



❄️ Maja Karlsson ❄️

MAJA'S SWEDISH SOCKS

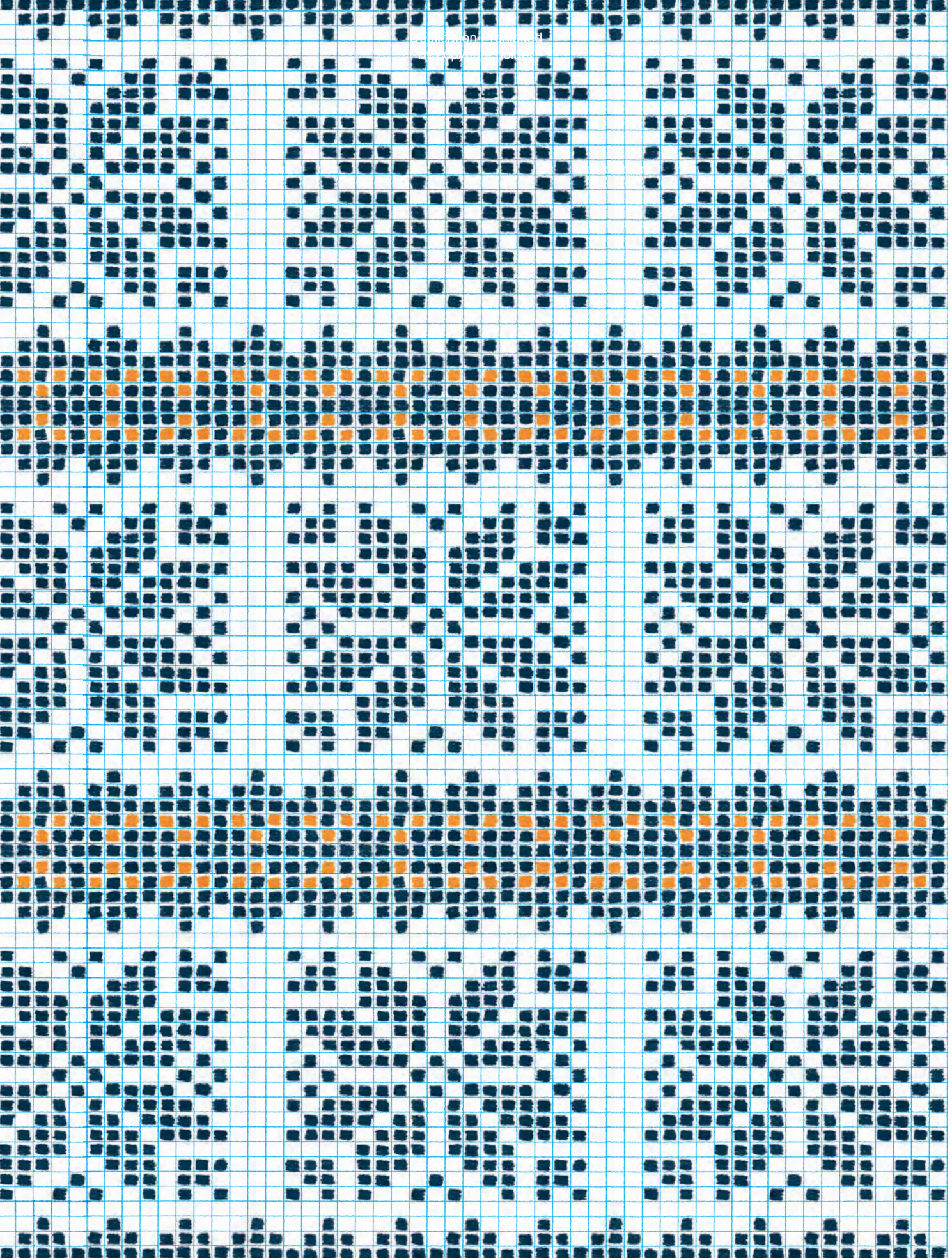
Over 30 Imaginative Patterns to Knit





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MAJA KARLSSON



Maja's Swedish Socks

OVER 30 IMAGINATIVE PATTERNS TO KNIT



Photography: Helén Pe

Illustrations: Siri Carlén



TRAFALGAR SQUARE
North Pomfret, Vermont

For more inspiration and knitting tips—follow Maja on Instagram: @majasmanufaktur. You can also go there to ask questions about the patterns in this book.

Have you knitted something from the book? Please share a picture of your project by using the hashtag #trettiofemsockor when posting on social media.

