

Godey's Knit Silk Purse, 1863

Instructions by: Jamie Quick

Skill Level: Easy.



Materials:

- 25 Grams of Silk yarn, where 100 grams = aprox 800 yards
- size 00 – 000 needles
- 3" cardboard or plastic for making tassels
- Sewing/embroidery needles and thread
- *Optional* – silk taffeta lining and size 1.8 – 1.9 MM crochet hook

Size: Without the tassels, the bag part of this purse measures approximately 3.5 inches wide (5 inches if stretched) and 5 inches tall.

Let's Get Knitting!!

Cast on 45 stitches, with long tail method

Row 1: knit

Row 2: purl

Row 3: knit

Row 4: purl

Row 5: k1, *yo, k2tog* repeat from * to * till end (if you mirror you k2tog by doing ssk at the half point, it will keep your edges straighter)

Row 6: purl

Row 7: knit

Row 8: knit

Time to Change Colors

When attaching a new color, do not cut your old string! Attach new color by tying a knot onto the previously used string. This will create a prettier attachment, as you will not have a knot or stress point in your work. Make sure all tie on strings are about six inches long, so you can easily weave them in with an embroidery needle.

Row 9: Starting with your new color, knit

Row 10: purl

Before you knit row 11, understand that now you have two different colors of yarn attached to your work, and you need to carry them up the side. (Why? Because it is much easier than cutting and retying your yarn with every stripe, and creates a stronger product) You will do this by knitting the first stitch of row 11, 13, and 15 in both colors of yarn. You will knit the rest of the row in it's normal color. When you purl in rows 12, 14, and 16 you will treat both loops of color as one stitch, and purl them together. Do not worry, this is the side of the purse that you will be sewing together at the bottom, so you will never see the stitches carried up the side!

Row 11: knit

Row 12: purl

Row 13: k1, *yo, k2tog* repeat from * to * till end

Row 14: purl

Row 15: knit

Row 16: knit

Repeat rows 9 – 16: until you start stripe 20. Remember to carry your yarn up the side! In the 20th stripe, you will bind off on row 16, and do so purl wise. I suggest a stretchy lace bind off or binding off with a larger needle.

A Lace Bind off: knit two, bind of one stitch. *Yo, knit 1. Bind off yo, then bind off knit stitch, k1, bind of k1* repeat

When Cutting Your String: Cut when you have finished row 8 of the alternate color, and need

to reattach the color once more for use. Always cut tails to be at least 6 inches long

Helpful Tips – Ever need to set down your work? If you are worried about your stitches falling off your needles you can attach rubber bands to the ends.

Weave in tails.

Lining

I like to line this purse with black silk taffeta, as knitting is stretchy and I don't want any non-historical items peeping through! To do this I pin my knitting wrong side up onto a blocking board (10" by 5"), and sew on the lining. Also, this purse does look better lined, it helps show off the lace. I do recommend Silk Taffeta... I have not seen linings in any other fabric on historical miser purses.

Sewing

Sew together the sides of the work first. I recommend sewing on the rightside of the work (so you can make sure it is nearly invisible), with matching silk thread. Once the top is finished, you will have a tube.

Take the rougher side of the purse, were you joined the yarn. This is the side you will sew together to make the bottom. Pinch together the bottom, and sew/pull the bottom closed. Finish by going inside the purse to the wrong side. Tie a few small knots and weave tail through the tops of the stitches.

Crochet Border (Optional)

Row 1: Attach color of choice. Ch2, 5hdc in each strip, slip stitch into the top of the ch2 to join.

Row 2: Ch2, all the way around, hdc in the third loop, slip stitch into the top of the ch2 to join.

Row 3: slip stitch in third loop, all the way around.

Row 4: chain 7, skip 3 stitches, sc into the third loop, slip stitch to join.

Cut off, weave in tail.

Tassels

I use a 3" quilting ruler to make my tassels, and wrap the yarn around the ruler 45 times. I suggest making tassels with other yarn before digging into your silk. Wool is the easiest fiber to start making tassels with, as it doesn't slip all over the place while you are getting used to knotting your tassel. Tassel video . When to making the tassels for the cords, I use a 58 inch string that is folded in half, and do a loop knot twice. I make my cords by braided the tassel strings together, but a twisted cord is historically accurate as well!

Attaching your bottom tassels – With needle bring all threads from the bottom tassel through the bottom of the purse, tie and weave in.

Side tassels/drawstring cords – With larger tapestry needle or crochet hook, weave in cords for side tassels. You want each side of the purse to have the tassels enter. Each tassel has two cords, each gets woven on their own side and is attached with thread and needle in the middle. Do, the same with the other sides cords, to create a drawstring that pulls shut.

I sew mine in so that there is 6.5 – 7.5 inches between the tops of the tassels and the purse entry, when the purse is completely open.

And your done!!

A look into the Historical Pattern



The Historical Pattern is actually pretty much the same as the pattern I gave you! There is only a few differences.

The Historical pattern says to knit the sixth row, and purl both the seventh and eight rows. I changed this, because I thought my alteration looked more like the featured photograph, and I liked it better.

Godey's magazine say's to finish the purse in a narrow crochet border, but doesn't give instructions as to how. So, I designed a border as close to the image as I could.

Just for fun – the purse was recommended to be made in two or more colors, — “blue and brown, violet and scarlet, or pink and black; but as this is entirely a mater of taste, we only suggest these colors as contrasting well together.” Imagine, a time when purple and red were considered a tasteful combination! 😊

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