



# 18th Century Women's Knitted Mitts



Most of the surviving 18<sup>th</sup> c. knitted mitts, or muffatees, were fancy enough to be considered special and worth saving. These mitts, intended for more everyday use, were inspired by a reference in Linda Baumgarten's *What Clothes Reveal* in which a knitter advertises that she will remake old stockings into mitts. Accordingly, I modeled the detailing on these mitts, including the "seam" down one side of the arm, on details from 18<sup>th</sup> century common stockings.

## **Yarn:**

2 50 g. skeins sport or fingering weight wool (mitts shown knitted from Brown Sheep Nature Spun Sport, 184 yds per skein). Some knitters find it difficult to get the specified gauge with sport weight yarn.

Gauge: 15 st./2", 23 r/2"

Needles: 1 set of five size 1 double-pointed needles (dpns), or as needed to get gauge.

This pattern will fit a medium-sized woman's arm; I've actually had friends who are larger and smaller than I try them on, and they fit them reasonably well, too. For a larger or smaller size, you can go up or down a needle size to change the gauge slightly.

## **Knitting:**

### Arm:

Cast on 74 stitches onto a needle several sizes larger than the needles you use to get gauge. Switch to your regular needle size and knit back (row 2). Knit several rows back and forth, making several rows of garter stitch (you'll go back and close the resulting gap when you're done knitting, using the leftover yarn from your cast-on to sew up the gap). Divide evenly among 4 dpns; join. Place marker at end of round.

Knit even (i.e., no increases or decreases) for 3.5 inches. At beginning of each round, knit false 'seam' as follows:

Even rows – p1, k1, p2

Odd rows – p2, k1, p1

Knit next 75 rows with a pair of decreases (one at the end of round and one at beginning of the next rnd after 'seam' stitches) every 5th rnd, decreasing to 44 total sts.

### Hand:

Knit even for 2.5", measuring from last decrease. (Note: the mitts in the pattern picture are knitted with a slight increase for the hand; however, this is not really necessary, as I knitted a later pair without the increase and they fit fine.)

### Thumb gusset:

Count the total number of stitches on the needles and divide by half. Knit that number of stitches from the beginning of the round, so that the thumb gusset will be placed directly opposite from the "seam". Place 1 marker; increase 1 stitch, knit stitch, increase 1 stitch, place marker. Increase 1 stitch after the first marker and before the second marker every other round for 6 rounds, then every third round until there are 19 gusset stitches.

Place gusset stitches on waste yarn. On next round, cast on 1 stitch over the gap by the gusset stitches using the backwards loop method. Continue knitting hand for another 2 inches and bind off. (You may want to knit the last few rows in garter stitch to prevent rolling.)

Place stitches of thumb gusset on three needles, picking up cast-on stitch in gap. Knit even until thumb is 1-1/4" long, measuring from join with hand. Bind off.

## **Notes:**

Baumgarten, Linda. *What Clothes Reveal: The Language of Clothing in Colonial and Federal America*, p. 185.

Cummings, Valerie. *Gloves* (The Costume Accessory Series), p. 50.

Kyoto Costume Institute, *Revolution in Fashion*, pp. 76 & 147.

Also see:

<http://www.antique-lace.com/date1/2432/2432.htm>

## **Support:**

If you believe you have found an error in this pattern or have problems understanding it, please email the author at [mara@rileyhome.net](mailto:mara@rileyhome.net).

Changes or updates to patterns will be posted at [www.marariley.net/errata.htm](http://www.marariley.net/errata.htm). If you would like a version of the updated pattern, email me at [mara.riley@yahoo.com](mailto:mara.riley@yahoo.com).