

Frankie's Knitted Stuff

Picnic Basket



This sturdy basket is made up of flat pieces crocheted together and features a textured pattern in three colours.

It has lots of room for all your picnic essentials and all four sides and the base are stiffened with plastic canvas to make it strong.

Facts and Figures

The finished basket is 30cm wide, 28cm tall and 15cm deep (12" × 11" × 6").

I used Cygnet Superwash Pure Merino DK (104m / 50g): Geranium (red, 2185) for the main colour, and then Everglade (green, 2817) and Gold (yellow, 2155). You will need 150g of the main colour and 100g each of the other two.

Tension: 18 trebles and 10 rows = 10cm / 4"², using a 3.5mm hook. You will also need a 4.5mm crochet hook.

This pattern uses British crochet terms: tr = US dc, dc = US sc

Front and Back

These two pieces are identical.

Using a 3.5mm hook and the main colour, work 56ch for the foundation.

Work 1tr into the 3rd chain from the hook and then 1tr into each chain along the row (55sts).

The rest of the piece is worked on a 4.5mm hook; all the rows are the same but the colour is changed. Work one row in each of the three colours in rotation. Using an odd number of colours will add interest to the finished fabric as the 'right' side doesn't remain constant.

Change colour before the final stage of the last stitch on each row, pulling the new colour through the last two loops on the hook for a neat transition. The yarns can be carried up the side of the work, don't worry if they look a little messy as they'll be covered up later.

So, back to the crochet ...

Change to a 4.5mm hook and a new colour and work the first of the pattern rows:

2ch, *FrTr in next st, tr in next st, repeat from * to end of row, working the last treble into the top of the turning chain.

Don't forget to change colour before the final stage of that last treble.



After the first pattern row you will find that the post you need to work the FrTr round will lie to the back of the work and will need digging out with the hook.

To position the 'normal' treble stitches exactly in the middle of the stitches on each side you will need to insert the hook through the loop of yarn below the next stitch and then through the two loops at the top of the stitch as usual.



This is hard to explain and even harder to photograph but if you experiment a bit, checking the back of the work as you go, all should become clear. If not, just work the trebles as normal, it's not the end of the world if your stitches don't line up exactly.

Work 33 pattern rows in all and then change to a 3.5mm hook and the main colour to work the edging. Time for another tip ...

Although this pattern gives a fabric that looks good on both sides, the two sides are not identical. So, make sure that you use the same side as the right side of every piece.

Edging

With the right side facing work double crochet (US single crochet) around all four sides of the piece. Work into every stitch of the top and bottom edges and work 1ch at the corners. On the two sides, work over the turning chains, trapping the carried yarn. Work 1dc into the first two rows, then 2dc into the next row, repeating this along each side (four stitches for every three rows).

The edging tidies up the sides and gives a neat row of stitches all round which will be used when joining the pieces together.



Make another piece in exactly the same way and then you are ready to move on to the sides.

The Sides

These are worked just like the front and back pieces but with fewer stitches in a row.

Work 26ch for the foundation with a 3.5mm hook and then work trebles into the 3rd chain from the hook and the rest of the chains in the row (25 sts).

Change to a 4.5mm hook and work 33 rows in pattern as you did for the front and back. Complete the edging with a 3.5mm hook as before.

The Base

This is worked a little differently and is basically just a big red rectangle. Use a 3.5mm hook throughout.

Work 51ch for the foundation.

Work 1tr into the 3rd chain from the hook and then 1tr into each chain along the row (50sts).

Continue working in rows of trebles, working 2ch for the turning chains, until you have worked 13 rows and the base is the same width as one of the side pieces (not counting the edging).

Work the double crochet edging all round the base in the same way as for the other pieces but adjust the number of stitches to match the pieces they will be joined to. So, work two stitches into the 5th and every following 10th stitch along the long sides to bring them up to 55 stitches. The short sides need 25 stitches which means working about two stitches into the side of every row.

The Lining

Once all five pieces are finished, they have to be lined. To do this, first cut cardboard templates to fit each size piece, leaving the edging free. Then fold the edges of material rectangles over the templates and iron them in place before removing the card. Pin the material to the back of the crochet pieces and sew them down by hand, keeping within the edging. Before sewing down the last side of each piece insert a rectangle of stiff plastic canvas. Again you can use the card templates to cut these out but then trim one square's width from one long and one short side to make the plastic pieces slightly smaller than the material.



Joining the Pieces

First make sure that the front, back and side pieces are all the same way up. Then, using a 3.5mm hook and the main colour, hold the pairs of pieces with the wrong sides together and work double crochet (US single crochet) through both sets of edging stitches. I worked the four side seams first and then added the base.



As long as the pieces are all the same way up, the stripes should match beautifully.

The Top Edging

This is worked all round the top of the basket using a 3.5mm hook and the main colour. There are two rounds.

First, work a round in double crochet (US single crochet) with the wrong side facing. This makes it a bit awkward to work but stops the edging from curling. Ignore the corners when you get to them, just work into the stitches on either side and that will tighten the corners a little.

The second round is worked with the right side facing, in crab stitch. This is worked like double crochet but from left to right instead of right to left. It gives a firm corded edge to the top of the basket.



The Top Edging

The Handles

I added a pair of ready-made handles to my basket but you could crochet them instead if you prefer. When sewing the handles to the front and back, sew right through the plastic canvas and the lining so that they don't pull on the crochet.

Abbreviations

st / sts	stitch / stitches
ch	chain
tr	treble (US double crochet)
dc	double crochet (US single crochet)
FrTr	<u>front raised treble</u> : work a treble in the normal way but insert the hook from the front to the back and then to the front again, round the stem of the next stitch



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