

## Nina's Caribou Trigger Finger Mittens

While there are many versions of the trigger finger mitten in Newfoundland, the pattern that stands out for its depiction of caribou was perfected by Nina Hoddinott of River of Ponds on the Northern Peninsula. She first got the pattern from Joyce Patey, and where Joyce got the pattern is not known. What is known is that Nina took that pattern and knit hundreds of pairs of these mittens, each with subtle variations and nuances, for friends, family, and upon request.



It was in the 1990's that Nina started to sell her caribou mittens at craft fairs as a means of raising money to buy Christmas gifts for the family. To this day family members can look at a pair of trigger finger mittens and be able to tell if they were knit by Nina or not, so distinctive is her style.

**...feel free to think like a Newfoundland knitter - add stitches as needed, change things that don't suit the mitten, and use your resourceful and creative nature make it work!**

Please enjoy the pattern, and knit it knowing that you are carrying on a long tradition of knitting from Newfoundland - one that reflects the practical yet whimsical nature of generations of knitters from the island.

### Notes:

This attempts to put on paper a pattern that exists largely in the memory of Newfoundland knitters, and as such it is more of a guideline than a set of strict rules. Keep this in mind when using the pattern, and feel free to think like a Newfoundland knitter – add stitches as needed, change things that don't suit the mitten, and use your resourceful and creative nature make it work!



## Materials:

**For traditional mittens:** two skeins of *Briggs & Little Heritage* yarn (or any worsted yarn that has a high lanolin content) in contrasting colours, size 3.5mm Double point needles (3.75mm or 4.0 mm for a men's XL)

**For other worsted yarns:** two skeins/balls of *Ella Rae Classic Superwash* (or other softer yarns such as *Diamond Galway*, *Brown Sheep*, *Debbie Bliss Blue Faced Leister...*) in contrasting colours, size 3.75 mm DPN for ladies Medium, OR size 4.0 mm DPN for ladies large men's small/medium, OR 4.5mm DPN for Men's large

**All mittens, in any size:** two stitch holders (large safety pins work well) to hold thumb and trigger finger stitches until they are needed, 1 plastic darning needle to weave in ends.

## Terms:

DPN	Double point needle
MC	Main colour (usually a dark colour)
CC	Contrast colour (usually a light colour)
K	Knit
P	Purl
St	Stitch
St st	Stockinette stitch
Chk patt	Checker pattern (K1 MC, K1 CC)



## Cuff:

Cast on 45 sts with MC, dividing evenly over DPNs

\*K2,P1\*, repeat between \*\* to end of round with MC for 7 rounds.

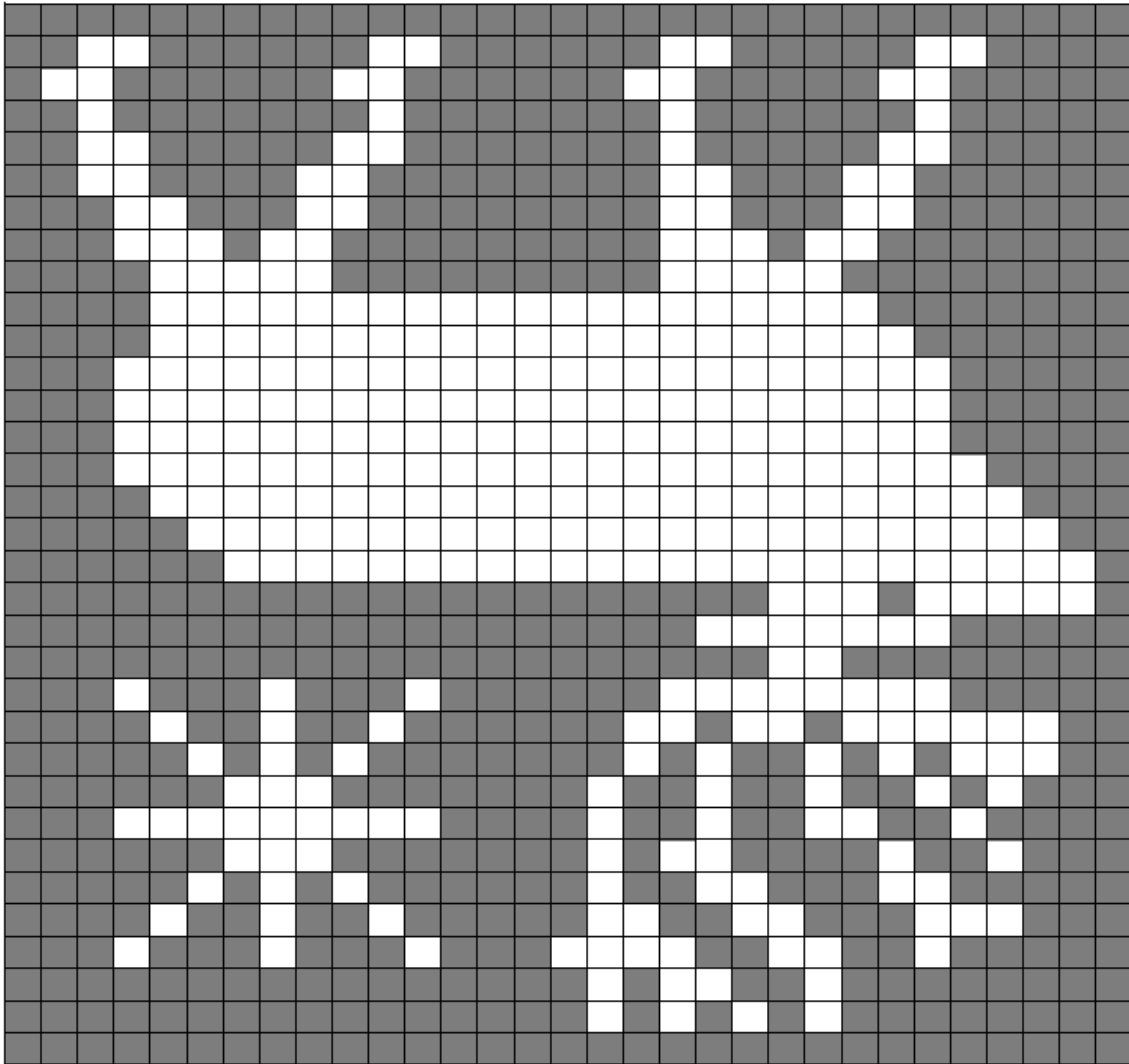
Continue in \*K2, P1\* ribbing while alternating between the MC and CC for each round, until there are 7 CC stripes in your work.

