketweave Wrap'; Family Slippers (free Churchmouse pattern).

CRAFT RECAP

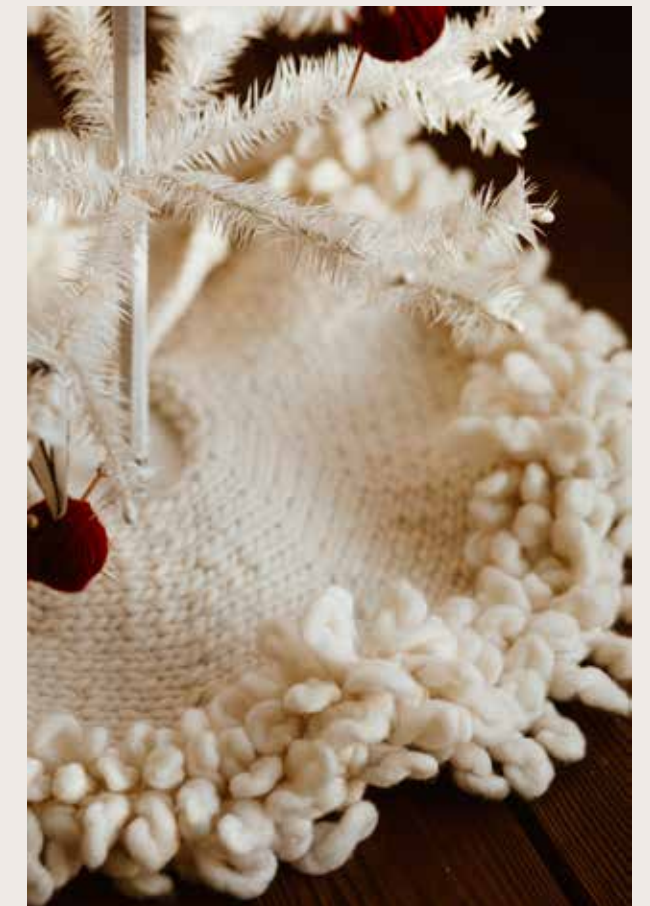
These little crafty projects are a treat! Some are easy enough for the whole family to whip together in an evening, while others ask for a little more concentration, but all are sure to cozy up your home and bring on the smiles. ❄️



Top, from left: Woolly Wreath Ornaments (free Churchmouse pattern); Pom-pom Makers; Churchmouse At Home 'Woolly Wee Sheep'.
 Middle, from left: Easy Yarn Ball Ornaments (free Churchmouse pattern); Raffia Star & Snowflakes; Churchmouse At Home 'Jolly Wee Elf'.
 Bottom, from left: Raffia Pom-poms; Churchmouse At Home 'Felted Gingerbread Ornaments'; Holiday Cheer Mini Hats (free Blue Sky Fibers pattern).



Jolly Great Elf (free adaptation to Churchmouse At Home 'Jolly Wee Elf'); Mini Loopy Tree Skirt; Churchmouse At Home 'Basic Christmas Stocking'.





HELLO, HOLIDAY

By John Koval

When Kit and I chatted with our friends at Smith Tea about new creative collaborations, we all looked at our four seasonal Churchmouse blends and saw that something was missing: a Holiday blend.

Head teamaker, Ravi Kroesen—leading the effort at Smith since October 2018—was especially excited about the idea. He brought a lifetime of experience, a calm mindfulness, and an exceptional palate to the task of creating a new blend that would suit the Churchmouse spirit.

Ravi and his team sent us a couple of black tea blends and we set to tasting. I made a cup of the first one, went to my desk, and was of course immediately called out of the office. When I opened the door on returning, I was captivated by an aroma I hadn't ever experienced. It was, well, "festive."

Now, a lesser tea maker might have mailed in the usual holiday-ish treatment—cranberry, spice, etc. Instead, as I had hoped, I was enchanted by a brew that filled my senses with... juniper berries! A whiff of clove! And what was that... yes, a bit of bergamot. I stopped everything to sip and savor this elixir.

For the black tea base, Ravi selected elegant Assam and Keemun varieties that entertained us to the last, cooled-off drop. When I connected with Kit after her cuppa, we just looked at each other. I wrote to our Account Manager at Smith, Alix, and said: "Tell Ravi to stop blending! This is it!"

So please welcome along with us, the new Churchmouse Holiday blend. To the Smith team, thank you. To you, cheers!

CONVERSATIONS WITH A CUPPA

In these extraordinary times, we seek comfort. And if it's elusive, why not manufacture a comforting moment? Easy enough: All you need is a hot cuppa and some company. Of course, a piece of cake or a biscuit wouldn't go amiss.

