



Contemporary Irish Knits

By Carol Feller

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Celebrate the Irish countryside and create one-of-a-kind knitted projects

The patterns found in *Contemporary Irish Knits* showcase traditional Aran knitting patterns to create the more fitted and flattering shapes that modern knitters prefer. You'll get 18 patterns for making one-of-a-kind Irish knits, encapsulating projects for women's, children, and men's wardrobe pieces, and accessories like bags, blankets, and shawls. Plus, you'll get easy-to-follow instructions and guidance on how to construct and enhance your knitting experience to make for a more intuitively put-together knitted item.

This all-new collection is exactly what today's knitter is looking for, and complemented by inspiring design and photography. If you're a knitter looking for innovative patterns, enhancements to your skill sets, and a chance to broaden your range of knitterly knowledge, *Contemporary Irish Knits* is for you. It features: contemporary Irish designs created using traditional techniques and stitch patterns implemented in new ways; a broad range of projects; guidance on working with different construction methods; and much more.

- Features an elegant design and 18 enjoyable-to-knit, one-of-a-kind patterns
- Patterns are just challenging enough to be fun to knit
- All projects are thoughtfully designed for a beautiful finished project

Whether you're an intermediate or advanced knitter, *Contemporary Irish Knits* gives you the skills, projects, and know-how to create truly gorgeous knitted pieces that celebrate Ireland's living knitted tradition with a modern, contemporary twist.

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Contemporary Irish Knits By Carol Feller Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Q&A with Author Carol Feller



Author Carol Feller

Tell us a little about your background as a knitter?

Like most Irish children I learned to knit in school when I was small. I don't ever remember actually learning the mechanics but I have faint memories of knitting fingerless gloves in a lemon acrylic yarn! As I got a little older I began knitting garments for myself (as well as my dolls). I always had a big supply of cotton yarn available as my aunt owned a wool shop in Dublin.

For many years after that I did not knit at all. In fact, I almost forgot how to knit! My first child was born in Florida and when he was still small we returned to Ireland. The weather was so much colder I longed to knit some warm jumpers (sweaters) for him but didn't have enough time to relearn. Several children later I came across a new Irish online yarn shop (www.thisisknit.ie) and gave in to the desire to pick up my knitting needles again!

Once I began knitting again I was unstoppable, I tore through every knitting book I could find, and within 6 months I started designing. I find designing knits to be the perfect blend of the artistic and engineering sides of my brain, which makes me very happy on multiple levels.

I am just learning to knit and look forward to designing a few new patterns myself. What advice do you have for new designers?

Don't be afraid to experiment, and practice your pattern writing. When you are starting out you may find that patterns need to be rewritten several times before the directions make sense to other knitters. They then need to be read and knit by several people (and the numbers checked) before you reach a point that they are ready for the general public.

Knitters are very inventive and creative. However the pattern writing part of designing often takes a good deal of practice, and not everyone enjoys it!

What are the characteristics of traditional Aran patterns?

The concept of a traditional Aran pattern is actually a bit of a misnomer! Complex cabled Aran patterns are a relatively modern invention, dating from the mid-20th century. The Aran Islands was a very poor area and the sale of complex knitwear produced by the women on the islands was a vital source of income. The patterns they produced were a complex blending of cable patterns with highly textured stitches. The traditional yarn used for these garments was a cream (banin) 100% wool yarn that was very rich in wool oil (lanolin).

What are your thoughts on natural fibers like cotton and wool and bamboo versus synthetics like acrylic?

My own personal preference is for natural fibers. I like that they are breathable, comfortable to wear and very durable, for the most part. I especially like to use 100% wool yarns that are more durable. Often they can be a little rougher to knit when you are working with them but as soon as you wash them they soften beautifully. The huge advantage that they have over slightly softer yarns is that they wear really, really well. When you use a cardigan every day over a cold winter it is nice to know that it will look just as well at the end of the winter!

I do use yarns with acrylic content also when it is of benefit to do so. Sock yarn is a good example of this; socks take a huge amount of abuse and the addition of nylon helps them last much longer. I also like some blends of cotton and acrylic as it still retains the nature of cotton but by having an acrylic content you reduce the heaviness of 100% cotton especially for heavier weight yarns.

What's the favorite thing you've ever knitted?

That's a really hard question! I've probably got several different answers; I knit a shrug for my sister's wedding (Summer affair) a couple of years ago that I felt very proud seeing her wear on her wedding day. The cardigan which is shown on the front cover of Contemporary Irish Knits was also very satisfying. I had envisioned that pattern in my head almost a year before knitting it. It took me that long to figure out how to knit it in a way that would make it possible to write an easy to follow pattern for it.

In terms of the knit I wear most often, that would be a Felted Tweed version of my Akoya pattern. It is in a lighter weight yarn and I wear it summer and winter!

Where do you get your inspiration for pieces?