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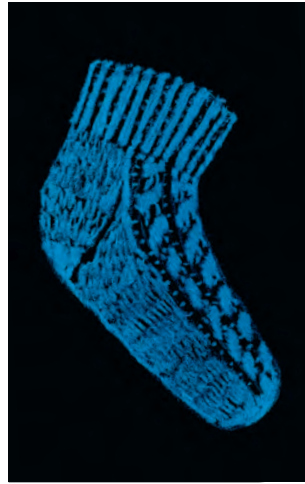


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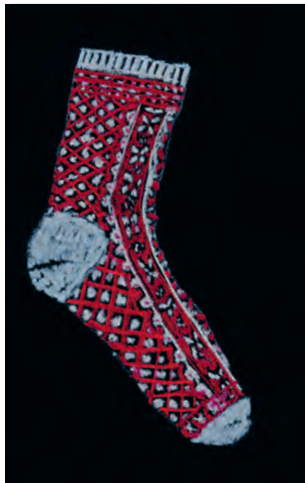
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Preface

A long time ago, I met an old woman who was sitting and knitting. We started talking about ragg socks and the best way to knit them. She told me about her husband, who was a woodcutter and had worked outdoors all winter in the damp and the cold. She had to knit his socks exactly the right size: if they were too big and got crumpled in his boots, the least little fold would cause blisters and discomfort. The socks had to be thin and tight enough to fit precisely, particularly around the foot. I've thought back to that conversation many times, and love to use the knowledge she shared with me.

Life is so full of wonders. Although we are the fruit of earlier generations' endeavors, yesterday's hardships are easily forgotten. That a pair of well-knitted wool socks made a huge difference for a worker in the first half of the twentieth century might be difficult for us to imagine. I often think about my grandfather, who also worked in the woods during the winters—he lost two fingers, and had a rough time of it. Were his feet warm? And my other grandfather worked in the mines from a young age; did he have good stockings in his boots when the raw air hit him? I certainly hope so.

To knit socks is to carry on a precious and meaningful tradition. Anyone who picks up knitting needles becomes part of an endless chain. I also often think about photos I found of older relatives in a sewing circle.

When I asked my aunt if she remembered what they were working on in those pictures, she said, "They were usually knitting socks—as everyone did back then." Sock knitting was a basic everyday occupation. And even if knitted socks aren't a necessity for us today, they carry a special meaning. Socks represent forward movement and put a spring in your step. If we have warm feet, we go farther and do it comfortably. Handmade socks are also full care and love. If we give them to someone we care about, it means more. And, in a certain sense, socks are a type of amulet, offering protection. We tug them onto our children's feet before we send them out into the world; we put them on to help us through cold, difficult days.

The socks in this book are memories, dreams, fairy tales, and experiences in nature that I want to share with you. Each and every one has its own history and is named after something I care about. It took a lot of time to design and knit 35 socks, but my reward was to go on a singular journey. From a miner's homestead in Västmanland to the famous Swedish author Selma Lagerlöf's home at Mårbacka, to a small mountain in Värmland. It was a delightful and beautiful journey that I hope will continue with you.

A pattern isn't a sock until someone's knitted it. Now the real adventure begins: Let's knit together!

Warmest greetings from Maja

About Socks

The word “sock” comes originally from the Latin word *soccus*—a type of shoe—while the Swedish word *strumpa* (“stocking”) means “something shortened,” and has the same origin as “stump.” In Sweden, we walk in *strumplåsten*; in the Fenno-Swedish dialect, they continue to use an older word, *strumpfota*. Both mean “in stocking feet.” In the 1600s, the adjective *sockad* could describe someone who wore socks (“sock-clad”).

The presence of socks in our everyday lives has left footprints, in Swedish. We have an expression, “walk about in wool stockings,” which comes from the days when wool stockings were put on over winter shoes when it was slippery, in order to minimize the risk of sliding. This idiom now describes anyone who continues doing something without regard for external circumstances. To be “secure in socks” is another old Swedish saying that connects sock-wearing to a certain amount of self-confidence—it means that someone is cocky.

Starting a couple of years ago, we began to celebrate *Ragg* Sock Day on 24 October. *Ragg* socks are as common and as celebrated as *knäckebröd* (traditional crisp bread) and *ragg* rugs in Swedish culture. Sometimes these socks are referred to as “poor man’s shoes”—because by knitting with *ragg* yarn (a blend of goat hair and wool), you can produce a pair of thick, almost indestructible socks, which can even be worn over the outsoles of shoes in the winter in Sweden as an extra warming layer. The phrase “*ragg* socks” has lived on in Swedish, even though for many years now this style of sock has been

knitted with wool instead of *ragg* yarn. What Swedish people call these socks depends on what part of the country we live in: they’re known as “thick socks” in Norrland and “*ragg* socks” in central Sweden. Some say “wool socks,” and others say “knitted stockings”! I grew up in Västmanland, and I’d certainly tell you they’re called “*ragg* socks.” You’ll get different answers depending on where you are and who you ask.

