

Caspian Sea Socks

Design by Priscilla Gibson-Roberts



Chris Hartlove

The Caspian Sea, the largest lake on earth, is surrounded by lands rich in color and history—Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Russia, and Kazakhstan, countries whose very names evoke exotic landscapes and vibrant cultures. Priscilla Gibson-Roberts has captured the flavor of the region in these four-color marvels. She begins at the traditionally pointed toe, working the top and bottom of the sock in different patterns. The heel opening is worked in waste yarn, so stitches for the heel can be picked up at the end, after the striking bands of the cuff are completed. These socks are not an overnight project, but the techniques are so intriguing that you may find yourself staying up nights until they are done. And a final warning: if you intend to give these as gifts, be prepared for the flood of requests for more pairs.

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★ FINISHED SIZE:

8" foot circumference, and 9 (9½)" long from tip of toe to back of heel, to fit women's U.S. shoe sizes 6 to 7 (7½ to 8½). Socks shown are 9½" long.

YARN:

Dale of Norway Tiur (60% mohair, 40% wool; 126 yd [115 m]/50 g): #4545 wine, 2 skeins; #4425 pink, #2526 gold, and #7562 dark teal, 1 skein each.

NEEDLES:

Size 2 (3 mm): set of 5 double-pointed (dpn); set of 5 double-pointed glove needles (about 4" [10 cm] long) are optional but may be helpful for cast-on.

★ NOTIONS:

Tapestry needle; small amount of smooth, contrasting waste yarn.

★ GAUGE:

16 sts and 15½ rnds = 2" (5 cm) in stranded two-color St st worked in the rnd from charts. Adjust needle size if necessary to obtain the correct gauge.

★ SKILL LEVEL:

Experienced. 

Notes

For shorter socks with a smaller foot circumference, use smaller needles (US 1 – 1½ [2.5 mm] suggested) for a tighter gauge, and begin the toe shaping on Round 9 of the sock chart as for the shorter foot length.

The socks are deliberately knit at a gauge that is tighter than customary for this yarn.

When only one measurement or stitch count is given, it applies to both sizes.

Each sock begins at the closed end of the toe and is worked upwards to the top of the leg. The location of the heel opening is marked by working the heel stitches using waste yarn, and the sock continues to the twined edging at the top of the leg. After the leg is finished, the waste yarn is removed, and the heel is worked outward to the back of the heel, where the remaining heel stitches are grafted together to close the heel.

On the sock chart, the toe shaping of the shorter foot and the location of the waste yarn inserted for the heel are shown in heavy black outlines.

★ FOOT:

Using wine and pink, CO 8 sts onto each needle as shown (see box)—16 sts total; each needle has 3 sts at each end in pink, and 2 center sts in wine. *Note:* The needles should be held together snugly; the space between them is exaggerated in the illustration to show how the yarns interlock and travel across the back of the needles. On the top needle, the sts will have the leading side of each loop on back of needle in a non-standard stitch mount; and stitches on bottom needle will be mounted in the standard manner with the leading side of each loop in front of needle. Work across the sts on the top needle by working into the front of the loops so the sts are deliberately twisted. Twisting the sts on the top needle will nudge each st to the right, making the stitches appear to be aligned, instead of offset by one-half stitch as usually happens when working in opposite directions from this type of wrapped cast-on. Work Rnd 1 of sock chart, placing marker (pm) at beg of rnd, and dividing sts evenly on 4 dpn as you work Rnd 1. Rnd begins at start of sole sts. Work Rnds 2–4 of chart. Use the needle tip to tighten the sts of the CO if necessary, working the extra slack in the yarn toward the tails. **Toe shaping:** For 9" foot length only, skip Rnds 5–8 of chart. Toe shaping beg on Rnd 9 (5) of sock chart as foll:

Rnd 9 (5): For sole of foot, *work 4 sts in patt, use the Lifted Increase Right Slant (LIR; see box) to inc 1 st in color shown, use the Lifted Increase Left Slant (LIL; see box) to inc 1 st in color shown, work 4 sts in patt; rep from * for top of foot—20 sts.