Sometimes an idea comes to me when I'm swatching with a yarn; I'll start experimenting with the yarn using different stitch patterns and an idea starts to form. Other times I'll see a clothing detail and I'll wonder how that could be interpreted in knitting to make a fun knit and beautiful garment. Still other times, I began brainstorming ideas around a particular theme (although I often find I head in a totally different tangent!)

The inspiration for the book was a combination of all these different ways of working. The textured Irish yarn and subtle color blends were lots of fun to swatch with, especially with complex cabled patterns. The overall theme of the book was also always in my mind. I wanted to create a collection of designs inspired by tradition, but still very contemporary, flattering and wearable.

Tell us about your construction methods, why or how are they unique/ different?

I enjoy unusual construction methods, especially if they are seamless. The knitted fabric is flexible and versatile; knitting seamless takes full advantage of this. I knit garments from the bottom up, top down and even from side to side! All of the garments in the book Contemporary Irish Knits are worked seamlessly. When a garment is knit in one piece it makes it very easy for the knitter to try it on as they are working to ensure that they are getting a good fit. This also means that if you need to make any adjustments for your own particular body type, you can ensure you are doing so in the right location. Simple additions such as

short rows to shape shoulders (rather than stepped bind offs) make for smooth lines and a more pleasant knitting experience.

Can you tell us a little about the Mills and the history behind them?

Until a few years ago I knew very little about milling and even less about Irish mills. Researching this book was a voyage of discovery for me with some interesting surprises along the way. I was astonished to discover how few mills still commercially produce yarns for hand knitters; I found only 3! These mills are sprinkled around the country. One is very far north ('Donegal Yarns' in Donegal), 'Cushendale Woollen Mills' is closer to the center of the country in County Kilkenny, and 'Kerry Woollen Mills' is located close to Killarney in the South west of the country. Each of these mills produces their own unique style of yarn. Donegal produces a yarn with colored tweed flecks through it, Cushendale produces a lighter weight yarn in subtle, complementary shades and Kerry is the only mill in Ireland spinning organic fleece when it is available.

Each of these mills has been in operation for several generations, with information being passed on and techniques improved by each generation. The yarn each produces is beautiful and unique and deserves to be cherished as a distinctly Irish, usable yarn.

Do your sons knit or know how to knit? Or do they just like wearing what you make them?

Three of my four sons knit and my youngest (who is 5) desperately wants to know how, but can't quite manage it yet! My oldest son knit a hat for himself last summer with yarn he dyed himself using Kool Aid, and he wears it nearly every day. My 10 year old knit an entire sweater for himself last winter – he was very proud of himself (as was I!) It was a top down raglan sweater that he finished with minimal help from me. My third boy likes to keep his hands busy and finds knitting great for his concentration.

Sample Patterns



Glengesh: Cable-and-Lace Wrap
(Click for pattern)



Ardara: Women's Tunic Cardigan
(Click for pattern)

From the Inside Flap

Celebrate the rich tradition of Irish knitting and create up-to-the-minute pieces with timeless style

Contemporary Irish Knits gives you 20 exciting patterns for making one-of-a-kind Aran-inspired knits, including unique projects for women's, children's, and men's pieces as well as accessories like blankets, shawls, hats, and fingerless mittens. Plus, you'll get easy-to-follow construction guidance so that you can enhance your knitting experience and more intuitively create and customize your pieces.

Complemented by essays on inspiring Irish yarn mills and photography of the Irish countryside, this book features designs created using traditional techniques and stitch patterns implemented in new ways to make truly original pieces.

Knit your way through the Emerald Isle with patterns including:

- Women's Cable Rib Jacket
- Men's Twisted Stitch Sweater
- Boy's Hooded Vest
- Felted Tweed Handbag
- Cable-and-Lace Square Blanket
- Women's Honeycomb Beret
- Girl's Cabled Yoke Cardigan
- And more

No matter what your knitting experience, *Contemporary Irish Knits* gives you the skills, projects, and know-how to create truly gorgeous knitted pieces that celebrate Aran style with a modern, contemporary twist.

From the Back Cover

20 projects that celebrate Ireland's rich knitting tradition

Inside, you'll find 20 projects that make use of the unmistakable texture of cabled Aran stitches, implemented in new ways to create more fitted, flattering, and up-to-the-minute shapes. Working with different construction methods and stitch patterns, you'll knit show-stopping pieces that are functional yet durable. Ranging from a sweet honeycomb beret to a cabled tunic cardigan, these projects invite you to lose yourself in the timeless enjoyment of Aran knitting.

Inspired by the author's own Irish heritage and showcasing the remaining yarn mills and hand dyers in Ireland, this book represents the best of the old and the new—a collection of Irish knitting projects as you've never seen them before.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jeffrey Brown:

Book is usually written, printed, or highlighted for everything. You can recognize everything you want by a guide. Book has a different type. We all know that that book is important point to bring us around the world. Alongside that you can your reading talent was fluently. A guide *Contemporary Irish Knits* will make you to be smarter. You can feel considerably more confidence if you can know about every little thing. But some of you think which open or reading a book make you bored. It is not make you fun. Why they could be thought like that? Have you in search of best book or appropriate book with you?

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