

## Knitting in Peru

### ... a masculine craft

by Ken Ockenden

High in the Peruvian Andes, 12,500 feet above sea level, lies Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world.

Along its shores Hispanic culture predominates but on the lake itself, descendants of the Incas have developed distinct and unique cultures. On the floating islands the Uros people live out their lives on islands constructed entirely of reeds anchored in the lake. Their main foods are dried duck “jerky” and Canadian trout which were introduced into the lake and have overwhelmed the native fish.

Another interesting culture can be found on Taquile Island, a conical hill jutting 800 feet up out of the lake with a town crowning the peak. About 2,200 people live in a society which functions communally and collectively. There are no police, no judge or jail, no taxes and no elections. The mayor is chosen by consensus and steps down if the community feels he is not working enough for them. There are a few small restaurants started recently for tourists but they open alternately so the money earned is distributed more evenly among the islanders.

The most striking thing about the island is seeing the men – all ages – continually KNITTING when not actually doing field work. Women weave; men knit.

Around age 7 all boys are taught to knit. Their most important

project is to knit a hat resembling a ski cap, which they wear constantly. Hat color is determined by marital status and how the hat is worn has meaning to all the Taquilenos.

By looking at hat color and the way it is placed, people can determine whether the wearer is single or not and, perhaps more importantly, whether he is looking for a wife. The importance of the knitted hat does not end there however. When a man approaches a family to ask for a girl, he must undergo a critical test. With the extended family and neighbors watching, water is poured into the hat. If it leaks before a count of 10, the marriage is off. If it does not leak, the marriage can proceed as the groom has demonstrated his knitting ability and therefore his skill and ability to provide.

**On the island Taquile/Lake Titicaca only the men are knitting and you can see them doing their work in different places. These men are all married... you can tell by their hats.**



## The Latest Magazines...

We carry the latest issues of *Interweave* magazines – *Knits*, *Crochet*, *Spin-Off* and *Knit Scene*.



### Sizes of Needles

METRIC (MM)	US	UK/CANADIAN
2.0	0	14
2.25	1	13
2.75	2	12
3.0	–	11
3.25	3	10
3.5	4	–
3.75	5	9
4.0	6	8
4.5	7	7
5.0	8	6
5.5	9	5
6.0	10	4
6.5	10 ½	3
7.0	–	2
7.5	–	1
8.0	11	0
9.0	13	00
10.0	15	000
12.0	17	–
16.0	19	–
19.0	35	–
25.0	50	–

### Store Hours

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Closed</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Closed</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>10 am to 5 pm</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>10 am to 5 pm</b>
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## Café Wrist Warmers

*It's warmer so you don't need mittens or gloves but these are perfect for cool spring weather (and the freezer section of the grocery store.)*

**MATERIALS:** 1 skein aran weight yarn  
(20-22 sts per 4 inches)  
5 mm (#8US) needles  
2 buttons (optional)

**DIRECTIONS:**

Cast on 26 stitches for medium size hand.  
Row 1-16: 2x2 Rib stitch – K2 P2 (RS) P2 K2 (WS).  
Row 17-26: Seed Stitch – K1P1 (RS) K1P1 (WS)  
Row 27-30 2x2 Rib stitch – K2 P2 (RS) P2 K2 (WS).

Cast off. Sew up seam leaving enough room for thumb. Fold down wrist rib in half and place your choice of button on the left and right of each Cafe Wrist Warmer.

*This pattern is courtesy of Lady Samm who has wrist warmers for every mood and event.*

*Note: These can be holders for coffee cups... takeout or mugs.*



**“100 years ago, buying something you could make was considered wasteful; now making something you could buy is considered wasteful. I am not convinced this is a step in the right direction.”**

— Stephanie Pearl-McPhee

## And she has a magazine too...

Not only does Debbie Bliss have yarns and patterns, but she also has her own magazine! 'Debbie Bliss' knitting magazine is a bi yearly magazine which includes 36 designs in each issue (a combination of new projects and the most popular from past collections). There are also interviews with other designers, workshops and inspirational features.

In the Spring/Summer 2009 issue, Debbie talks about her new spring yarn, Eco, a beautiful Fair Trade organic cotton. Read the story behind it in The Blissful Life.

We couldn't keep her debut issue in stock so we ordered extra of the Spring/Summer issue. **Make sure you get yours!**

