

# Lost City Knits

Encouraging Intrepid & Eclectic Knitters

## Saguaro Vest

There are places that simply astound with beauty, and then there are seemingly simple places where one must look closer to see what's going on. The former get all of the attention, but I'm drawn to the latter.

The Sonoran Desert is such a place. It ranges from Mexico northward to central Arizona and reaches west into California and the Baja Peninsula. It's vast and desolate. But there is a lot going on if you look closely.

I've chosen both subtle and iconic motifs to depict this unique area.

The Saguaro Cactus can live 200 years, and usually doesn't develop its characteristic arms until it is 70 years old.

A subtle depiction of the Diamondback Rattlesnake repeats in a sage green throughout.

Bringing life to it all is the desert sun. I've depicted my own version, using southwestern colors.

The Saguaro Vest adds a layer of warmth against the winter chill. Colors from Jamieson & Smith help create a distinctively southwestern garment.

This garment is worked in the round from the hem up, with steeks for the armholes and v-neck.



## Materials

**Yarn:** Jamieson & Smith 2 ply Jumper Weight Shetland

Shade number (quantity) - 132 (1), FC43 (1), FC45 (1), 202 (1), FC12 (1), FC46 (2), 32 (1), 1281 (2), Shade 1 (1 (2, 2, 2, 2)), FC38 (1)

**Needle Size:** US 3 / 3.25mm (32 inch / 80 cm) circular needle (or size to obtain gauge in pattern) for main body, US 2 / 2.75mm (16 inch / 40 cm and 24 inch / 60 cm) circular needles for ribbing

**Gauge:** 28 stitches and 28 rounds = 4 inches / 10 cm using larger needle (in pattern after blocking)

**Finished Sizes Approximately:** A 34.25", B 37.25", C 40", D 42.75", E 45.75" at bust.

**Notions:** smooth waste yarn, darning needle, scissors, and stitch markers

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## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

It's always best to read through a pattern completely before beginning any project, underlining important notes and circling the details about your size throughout. Swatching in the round in 2 colors is recommended to achieve gauge.

### CAST ON AND RIBBING

Using shade 132 and smaller circular needle, cast on 240 (260, 280, 300, 320) stitches using the Long Tail method. Without twisting, join to work in the round. Work 1 round of k2, p2 ribbing. Change to shade 1281 and work 17 rounds of k2, p2.

Sizes:

- A - cast on 240 stitches - 6 pattern repeats (per side)
- B\* - cast on 260 stitches - 5 stitches before pattern repeats, 6 pattern repeats, 5 stitches after pattern repeats (per side)
- C - cast on 280 stitches - 7 pattern repeats (per side)
- D\* - cast on 300 stitches - 5 stitches before pattern repeats, 7 pattern repeats, 5 stitches after pattern repeats (per side)
- E - cast on 320 stitches - 8 pattern repeats (per side)

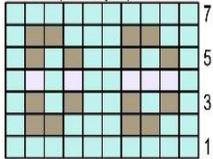
\*Sizes with an asterisk will work the extra charted stitches before and after the pattern repeat (in the blue box) on both the front and the back sides. Sizes without an asterisk will work only the pattern repeat within the blue box.

### BEGIN CHART

Change to larger circular needle. Using shade 1281, knit 1 round, placing a marker after 120 (130, 140, 150, 160) stitches to mark the side seam.

Work chart until body measures desired height to underarm, ending last round 10 (11, 12, 13, 14) stitches before end of round.

Initials (Example)

