BASIC EAR FLAP HAT

Most of the hats I've come across are just basic hats. In Canada (or any colder climate), I've found that basic hats don't always cut it. There's something extra about a hat with ear flaps – your ears stay warm and being able to tie it under your chin keeps the wind out just that much more effectively.

When I started knitting, I couldn't find a pattern for an ear flap hat that I really liked. I experimented and made a bunch for friends. This basic pattern is the result of that experimentation. Enjoy!

I like my hats a bit longer so that the ear flaps cover right down to my jaw line (they keep the wind out better in cold winters), so keep that in mind when using my guidelines. As always, adjust to your tastes.

Materials:
Needles: set of 8 US (5mm) dpn, 16" 8 US circular
Other Materials: tapestry needle, stitch marker, crochet hook
Yarn: less than one skein of Malabrigo worsted weight merino or Blue Sky Alpacas Dyed Cotton (less than 150 yards needed)
Gauge: 16 sts and 24 rows = 4" (10cm) in stockinette (exact gauge isn't vital)

I've used standard abbreviations. If you don't know one, they are easy to find online (with videos and diagrams and explained much better than I'd be able to).

This pattern is written for sizes Small/Medium/Large is a worsted weight yarn. Pictures in this pattern are for a hat knit in a Medium (which should fit most heads). You can use a Malabrigo silky merino and go up a size or a Malabrigo bulky yarn and go down a size.

Ear Flaps: (make two)

Cast on 6 stitches using long tail cast on and dpns. Purl next row to set up.
Row 1 (RS): kfb, knit until last stitch, kfb
Row 2 (WS): k2, purl until last two stitches, k2
Repeat these two rows until you have 18 (20, 22) stitches

Row 1 (RS): knit
Row 2 (WS): k2, purl until last two stitches, k2
Repeat these two rows 8 (10, 12) times. This will produce long ear flaps. If you'd like them shorter then repeat fewer rows.
End with Row 1

After the first ear flap is finished, cut the yarn leaving a tail about 8” long. For the second ear flap knit the last row using the circular needle, do not cut the yarn. Instead, move onto assembling the brim.

Assembling the Brim:

This hat is assembled so that the front is wider than the back, helping ensure that the ear flaps are positioned properly. Further, the cable cast on (while tight when knitting into the first row after casting on) helps keep the brim from rolling up.

With the ear flap on the circular needle, cast on 22 (24, 26) stitches using a cable cast on.

Join and knit along the remaining ear flap, making sure that the remaining ear flap is oriented so that you knit along the right side of the piece (i.e. you’re not knitting across the purled side). Use the tail of yarn from the ear flap to knit the next 4-5 stitches to help the join. Continue and cast on 18 (20, 22) stitches. Total stitches on needles before joining: 76 (84, 92).

Transfer last cast on stitch to the left hand needle and k2tog to join in the round, making sure that stitches aren’t twisted. Total stitches at end of round: 75 (83, 91).

Next Round: Knit across ear flap, k2tog at small gap that was created by the cable cast on. Repeat at the start and finish of the next ear flap, for a total of three decreases. By doing this, the join at the ear flaps and across the remainder of the brim are stronger. Total stitches at end of round: 72 (80, 88).

Place marker at end of this round.

Body of the Hat:

Knit all rounds, slipping the stitch marker. Knit until the body is 5” (6”, 7”) from the brim.

A general rule of thumb for the height of the body of the hat before beginning decreases is to place your thumb where you want the hat to sit and your fingers back over your head. It will likely be your index or middle finger that reaches your crown. The distance between your thumb and your finger is how long you want the body of the hat to be before you begin decreases. So feel free to knit more or less so that the hat fits you!

Crown of the Hat:

Begin decrease rounds at the stitch marker. Switch to dpns when needed.

Decrease Round 1: *k6, k2tog, repeat from * until end (63, 70, 77 stitches)
Knit one round
Decrease Round 2: *k5, k2tog, repeat from * until end (54, 60, 66 stitches)
Knit one round
Decrease Round 3: *k4, k2tog, repeat from * until end (45, 50, 55 stitches)
Knit one round
Decrease Round 4: *k3, k2tog, repeat from * until end (36, 40, 44 stitches)
Knit one round
Decrease Round 5: *k2, k2tog, repeat from * until end (27, 30, 33 stitches)
Knit one round
Decrease Round 6: *k1, k2tog, repeat from * until end (18, 20, 22 stitches)
Decrease Round 7: * k2tog, repeat from * until end (9, 10, 11 stitches)
Decrease Round 8: * k2tog, repeat from * until end (5, 5, 6 stitches)

Break yarn, leaving 8” tail. Draw yarn through the remaining stitches and pull tight.

Finishing:

Weave in ends. Block if desired.

You can add a half double crochet border for decoration or to hide the cast one edges.

You can also add braided ties by cutting 12 equal lengths of yarn. Take 6 strands, and using the tapestry needle, thread them through the bottom of an ear flap (two rows up and in the middle). Braid and tie end in a knot. Repeat on other side, keeping braids approximately the same length. Trim ends of yarn to be even.

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