

A Suffrage-Fair Washcloth to Crochet

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Photos by Joe Coca

PIECEWORK.

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Crocheted washcloths were among the items for sale at the December 1900 National Suffrage Fair. You'll want to make multiples of these—for yourself and as gifts!

Cotton was the favored fiber for nineteenth-century washcloths, utilitarian squares of about 8 inches (20 cm) that were typically knitted or crocheted in some stitch the maker wanted to try out. A border added function as well as beauty; loops made it easy to hang a washcloth on a handy nail to drip dry.

The blue-on-cream colors used for this washcloth were inspired by the color scheme for the official stationery of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Butterick's *The Art of Crocheting* (published in 1897) features a crocheted square for a bedspread made with a light center and a dark contrasting border, suggesting that the strong color contrast is appropriate to the period.

I've used tricot stitch (now called Tunisian simple stitch) to create a washcloth that is heavily textured on one side and relatively smooth on the reverse, ideal for scrubbing the skin and working up luxurious suds. If you reverse the color scheme, you'll have enough yarn to make a second washcloth, one that is perfect for removing makeup.

MATERIALS

- ◆ Paton's Grace, 100% mercerized cotton yarn, sportweight, 136 yards (124.4 m)/50 gram (1.8 oz) skein, 1 skein each of Natural and Navy; www.patonsyarns.com
- ◆ Crochet hooks, Tunisian size H (5 mm) for cloth and aluminum size H (5 mm) for border
- ◆ Tapestry needle

Finished size: 8¾ x 8¾ inches (22.2 x 22.2 cm)

Gauge: 10 tss and 10 rows = 2 inches (5.1 cm)

SPECIAL ABBREVIATIONS

FwP—Forward Pass (see below)

RetP—Return Pass (see below)

tss—Tunisian simple stitch (see below)

Visit pieceworkmagazine.com/abbreviations/ for terms you don't know.

SPECIAL STITCH

Tunisian Simple Stitch

Forward Pass: Loop on hook counts as first stitch, skip first bar at edge of work, *insert hook from right to left behind next front vertical bar, yarn over and pull up loop, leave loop on hook; repeat from * to last vertical bar at edge, pick up front and back loops of last bar to create firm edge; return pass.

Return Pass: Yarn over and draw through first loop on hook, *yarn over and draw through 2 loops on hook; repeat from * to end, ending with 1 loop on hook.

INSTRUCTIONS

Note: See above and page 56 for Abbreviations and Techniques.

Washcloth

With Tunisian hook and MC, loosely ch 36.

Row 1: Pull up lp in back bump of 2nd ch from hook and in each rem ch; RetP—36 sts.

Rows 2–35: Tss in each st across.

Row 36: *Insert hook from right to left behind front vertical bar, yo and pull lp through bar and lp on hook, rep from * across to end. Fasten off.



Border

With aluminum hook and CC, join yarn in 1st tss in upper right corner with RS facing.

Rnd 1: Ch 1, *sc in each st to corner, ch 1, rotate to work along side edge, sc in side of each tss to next corner, ch 1; rep from * across next 2 sides, replacing last ch-1 with sc in beg ch 1 —35 sc along each side with ch-1 at 3 corners and sc at last corner.

Rnd 2: Ch 3 (counts as hdc, ch 1), hdc in 1st sc, ch 1, *(sk 1 sc, hdc in next sc, ch 1) across to corner sp, (hdc, ch 2, hdc) in corner ch-1 sp, ch 1; rep from * along each side, ending with hdc in sc at corner, ch 2, sl st in 2nd ch of beg ch-2 to join.

Rnd 3: Ch 1, sc in 1st ch-1 sp, *sc in each hdc and ch-1 sp across to corner ch-2 sp, 4 sc in ch-2 sp; rep from * along each side, ending with 3 sc in last ch-2 sp, sl st in beg ch-1 to join. Fasten off.

Finishing

Weave in loose ends.