As for the company, we've recently had some excellent tea parties over video. Benefit #1: Health safety. Benefit #2: Instead of sharing a pot, everyone chooses their own favorite—black tea or herbal tisane, hot cocoa or even, *ahem*, coffee.

So. The kettle is on and you've put out your choice of teaware. A sturdy English mug with a silver milk pitcher. Or that mid-century serving set you found last year at the bargain boutique. Or the heirloom china—don't let it languish in the cupboard when you can show it off online.

Everyone set? Okay, time for a good old chinwag.

Allow us to offer some conversation starters:

❁ ***If you had a theme song, what would it be?***

Break the ice. Get everyone comfortable.

❁ ***What are you grateful for today?***

It's quite true that spirits lift when you count your blessings. Keeping the question to "today" brings everyone into the "here and now."

❁ ***What act of kindness could you do tomorrow?***

In Jan Karon's "Mitford Series" of books, Father Tim had a lovely morning prayer:

"Dear Lord, help me be a blessing to someone today." This question can remind us that small gestures can make a big difference.

❁ ***Who did a little favor for you in the last few weeks?***

Let's honor others for their efforts, and share the joy you felt at the time.

❁ ***When should we do this again?***

There. You have the idea. It's comforting to remember how closely we're all connected. Enjoy!





SIP OR SEND

If you've been saving that treat—a scrummy recipe, a spiced tea, a delectable hot chocolate—for a special occasion, don't wait any longer! Now is the time to indulge yourself with a well-stocked pantry and send care packages full of all your favorites to share with friends and family.



Harney & Sons Holiday Teas.



Chocolat Chaud.

SMALL BATCHES

As a little girl, I turned up my nose at fruitcake much to my mum's dismay (by all accounts her dark-and-light-style fruitcakes were the gold standard). It wasn't until my childhood knitting friend Cheri (who now lives on an old Christmas tree farm!) made this version when we were both grown-ups that I overcame my bias. I think the secret is that there's no candied fruit in sight! Now I like all kinds of fruitcake but this one was the turning point. If you think you don't like fruitcake, you might give this one a go.

Enjoy,
Kit



DRIED-FRUIT FRUITCAKE

Makes two 9 x 5" loaves; or two 8 x 4" loaves plus six mini cakes in a cupcake tin. Line pans with parchment or muffin papers; butter or spray parchment with oil. Preheat oven to 300°F.

1 cup butter, softened
1 cup packed brown sugar
½ cup honey
5 eggs at room temp.

Cream first three ingredients; beat in eggs one at a time until well blended.

2 cups all-purpose flour; set aside
½ cup for dredging fruit
1 tsp. baking powder
1-¼ tsp ground cinnamon
¼ tsp nutmeg
½ tsp allspice
½ tsp salt
Combine dry ingredients.

½ cup apricot nectar
¼ cup half & half
Stir together nectar and cream.

1 lb. walnuts
½ lb. dried apricots
½ lb. pitted dates
½ lb. dried sweetened sour cherries
½ lb. mixed raisins

Chop all fruit and nuts to ¼-½" pieces; toss in reserved flour to dredge, separating pieces that stick together (keeps fruit from sinking); set aside.

Optional: ¼ cup Irish whiskey for cheesecloth wrapping

Add dry ingredients and nectar/cream mixture alternately to butter mixture. Gently stir in nuts and fruits until evenly dispersed in batter. (This is where we invite everyone to take a "magic stir" and make a wish.) Spoon into prepared pans, smoothing tops.

Bake until a tester comes out clean: 9 x 5" may take approx. 2 hours; 8 x 4" approx. 1 hour and 20 minutes; mini muffin cakes approx. 30 minutes. Check early; don't overbake. Tip loaves from pans; remove paper. Allow to cool.

If desired, soak cheesecloth in whiskey; wrap around cakes, then wrap in foil. If possible, let rest in fridge for a week or two. This will help it slice more tidily but we usually can't wait! Keep in a biscuit tin in a cool place for when you're a little peckish.





SITE SPECIFICS

Our marvelous team works every day to make the churchmouseyarns.com experience as smooth and helpful as possible. To that end, we'd love to introduce you to several useful features on our website (if you haven't discovered them already!).

[OUR STORY](#)

The tale of how Churchmouse came to be.

[UPDATES](#)

Up-to-date Churchmouse news, including holiday shipping estimates.

FINDERS

Use these little tools to search for just the right [yarn](#), [tea](#), or [needles](#)!