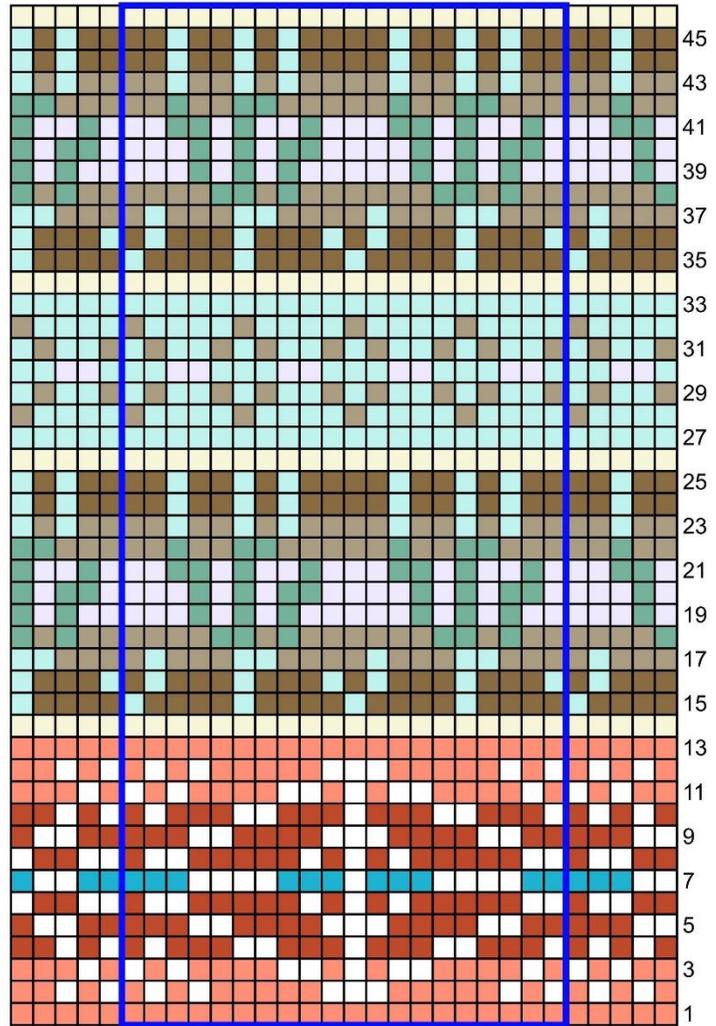


Yarn

- FC43
- FC46
- 202



*Note: Some knitters like to insert a year, initials, or even a message to personalize their garments. I added my initials in a Diamondback Rattlesnake repeat straddling the side seam.*



- Yarn
- FC43
  - FC45
  - Shade 1
  - FC38
  - 32
  - 132
  - FC12
  - 1281
  - FC46
  - 202

- Borders
- Pattern Repeat

This chart consists of three motifs inspired by scenes from the desert: Rounds 1-13 are a setting sun, Rounds 15-25 are Saguaro cacti, and Rounds 27-33 are Diamondback rattlesnakes. All stitches within the chart are knit stitches until you begin the underarms and v-neck, where right-leaning (k2tog) and left-leaning (ssk) decreases occur.

\*\*Note the cactus portions of the chart are not symmetrical – the image of a symmetrical saguaro cactus looks like a bit too much like a pitchfork when knitted. You don't want that.

Stitches used:

- Knit
- K2tog - Knit 2 stitches together (single right-leaning decrease).
- Ssk - Slip 2 stitches separately knitwise, move stitches back to the left needle, then knit the slipped stitches together through the back loops.



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## BEGIN ARMHOLE SHAPING AND NEW BEGINNING OF ROUND

Next round: Put the next 19 (21, 23, 25, 27) stitches on waste yarn – 10 (11, 12, 13, 14) sts before the marker and 9 (10, 11, 12, 13) sts after the marker, to provide symmetry to the chart. Place marker for new beginning of round. Cast on 7 stitches for the armhole steek using alternating colors (*background color, motif color, background color, motif color, background color, motif color, background color*), place marker. Work in pattern across the next 101 (109, 117, 125, 133) stitches, place marker. Put the next 19 (21, 23, 25, 27) stitches on waste yarn. Cast on 7 stitches for the armhole steek using alternating colors as previously done, place marker. Work in pattern to end of round. 216 (232, 248, 264, 280) total stitches: 101 (109, 117, 125, 133) front stitches, 101 (109, 117, 125, 133) back stitches, and two 7-stitch steeks.

Next round (armhole decrease round): \*Knit armhole steek stitches, slip marker, k2tog, work in pattern to 2 stitches before next marker, ssk, slip marker\* repeat to end of round.

Repeat armhole decrease round every round 3 (3, 4, 4, 5) more times.

## BEGIN V-NECK SHAPING

Mark the 3 center front stitches.

Next round (armhole decrease round and begin v-neck shaping): Knit armhole steek stitches, slip marker, k2tog, work in pattern to marked stitches; place the 3 marked center front stitches on a locking stitch marker or coilless pin, place marker. Cast on 7 v-neck steek stitches using alternating colors as previously done, place marker. Work in pattern to 2 stitches before next marker, ssk, slip marker, knit armhole steek stitches, slip marker, k2tog, work in pattern to 2 stitches before next marker, ssk.

Work 1 round in pattern.

Next round (armhole decrease round and v-neck decrease round): Knit armhole steek stitches, slip marker, k2tog, work in pattern to 2 stitches before next marker, ssk, slip marker, knit v-neck steek stitches, slip marker, k2tog, work in pattern to 2 stitches before next marker, ssk, slip marker, knit armhole steek stitches, slip marker, k2tog, work in pattern to 2 stitches before next marker, ssk.

Repeat last 2 rounds 4 (4, 5, 5, 6) more times.

Work 1 round in pattern.

Next round (v-neck decrease round): Knit armhole steek stitches, slip marker, work in pattern to 2 stitches before next marker, ssk, slip marker, knit v-neck steek stitches, slip marker, k2tog, work in pattern to next marker, slip marker, knit armhole steek stitches, slip marker, work in pattern to next marker.

Repeat last 2 rounds 14 (14, 15, 15, 16) more times or until desired width of shoulder. (*Remember that you will be adding approximately 1" of ribbing to both the outer armhole and the neck!*)

Work even in pattern until armhole measures 9 (9, 10, 10, 11) inches from underarm stitches or until desired height. If your shoulders and neck are wider or narrower, adjust the v-neck decreases to fit.

