

Nordic Handcraft: Knitting the Inari Cuff Mitten with Laura Ricketts | November 1, 8 and 15, 2020

Notes from Laura:

The Inari Saami are the only Saami subgroup that is entirely within one country: Finland. Their traditional homeland is around Lake Inari, with holy and sacrificial sites found within the lake and its islands.

Numbers differ according to sites and definition of ethnicity, but the Inari Saami have approximately 700 – 900 people with less than 300 still speaking the Inari Saami language, according to the Sámi Parliament of Finland. As such, they are extremely endangered as both a people and a language group.

Inari Saami national costumes often incorporate green, as do their mittens. The mittens we are making I first observed in the holdings of the Sámi Museum Siida in Inari, Finland and reproduced for Interweave Press with the museum's approval. The mittens use the traditional red and green colors to make a series of flowers around the wrist. Perhaps this motif was borrowed from a belt or woven object, because it is much more difficult to produce in knitting: three strands are used on some rows, and several rows have long floats that will need to be tacked down in one of several techniques. The hand itself, while all in natural colored wool, is nonetheless fascinating, as the tips of the mitten and thumb are created to curve inward. Lastly, the wrist has a braid and tassel.

We will learn all these techniques to create these beautiful mittens, as well as talk about the history of the Saami and Inari Saami peoples. I hope to see you soon!

The finished size of the mittens are: 8 1/4 inches (21 cm) hand circumference and 9 1/2 inches (24 cm) long, not including braid

Gauge: 14 sts and 17 1/2 rnds = 2 inches (5 cm) in stranded patt; 13 1/2 sts and 20 1/2 rnds = 2 inches (5 cm) in St st, blocked

Students should provide the following items for class:

- Rauma Strikkegarn, 100% Norwegian wool yarn, DK weight, 115 yards (105.2 m)/50 gram (1.8 oz) ball
 - 2 balls of #101 Unbleached White (MC)
 - 1 ball each of #130 Green (CC1) and #174 Red (CC2)
- Needles, set of 5 double pointed, size 2 (2.5 mm) or size needed to obtain gauge
- Smooth waste yarn, small amount of for holding thumb sts
- Stitch markers, 2
- Tapestry needle
- Cardboard, about same size as a credit card, for making tassels

Please contact the Program Coordinator, Erin Swenson-Klatt (erinsk@asimn.org) with any questions.