[MOUSE POINTS](#)

Our rewards program! Every purchase brings you points. Sign up. Refer a friend.


[USEFUL TECHNIQUES](#)

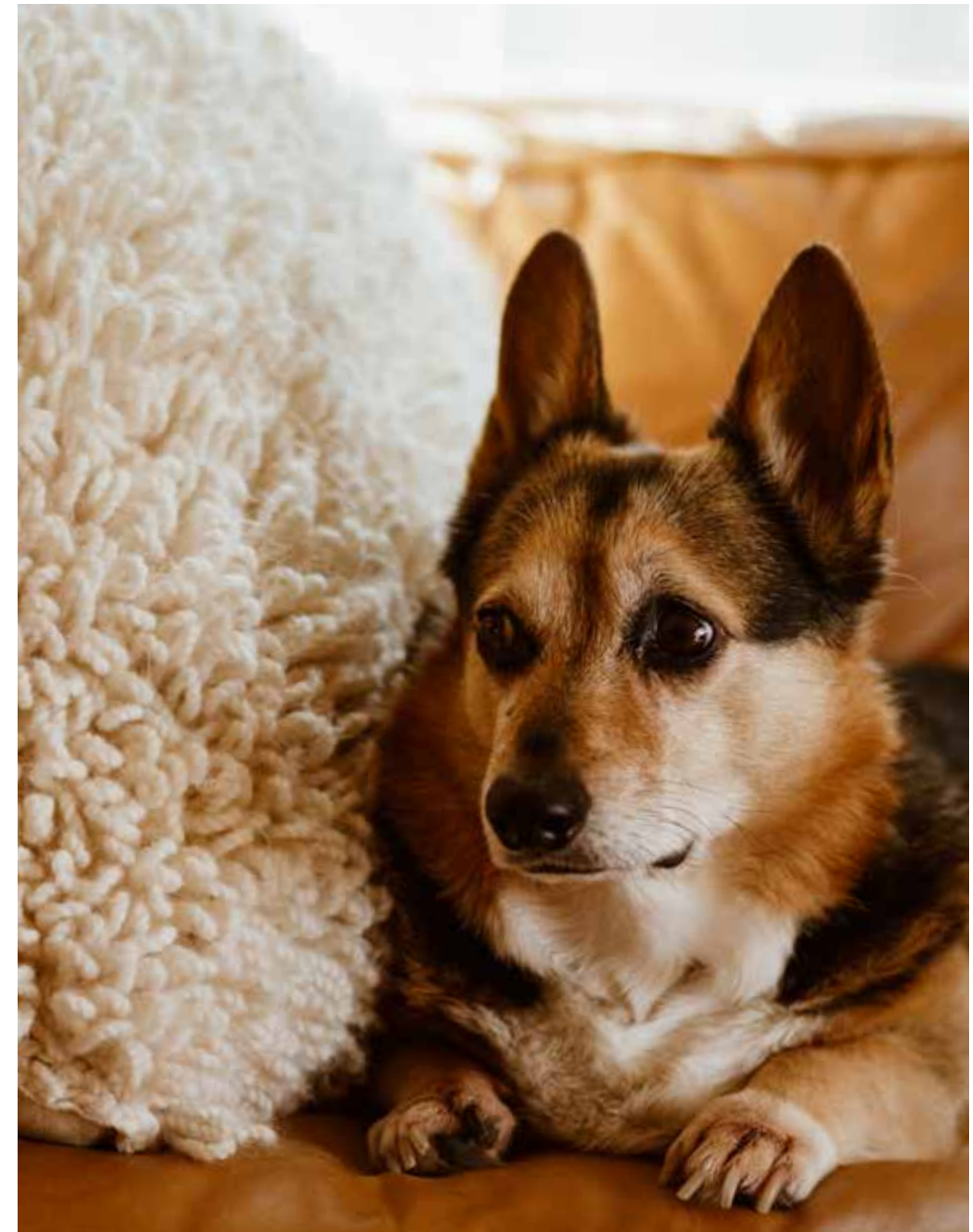
Tried and true techniques that you'll find in *Churchmouse Classics* patterns.

[FAQS](#)

A collection of our most frequently asked questions, sorted by category.

Don't forget to follow us on Instagram and Facebook, and join our spirited group on Ravelry. Remember, if you ever want to get in touch, please write to us at contact@churchmouseyarns.com or give us a call at 206.780.2686. We love to hear from you!

Join our mailing list (at the bottom of our webpage). You'll get our emails and the next issue of this newsletter. 



Woolly Loop Pillow Cover (free Churchmouse pattern); and this is Wally!