With MC, knit one round in st st.

With MC, knit one round in st st, increasing a total of 7 sts with the increases spread out as evenly as possible in the round. (52 sts)

## Set up Thumb Gusset:

Throughout the thumb gusset increases, **follow the caribou chart** (*Norma's Variation can be found on the last page of this pattern*) for the front of the mitten, starting from the bottom right corner of the chart and reading the chart from right to left. **On the palm side of each mitten, knit in single stitch checker pattern (chk patt) unless otherwise indicated.**



LEFT MITTEN: To set up thumb gusset increases on the palm side of the mitten, knit in chk patt to the last 8 sts of the round. At the last 8 sts, knit as follows: **K1 MC**, k4 in chk patt, **K1 MC**, K last 2 sts in chk patt. The K1 MC stitches will create a clear boundary line that will frame the increases and the shaping of the thumb!

RIGHT MITTEN: To set up thumb gusset increases on the palm side of the mitten, knit in chk patt for 2 sts after the chart front. After these 2 sts, knit as

follows: **K1 MC**, k4 in chk patt, **K1 MC**, knit to end of round in chk patt. The K1 MC stitches will create a clear boundary line that will frame the increases and the shaping of the thumb!

**BOTH MITTENS:** On the next round continue the chart on the front of the mitten, and always knit in chk patt before and after the K1 MC boundary sts while following the 2 steps below:

1. K1 MC, M1F, **K4** chk patt, M1B, K1MC, K last end of round in chk patt.
2. Knit between MC boundary sts in chk patt without any increases.

Repeat step 1 & 2 on the palm side of the mitten, increasing the bold directions by 2 sts each increase round (ex. K6, K8, K10, K12...) until there are a total of 12 stitches between the MC boundary stitches, and a total of 60 stitches in the project.

### Set up Thumb Stitches:

Knit the next round in chart pattern and chk patt until you reach the 12 sts between the boundary line sts. Slip these 12 sts onto spare yarn or a suitable stitch holder for later. Cast on 12 sts and alternating MC and CC accordingly.

Continue to knit the chart front and palm of the mitten in pattern until the chart is complete.

### Set up Trigger Finger stitches:

Knit 12 sts in chk patt on the front of the mitten.

Place these 12 sts from the front of the mitten and the corresponding 12 sts from the palm of the mitten onto spare yarn or a suitable stitch holder so that the trigger finger can be knit at a later time.

### Main Mitten top:

Knit remaining 36 sts for the main mitten top in chk patt until the 36 st tube measures 2 inches (5 cm).

Divide the sts evenly onto two DPNS so that the mitten top will lie perfectly flat. Repeat the following sequence on every needle on every row until a total of 16 sts (8 sts per needle) remain:

SSK, knit in chk patt to last 2 sts of needle, K2tog.

Finish the top of the mitten using the kitchner stitch.

Note that the most successful way to keep the checker pattern in sequence is to always ensure that you are alternating the colour when decreasing, even if it means that you have to occasionally need to knit the stitch next to the decrease stitch in the same colour. While this seems counter intuitive, you will be immediately knitting these two same-colour stitches together in the next row anyways, thus hiding the break in the checker sequence. This applies to every mitten finger!



### Trigger Finger Top:

Pick up the 24 sts that were set aside for the trigger finger, and divide as evenly as possible onto three DPNs. Knit in the round in chk patt until the 24 st tube measures 2 inches (5 cm).