Rnd 10 (6): For sole of foot, *work 4 sts in patt, LIR with color shown, work 2 sts in center of "no stitch" area in color shown, LIL with color shown, work 4 sts in patt; rep from * for top of foot—24 sts.

Rnd 11 (7): For sole of foot, *work 5 sts in patt, LIR with color shown, work 2 center sts, LIL with color shown, work 5 sts in patt; rep from * for top of foot—28 sts.

Rnd 12 (8): For sole of foot, *work 6 sts in patt, LIR with color shown, work 2 center sts, LIL with color shown, work 6 sts in patt; rep from * for top of foot—32 sts.

Rnd 13 (9): For sole of foot, *work 7 sts in patt, LIR with color shown, work 2 center sts, LIL with color shown, work 7 sts in patt; rep from * for top of foot—36 sts.

Rnd 14 (10): For sole of foot, *work 8 sts in patt, LIR with color shown, work 2 center sts, LIL with color shown, work 8 sts in patt; rep from * for top of foot—40 sts.



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Rnd 15 (11): For sole of foot, *work 8 sts in patt, LIR with color shown, work 4 center sts, LIL with color shown, work 8 sts in patt; rep from * for top of foot—44 sts.

Rnd 16 (12): For sole of foot, *work 8 sts in patt, LIR with color shown, work 6 center sts, LIL with color shown, work 8 sts in patt; rep from * for top of foot—48 sts.

Rnd 17 (13): For sole of foot, *work 8 sts in patt, LIR with color shown, work 8 center sts, LIL with color shown, work 8 sts in patt; rep from * for top of foot—52 sts.

Rnd 18 (14): For sole of foot, *work 8 sts in patt, LIR with color shown, work 10 center sts, LIL with color shown, work 8 sts in patt; rep from * for top of foot—56 sts.

Rnd 19 (15): For sole of foot, *work 8 sts in patt, LIR with color shown, work 12 center sts, LIL with color shown, work 8 sts in patt; rep from * for top of foot—60 sts.

Rnd 20 (16): For sole of foot, *work 8 sts in patt, LIR with color shown, work 14 center sts, LIL with color shown, work 8 sts in patt; rep from * for top of foot—64 sts.

Work 1 (5) rnds even in patt, ending with Rnd 21; leave gold yarn hanging at end of last gold st in Rnd 21.

Rnd 22: Work in patt to beg of gold sts. For the next 14 sts, knit the sts shown in wine or pink, and slip the gold sts as if to purl with yarns in back (pwise, wyb). Turn the sock so WS is facing you; gold yarn will be hanging near the beg of the needle. Work back across the 14 sts just worked, purling the gold sts, and slipping the wine and pink sts as if to purl with yarn in front (pwise wyf). Turn the work again so the RS is facing you, and sl 14 sts pwise wyb. Cont in patt to end of rnd.

Work Rnd 23 even. Work Rnds 24 and 25 as for Rnds 21 and 22, slipping 12 sts for gold section in Rnd 25. Work even in patt until Rnd 36 has been completed. For Rnds 37, 38, 40, and 41, work the dark teal sts as shown on chart as for the gold sts in Rnds 21, 22, 24, and 25. Work even in patt until Rnd 52 has been completed, then work the gold sts of Rnds 53, 54, 56, and 57 as for the gold sts in Rnds 21, 22, 24, and 25.

Work even in patt until Rnd 59 has been completed.

Rnd 60: With smooth, contrasting waste yarn, k32. Drop waste yarn. Beg at start of rnd where working yarns are hanging, work Rnd 60 across all sts in patt. Sts for heel location marked on chart will have been worked twice, once with waste yarn, and once with sock colors.

★ LEG:

Work Rnds 61–70 in patt from chart. On Rnd 71, inc 2 sts as shown using M1 (see box)—66 sts. Work Rnds 72–102 in patt from chart. Work twined edging for top of leg as foll:

Rnd 103: *K1 pink, k1 wine; rep from * to end.

