The Soho Bag

Super size for all your fun shopping days. Tough enough to take on trips and classy enough to be your favorite large tote bag. This bag is worked in two yummy colors with classic large circles across the top, back and front.



Size: 14" X 19" high and 4" deep. Measurements taken after felting.

Straps are 22" long in leather, secured with large silver rings.

Stitches: Stockinette

Yarn: Lion Brand Alpine yarn, great for felting. 93 yds per skein. Main color (8 Skeins) for body and accent (3.5 Skeins) for circles and bottom of bag. Colors used in photo Barley #224 (77%wool/ 15%acrylic/ 8%rayon) and Bay Leaf #123 (100% wool)

Needed:

- 28" Knitting Board at standard 1/2" spacing
- Knit hook
- Crochet hook size 6/J
- Large darning needle
- 2 metal rings, 4" diameter
- 2 leather straps or a single wide strap of leather or a knitted strap.
- Bag closure. See options at end of pattern under "Finishing". 1 button may be needed.

Gauge: 3 sts=1" 3.5 rows=1" (before felting)

Bag is knit with 2 main pieces for front and back starting at top edges with circles. One long piece for sides and bottom.

Front and Back:

Cast On 56 stitches with taupe yarn in Stockinette stitch. Lay strong anchor yarn. Work 3 rows with taupe yarn.

Tie on the blue yarn at stitch # 8 between the rows of pins.

Follow the graph for the amount of blue stitches per row, starting at row #1. For the first row, you will wrap needles 9,10,11,12 from front to back with blue yarn. Carry the blue yarn over to needles 27,28,29,30 and then over to needles 45,46,47,48. Lay the blue yarn down at this point. Pick up the

main working yarn at beginning of row and work in Stockinette stitch skipping the blue pins and complete the circular. Hook over all stitches.

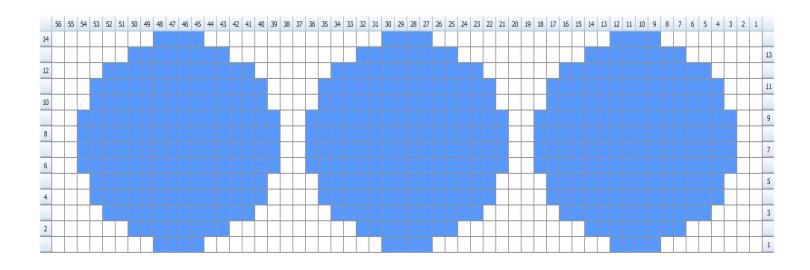
Work the design area in same manner per the diagram provided until all 14 rows of design are complete. Cut the blue yarn with a 2" tail and tie to working yarn where they meet. Work 33 additional rows in Stockinette stitch with main taupe yarn. Total rows=50

Cut the main yarn leaving a 2-3" tail.

Tie on the blue yarn at beginning of next row and lay yarn tails down between the rows of pins. Work in Stockinette stitch for 20 rows with the blue yarn.

Bind off with crochet hook using 2 loop method. (1 loop thru 1 loop) Cut and knot at end of row and knit piece is off of board. Bind off at anchor yarn with 3-loop method or 1 loop thru 2 for a firmer edge.

Work the 2nd piece for bag back same as front.



Sides and Bottom:

Cast On 12 sts in Stockinette with taupe yarn using anchor yarn. Work 56 rows in taupe. Cut and tie on blue yarn. Work 93 rows in blue yarn. Cut and tie on taupe yarn. Work 56 rows in taupe yarn. Bind off board and anchor yarn with 2-loop method.

Sewing:

Be sure to sew with strong yarn in similar color.

Be sure to match the change of colors of bag sides to bag front and back. We suggest that you do some tacking before doing the actual seams so you'll be sure to keep the pieces aligned properly. The sides of bag will extend above the bag front by 6 rows. This extension will create the ring holders that will secure the straps. Be sure to leave this extension when you sew in the sides. Use the invisible stitch when sewing the blue bottom and sides to the bag front and back.

Sew the side seams with the darning needle up to top edge of bag. Do not sew the side tabs until after the bag is felted and you are ready to add the rings.

Felting:

Set washing machine at hottest water setting at low level of water. Fill tank before adding bag. Place bag into machine when agitation begins. Check the bag after 10 minutes. Be sure the machine continues to agitate while bag is felting. If the felting is not complete, place back in agitator for another 5 mins. You may need an additional 5 mins as it depends on your washer temperature. Be sure to check bag every few minutes to prevent over-felting. (Our sample needed 20 minutes of agitation). When complete, the taupe knitting will be almost solid with some evidence of stitches. The blue will be solid. Once the felting is complete, remove bag from machine and squeeze out as much water as possible. Use several towels to expel as much additional water as possible. Allow the bag to air dry while you gently shape the bottom and sides. Extend the tabs so they stretch out as smooth as possible. It may take several days for your bag to dry completely-do not rush the drying process. Use scissors to trim any stray hairs of yarn.

Finishing:

Place the metal rings at each tab at top edge of bag. Fold over to inside and stitch securely with darning needle and taupe yarn. If preferred, you can use black nylon thread.

Bag straps can be purchased at bag accessories sites, leather stores, or any belt can also be used. You may even find an unwanted leather bag with reusable handles. If you prefer a knit strap, you can knit 12 stitches, 34 inches long and felt this piece with bag. Wrap the ends around the metal rings and stitch in place.

Bag Closure:

We have used brown Velcro strips to secure the center of bag at inside of top edge, about 1" down. These can be sewn in with yarn or thread. You can also purchase a magnetic snap that can be sewn to each side of top edge, about 1" from top edge. If you prefer, you can make a knitted tab to wrap over the top of bag at center. This would be about 8" long (knitted) with 8 st cast on with large buttonhole in one end. Or you can knit it 10" long with 6 sts cast on and create a loop at one end to go over the button. Either way you select, sew the tab onto the bag back about 1" down from top edge prior to felting. After bag is complete, you can sew on your button for proper placement to match the length of your tab.