Divide the sts evenly onto two DPNS so that the trigger finger will lie perfectly flat. Repeat the following sequence on every needle on every row until a total of 12 sts (6 sts per needle) remain:

SSK, knit in chk patt to last 2 sts of needle, K2tog.

Finish the top of the mitten using the kitchner stitch.

### Thumb:

Pick up the 12 sts that were set aside for the thumb, and pick up an additional 12 to 14 sts above the thumb opening and edge. Divide as evenly as possible onto three DPNs. Knit in the round in chk patt until the 24 st (or 26 st) tube measures 2 inches (5 cm).

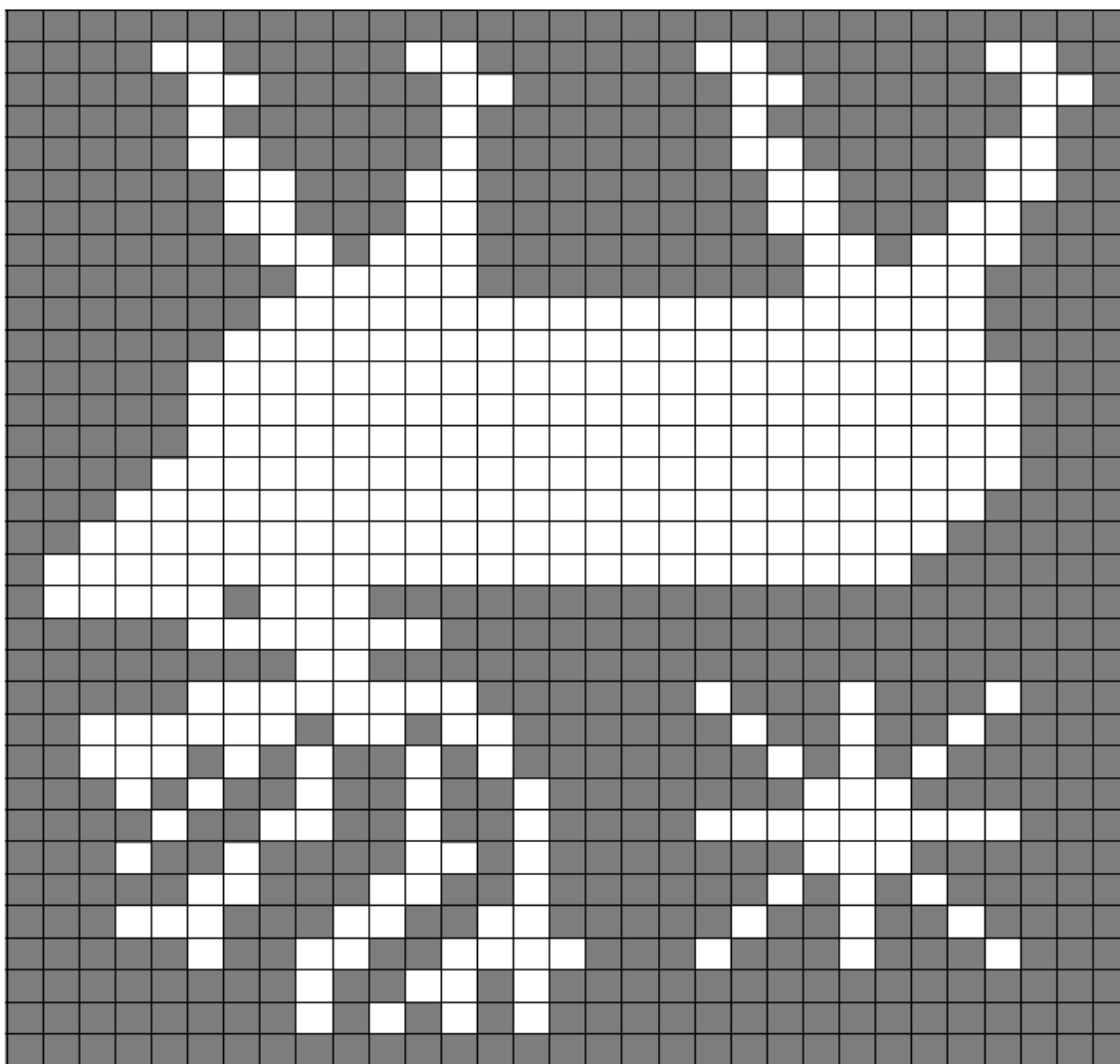
Divide the sts evenly onto two DPNS so that the thumb will lie perfectly flat. Repeat the following sequence on every needle on every row until a total of 12 sts (6 sts per needle) remain:

SSK, knit in chk patt to last 2 sts of needle, K2tog.

Finish the top of the mitten using the kitchner stitch.

### Norma's Variation:

Nina's daughter Norma took the time to flip Nina's caribou pattern so that when the mittens are worn the caribou on each are nose to nose, as opposed to Nina's tradition of caribou marching in a line. To use *Norma's variation*, simply use the Norma chart on the right hand of the mitten, and a subtle symmetry will be added to the work.



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