Rnd 104: Bring both yarns to front. Keeping the yarns in front throughout, purl each st with its matching color, bringing the new color over the strand of the previous color at each color change. Yarns will become very twisted, but will be untwisted when you work the next row.

Rnd 105: Keeping both yarns still in front, purl each st with its matching color, bringing the new color under the strand of the previous color at each color change. Do not cut pink yarn.

Rnd 106: With wine, knit all sts.

BO in wine. Cut yarns, leaving 10" strands of pink and wine. Make a short twisted cord (see box) using the 2 strands. Cords at the top edge of ethnic socks are used

to tie the socks together and hang them when not in use; the cords are untied and hang free when the socks are worn.

★ HEEL:

Carefully remove waste yarn from heel sts and place 64 exposed live sts evenly on 4 needles as they are released from the waste yarn—32 sts each from top and bottom of heel opening. Join yarns to side edge of heel with RS facing so first sts to be worked are sts from the sole of the foot. Work in patt from heel chart and shape heel as foll:

Rnd 1: Pick up and knit 1 st from side of heel opening with wine as shown on chart, work 32 sts in patt, pick up and knit 1 st from side of heel opening with wine as shown on chart; rep from * once more—68 sts; 17 sts on each needle. The extra sts picked up will help close any gaps at the sides of the heel.

Rnd 2: Eliminate extra picked-up sts as foll: K2tog with color shown, work 30 sts in patt, ssk; rep from * once more—64 sts; 16 sts on each needle.

Rnds 3–5: Work even in patt.

Rnd 6: *Work 8 sts in patt, ssk with color shown, work 12 center sts in patt, k2tog with color shown, work 8 sts in patt; rep from * once more—60 sts.

Rnds 7–11: Work as for Rnd 6, working 2 fewer sts between decs each rnd—40 sts after completing Rnd 11; 2 sts worked between decs in Rnd 11.

Rnd 12: *Work 8 sts in patt, ssk with color shown, k2tog with color shown, work 8 sts in patt; rep from * once more—36 sts.

Rnd 13: *Work 7 sts in patt, ssk with color shown, k2tog with color shown, work 7 sts in patt; rep from * once more—32 sts.

Rnd 14: *Work 6 sts in patt, ssk with color shown, k2tog with color shown, work 6 sts in patt; rep from * once more—28 sts.

Rnd 15: Work even in patt.

Rnd 16: *Work 5 sts in patt, k2tog with color shown, ssk with color shown, work 5 sts in patt; rep from * once more—24 sts.

Rnd 17: *Work 4 sts in patt, k2tog with color shown, ssk with color shown, work 4 sts in patt; rep from * once more—20 sts.

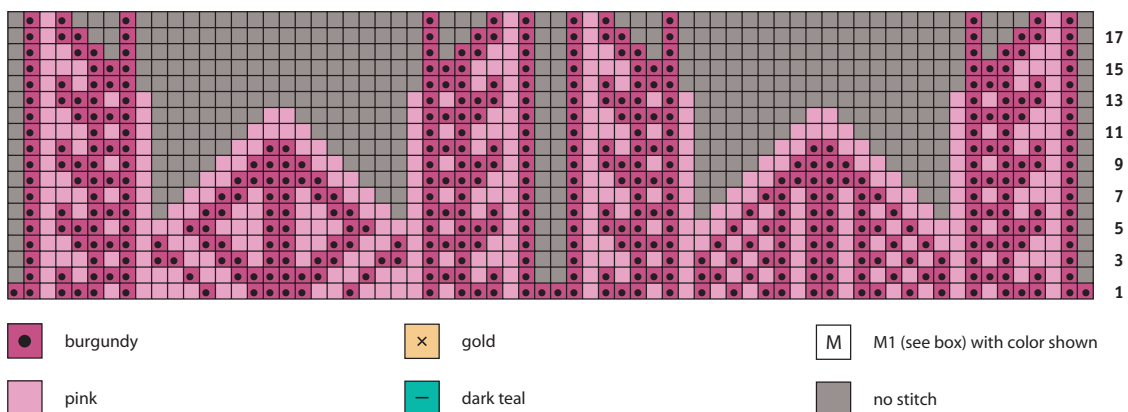
Rnd 18: *Work 3 sts in patt, k2tog with color shown, ssk with color shown, work 3 sts in patt; rep from * once more—16 sts; 4 sts each on 4 needles.

