

Hakucho's Big Bag - recycled plastic grocery bag pattern



This pattern was inspired by [Maia Disco's](#) felted bag [Baby's Got a Brand New Big Bag](#) pattern.

I modified the pattern ever so slightly for the plastic yarn and Maia so kindly gave me permission to post my modified directions as a free pattern.

Materials:

You will need many plastic shopping bags (bags marked "recyclable" not recommended)***. I would say approximately 50-60. Here is the tutorial on [How to turn plastic bags into yarn](#).

I have found that the process goes much faster if once the handles and bottoms are cut off, you stack the prepared bags one on top of the other (I have done up to 8 at a time) and then cut the bags as shown in the tutorial. I think the number of bags that you can cut at one time depends greatly on how sharp your scissors are. You will now have loops, which you will slip knot together to make the plastic yarn. For those who have read the [Mason-Dixon Knitting](#) book, you will recognize this technique, which is referred to "Calamari Knitting". The French woman mentioned in the book used this type of plastic yarn to make sling seats for folding lawn chairs. This is what inspired me to try and use this material for a reusable shopping bag.

U.S. 17 circular knitting needles 29"

U.S. 15 circular knitting needles 29"

4 large stitch markers

crochet hook for weaving in ends

Gauge:

Gauge is really not at all important. With size 17 circular needles gauge is approximately 2.5 stitches per inch. The bag's approximate measurements upon completion are 17" x 16".

*This bag is worked from the bottom up starting with a rectangle of garter stitch. With the size 15 needle cast on 23 stitches using the long tail cast on method. Always slip the first stitch of every row purl wise. Knit 32 rows (garner stitch). **The 32 garner stitch rows produces a chain on the short edges of your rectangle. The chain is the result of your***

slipped stitches at the beginning of the garter stitch rows. There are 16 slipped stitches on each side.

Please note: For the body of the bag you will need to pick up a total of **55** stitches. 16 stitches along each of the two sides **picking up the whole slipped stitch** and 23 along the cast on edge. When you are finished picking up all the stitches you should have a total of 78 stitches on your needle.

Round 1: Having your original 23 stitches on your needle place a marker on the needle and pick up 16 stitches, place another marker and then pick up 23 more, place another marker and pick up 16 again and then place the last marker - *it is helpful if this marker is different from the rest, larger or a different color.* This is now the beginning of round 2. **You will have 78 stitches on your needle.**

Round 2, etc: Continue to knit every round.

After 6 rounds switch to the size 17 needle. Continue knitting every round until the bag measures 12-13 inches or desired length. Measure only the stockinette portion of the bag.

To make the bag's handles:

Round 1: Knit 6 stitches, bind off 11 for handle, knit 6 more, move marker, knit 16, move marker, knit 6, bind off 11 stitches. Knit 6, move marker and knit the remaining 16 stitches.

Round 2: Knit 6 stitches, cast on 11 using [backward loop cast on](#) method, knit 6, move marker, knit 16, move marker, knit 6, cast on 11, knit 6, move marker, knit remaining 16 stitches. You should now have 2 holes for the handles evenly spaced on the front and back of the bag.

Switch back to size 15 needles. Knit 5 more rounds of seed stitch

Round 1: k1, p1

Round 2: p1, k1

Etc.

Bind off all stitches. Work in ends with crochet hook.

Note: The bag will stretch a little with use.

Enjoy!

Questions, comments please visit hakucho.blogspot.com or email me hakucho19(at)yahoo(dot)com.

If you would like this pattern in pdf format for easier printing please email me. I will be very happy to send it to you!

I LOVE seeing what others have made with my patterns, so please send me your photos and I will add them to [My Knitting Friend's Gallery](#). Thanks :)

****It has been brought to my attention that you should not use bags labeled "recyclable" because they are manufactured to break down easily and your knitted bag may break as well. Everyone's supply of bags is different. My best advice is to use your judgment and if you think the bags will not hold up or break do not use the flimsy bags. I don't know that much about plastic bags, but I do know that over time ALL plastic tends to break down. Heat also effects plastic. I wouldn't recommend storing the knitted plastic bags in you hot car for any length of time. I have had no problems with falling apart or breaking so far with all the bags I have knitted. The first bag I made too large and it stretched (but did not break) because it was overfilled. I'm still using it :)*

Edited September 3, 2007: errata in the pattern found!

I have made corrections in the pattern in black print. Sorry for any confusion or inconvenience. As always I really appreciate any and all feedback. Thankfully an anonymous reader caught

my mistake and so kindly left me a comment. Thanks :) Hopefully it is clearer now.

Please email me if you have any questions or comments.

hakucho19(at)yahoo(dot)com

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