Sock knitting was considered a natural part of daily chores in Sweden:

“Those who go out into the pastures with the animals or help with the milking in the early morning hours, take a cup of coffee and a little bread and butter, as well as regular stocking knitting (strumpbindningen), and perhaps also a 10-öre book...”***

Socks also have a place in the world of Scandinavian fairytales:

*“In Fving in Blekinge, once upon a time, a little troll girl sat under a spruce tree called the Troll Spruce. Every night, she worked on a knitted golden stocking. If anyone addressed her or she was observed in any other way, she disappeared. Anyone who wanted to see even a glimpse of her had to hide very carefully.”****

Even poets have written about wool stockings:

*“The white stockings sleep well overnight, and their shadows go into wool socks.”*****

The socks in this book will entice you with a delightful mix of heel variations, pattern motifs, and knitting techniques. These socks are







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Miners

Bergsmän is the Swedish word for the peasants who worked in the mines in Bergslagen from the Middle Ages until the nineteenth century. The clothing of these miners was austere, and consisted of a long dark coat, shirt, vest, and knee pants. A miner might also have a miner's stick, with the shaft shaped like a miner's ax. My relatives have roots in Bergslagen going back several centuries, and many of my relatives worked in the mines that supplied Sweden and Europe with iron ore. This sock is an homage to those who suffered in dark mines and risked their lives and health. The pattern was inspired by the fabric from a vest that was part of my father's work outfit. It's designed to fit a number of sizes; find your sock circumference and then tailor the sock to the actual length of your foot.

SKILL LEVEL: Experienced

SIZE: Shoe sizes: U. S. Women's 5-6½ (7½-9½, 10½-12, Men's 11-13) / Euro: 35-37 (38-40, 41-43, 44-46)

FINISHED MEASUREMENTS

SOCK LENGTH: 9 (9¾, 10¾, 11½) in / 23 (25, 27, 29) cm

SOCK CIRCUMFERENCE: A = 8 in / 20 cm; B = 9½ in / 24 cm

MATERIALS

YARN: CYCA #1 (fingering) Rauma Gammelserie (100% Norwegian wool, 175 yd/160 m / 50 g)

YARN COLORS AND AMOUNTS:

MC: Dark Gray Heather 405: 100 g

CC1: Natural 401: 50 g

CC2: Blue 447 or Petrol 4902: 50 g

CC3: Copper Red 4904: 50 g

CC4: Ochre 4905: 50 g

NEEDLES: U. S. sizes 0 and 1.5 / 2 and 2.5 mm: sets of 5 dpn

GAUGE: 30 sts x 42 rnds in stockinette pattern on larger needles = 4 × 4 in / 10 × 10 cm.

Adjust needle sizes to obtain correct gauge if necessary.

CONSTRUCTION: The socks are worked toe up with a peasant heel (see page 192).

TECHNIQUES: Judy's magic cast-on (see page 194).

MIL = Increase 1 st with make 1 left-leaning (see page 196).

MIR = Increase 1 st with make 1 right-leaning (see page 196).

SHORT ROWS and **WRAPPED STITCHES** (see page 194).

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ramt fjäderfä
Då sträckte
de i år som i

e, såsom det
er Matssons
om de tyckte
mansställen,
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ana namn av
ingby.

ga att hitta på
kraft, som om
ks herrgård. I år

a är Svaneholm.

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att vara i Skåne

unga byggnader
gd mindre hus.
Detta är Jord.

orde ju ha känt
och här hade

ar nog så att
opifran.

om voro hans
tingo kvar här
lög från högt



Det rutiga tygtycket.

1881 Kungälv, Nils Holgersson.

A TREAT FOR YOUR FEET

From fun and cozy to traditional and classic, from Scandinavian history and geography to willow catkins and dragonflies, this all-new selection of handknit socks is impossible to resist. With every pattern steeped in the sights, sensations, weather, wildlife, and folk culture of Sweden, knitters are invited to

step into a world with inspiration around every corner. Technical tips and an overview of heel types, plus instructions for increasing, decreasing, reinforcement, and darning, are ready to guide the sock novice, while experts can dive into cables, bobbles, colorwork, and more, to find the perfect fit for every foot.

MAJA KARLSSON lives in Arvika, Sweden, in a charming house built in the 1920s. She is a freelance knitter, and designer, writer, blogger, photographer, lecturer, and teacher, and also operates her own online yarn store called Maja Manufaktur. Karlsson is the author of *Traditional Swedish Knitting Patterns* and *Maja's Swedish Mittens*, available from Trafalgar Square Books.

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