With wine only, re-arrange sts as foll: Knit first 4 sts of rnd; using an empty needle, knit the next 8 sts onto one needle; with another needle, knit the last 4 sts of rnd, then knit the first 4 sts again onto the same needle—8 sts each on 2 needles; sts on each needle are half from the sole of the heel, and half from the back of the leg. With wine threaded on a tapestry needle, use Kitchener stitch (see box) to graft sts tog at back of heel.

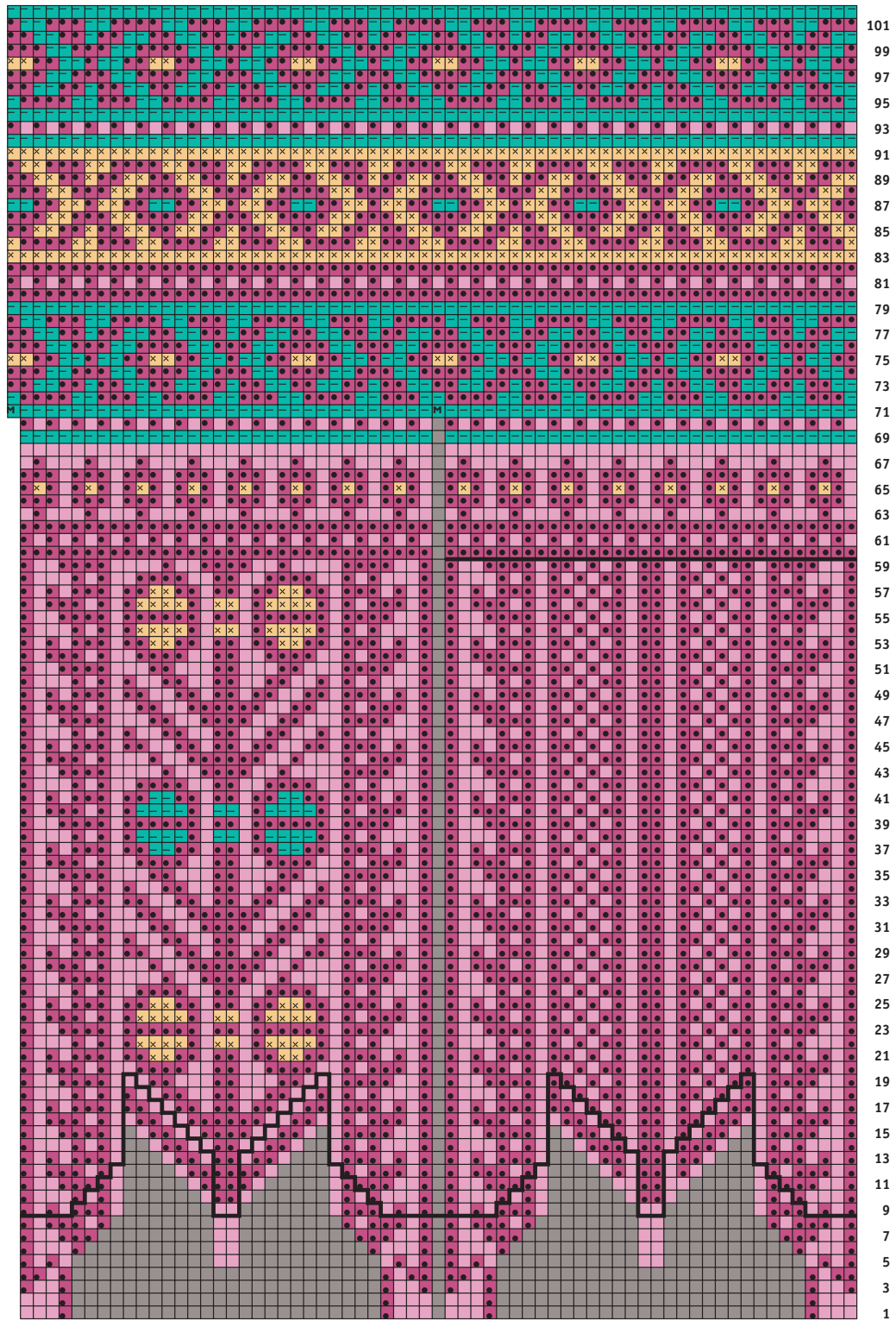
★ FINISHING:

Weave in ends. Steam lightly to block. ❄️

Heel:



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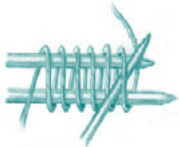


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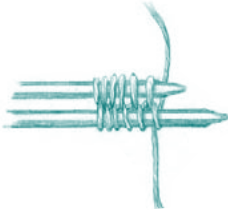
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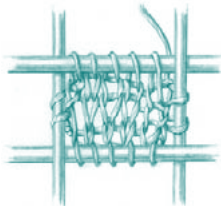
Snugly wrap the working yarn counterclockwise around two needles. Bring the yarn forward between needles, back to front.



Knit across stitches on upper needle.

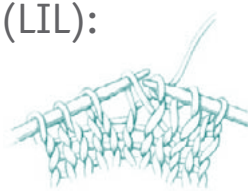


Rotate the work and knit across the same number of stitches on the other needle.



On the third row, pick up two stitches along each side.

Lifted Increase Left Slant (LIL):

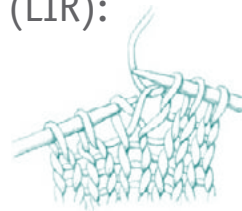


Step 1. Knit into the back of stitch (in the "purl bump") in the row directly below the stitch on the needle.

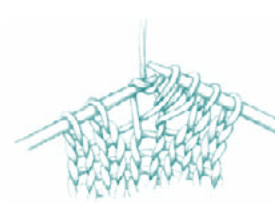


Step 2. Knit into the stitch on the needle, then slip both stitches off the needle.

Lifted Increase Right Slant (LIR):



Step 1. Insert left needle into back of the stitch below stitch just knitted.



Step 2. Knit this stitch.

Raised Increase M1:

Unless otherwise indicated, work this increase as M1L. Left slant (M1L): With left needle tip, lift strand between needles from front to back (1). Knit the lifted loop through the back to twist the stitch (2). Right Slant (M1R): With left needle tip, lift strand between needles from back to front (3). Knit the lifted loop through the front to twist the stitch (4).



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

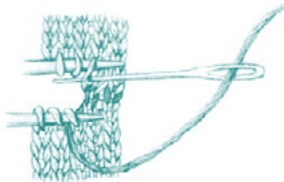


Figure 4

Illustrations by Gayle Ford

Kitchener Stitch

Step 1: Bring threaded needle through front stitch as if to purl and leave stitch on needle.



Step 2: Bring threaded needle through back stitch as if to knit and leave stitch on needle.

Step 3: Bring threaded needle through same front stitch as if to knit and slip this stitch off needle. Bring threaded needle through next front stitch as if to purl and leave stitch on needle.

Step 4: Bring threaded needle through first back stitch as if to purl (as illustrated), slip this stitch off, bring needle through next back stitch as if to knit, leave this stitch on needle.

Repeat Steps 3 and 4 until no stitches remain on needles.

Twisted Cord:

Cut several lengths of yarn about five times the desired finished cord length. Fold the strands in half to form two equal groups. Anchor the strands at the fold by looping them over a doorknob. Holding one group



Figure 1



Figure 2

in each hand, twist each group tightly in a clockwise direction until they begin to kink. Put both groups in one hand, then release them, allowing them to twist around each other counterclockwise. Smooth out the twists so that they are uniform along the length of the cord. Knot the ends.

PRISCILLA GIBSON-ROBERTS loves to make socks. See her other patterns in the Spring 2003, Winter 2003, Spring 2002, Fall 2003, and Fall 2000 issues of *Interweave Knits*.

Illustrations by Gayle Ford



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