



This tiny tortoise/turtle is a quick, easy knit. The tiniest beasties are often the fiddliest to make but this one is surprisingly straightforward.

To make the tortoise, you knit a stocking stitch (stockinette) rectangle, knitting little short row head, legs and tail as you go. You gather the edges and seam the sides of the head. You then wet felt the turtle to miniaturise it, finally doing simple embroidery to make the features.

It takes me just over half an hour to knit and sew up a tortoise (I'm an average speed knitter), about 6 minutes for felting and a few minutes more for embroidering the face. After felting, this tortoise will be about 5.6cm long, head tip to tail tip.

You will need:

8m of 4-ply (fingering) yarn (I used 1.9g Jamieson's Spindrift)- to be wet feltable, this should be 100% wool and not superwash
2.75mm needles, Black embroidery thread, Needle, Walnut shell

Tension: pre-felting, about 25 stitches and 34 rows per 10cm.

Abbreviations

k: knit

p: purl

kf&b: increase one stitch by knitting into the front leg of the stitch and then into the back leg of the same stitch before dropping it off the left needle

pf&b: increase one stitch by purling into the front leg of the stitch and then into the back leg of the same stitch before dropping it off the left needle

Pattern: Cast on 15 stitches

Rows 1-5: Work 5 rows in stocking stitch (stockinette), starting and ending with a purl row

Row 6 (head row): K9, turn p3, turn k3, turn p3, turn k1, kf&b, k1, turn p4, turn k4, turn p1, p2tog, p1, turn, k1, kf&b, k1, turn p4, k4, turn p1, p2tog, p1, turn k3, turn p3, turn k9, 15 stitches

Rows 7-9: Work 3 rows in stocking stitch (stockinette), starting and ending with a purl row

Row 10 (Front leg row): K5, turn p2, turn k2, turn p2, turn k2, turn p2, turn k9, turn p2, turn k2, turn p2, turn k2, turn p2, turn k5 (15 stitches)

Rows 11-17: Work 7 rows in stocking stitch (stockinette), starting and ending with a purl row

Row 18 (back leg row): k6, turn p2, turn k2, turn p2, turn k2, turn p2, turn k7, turn p2, turn k2, turn p2, turn k2, turn p2, turn k6 (15 stitches).

Row 19: Purl all stitches

Row 20 (Tail row): k9, turn p3, turn k2tog, k1, turn p2tog, turn k1, turn p1, turn kf&b, turn pf&b, p1, turn k9 (15 stitches)

Rows 21-25: Work 5 rows in stocking stitch (stockinette), starting and ending with a purl row.

Don't cast off; instead, thread a needle (I prefer to use a stronger yarn or thread than tortoise is knit with, as the latter easily snaps under tension, but you can use this if you're very careful) and sew through all the stitches, removing them from the needle. Sew a running/straight stitch right around the other three edges and pull the ends to cinch together the turtles back. Knot securely. Sew down both sides of the tortoise's head using the same yarn you knit it in. The smaller legs and tail felt nicely into tubes so don't need seaming. You don't have to worry about tidying up ends that will be hidden in the shell.

Finishing: Wet felt the tortoise by very roughly washing it with a little hand soap or detergent, alternately shocking it in hot and cold water. After about 6 minutes it should have felted down enough to fit into its shell. As you're felting, shape the legs, head and tail by rolling them between your fingers. Spend a little time pushing, pulling and rolling your tortoise into a good shape while it's damp. If you have somewhere nicely warm (e.g. near a stove, radiator or in an airing cupboard) you can dry it in its shell to ensure a good fit and shape. In less good drying conditions, fit it nicely to its shell before carefully removing it to dry. Felted wool often becomes hairy; if yours has, carefully trim over with little scissors. Embroider French knots for eyes and sew on a smile (there are a million and one Youtubes on French knots, for the mouth just sew a loose little horizontal stitch about 3mm long then bring the needle up in the middle of the mouth but about 1.5mm below it, catch the mouth stitch thread and sew the needle back down in the same place it came out, bending the mouth stitch into a smile). I used 2 strands of stranded embroidery thread for eyes and mouth.

Tiny Turtally Tortoise is not suitable for small children



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