## SHOULDER SHAPING OPTION

A few rounds before the v-neck has reached desired height is a good time to decide whether you would like to include a bit of shoulder shaping. Shoulder shaping worked in pattern, as detailed by Janine Bajus of Feral Knitting fame, looks a bit difficult at first glance but is really quite easy to wrap your head around while doing it. I recommend her pdf which can be found [HERE https://www.feralknitter.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Shaped-Shoulders-revised-edition.pdf](https://www.feralknitter.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Shaped-Shoulders-revised-edition.pdf)

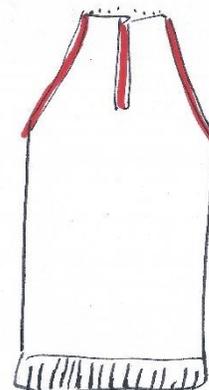
It so happened that my goal for the body length of my vest (from knob of neck to desired hem length) fell near the end of the third repeat of the Diamondneck Rattlesnake section of the chart. I used the shoulder shaping mentioned above to add 3 short rows for a bit of gentle shaping.

If you choose not to include shoulder shaping, work your vest to the desired length and bind off all steek stitches on the final round.

Being careful to make sure you have the same number of stitches on each side, put shoulder stitches from the front and back on waste yarn. Give a second look here to note that the motifs line up nicely. Remember the cactus motif is the only one that is not symmetrical and will not be a mirror image when the shoulder stitches are joined. Put the remaining live center back stitches on a separate waste yarn.

Note: It might be helpful to draw the v-neck decreases on your chart with a contrasting ink. You might want to begin the v-neck in a round has clear visual center stitches in the chart or even a solid round.

Completed shoulder stitch count by size:  
A: 19  
B: 23  
C: 23  
D: 27  
E: 27



In a class I teach on steeks I am often asked what a vest looks like before the steeks are cut. Above is a schematic sketch to give you an idea. The red lines are where the steek stitches are located. The dotted line above the shoulders depicts the gentle slope of shoulder shaping should you decide to use that technique.



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## STEEKS AND SHOULDERS

Secure each side of the front steek and armhole steeks with a series of crochet chain stitches, then cut the bars between the legs of the center steek stitch.

After cutting steeks, join the shoulders using the Kitchener Stitch or Three-Needle Bind Off, whichever you prefer.

Note: Work the center double decrease at the base of the v-neck every round, making sure to balance the flanking stitches in pattern.

## V-NECK BAND AND RIBBING

Using shade 1281 and larger circular needle, and starting at the middle of the back neck stitches, recover and knit the live stitches, decreasing twice before reaching the shoulder seam to make the neck band snug against the neck. Pick up and knit stitches down along the v-neck edge (holding the working yarn under the vest and picking up and knitting between the steek edge stitch and the first pattern stitch) until you reach the 3 stitches on the stitch marker or coilless pin at the center front. Put these 3 stitches on the left-hand needle and work them using the centered double decrease (CDD) of your choice (one has been described on page 2).

Continue picking up and knitting stitches along the v-neck to the shoulder. Knit the remaining live back neck stitches, decreasing twice again. Place a marker for the center back / beginning of round. Adjust stitch count if needed to ensure it is divisible by 4. Change to smaller circular needle and work 5 rounds of k2, p2 ribbing. Change to shade 132 (or pop color of your choice) and work 2 more rounds of k2, p2 ribbing. Bind off in pattern.

## ARMHOLE BAND AND RIBBING

Using shade 1281 and larger circular needle, and starting at the middle of the underarm, recover and knit the live stitches. Pick up and knit along the armhole edges (holding the working yarn under the vest and picking up and knitting between the steek edge stitch and the first pattern stitch – if there is a slight gap between the live stitches and the steeked stitches, consider picking up and knitting 1 extra stitch in the corner, twisting it as you work it), then knit the remaining live underarm stitches. Place a marker for the center underarm / beginning of round. Adjust stitch count if needed to ensure it is divisible by 4. Change to smaller circular needle and work 5 rounds of k2, p2 ribbing, decreasing 4 stitches evenly on the first round to avoid flaring. Change to shade 132 (or pop color of your choice) and work 2 more rounds of k2, p2 ribbing. Bind off in pattern.

Repeat for the second armhole band.

## FINISHING

Wash your new sweater vest using a nice gentle wool wash. Dry flat, patting lightly into shape if needed, or use a wooly board for drying. After the garment is dry, weave in ends, then anchor the raw edges of the cut steeks to WS (wrong side) of garment with a herringbone stitch.

Now plan a trip to the desert in the autumn or winter when you can wear your new vest in the setting that inspired it! And post a photo on Ravelry, Facebook, or Instagram, and tag Lost City Knits! We love to see our designs in the wild!



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