Glenborough

T his cozy, unisex cowl reminds me of blustery days on the coast when I would hunker my chin down into my coat. If I'd had a cowl like this, made of soft wool to block the wind, I wouldn't have needed to hunker.

The cowl is named for the pattern's resemblance to plaid. You'll find making the elongated stitches that create the effect to be easier than warping a loom to weave a true plaid, though!

Glenborough

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

Skills/Techniques: knitting in the round, I-cord cast on, I-cord bind off, wrapped stitches, dropping wraps, slip-stitch colorwork

Yarn: Morehouse Farm 3-Strand Worsted 100% Merino or another soft, worsted or light Aran weight yarn, in three colors.
MC: 150 yds
CC1: 75 yds
CC2: 50 yds

Needles: #7 US (4.5 mm) circular needles in 16" (40 cm) length

Notions: tapestry needle, scissors

Gauge: 15 stitches and 28 rows per 4"/10 cm in stockinette
20 stitches and 32 rows per 4"/10 cm in pattern

Finished Measurements:
8" high and 22" around

Abbreviations:

K: Knit
P: Purl
LN: Left needle
RN: Right needle

Sl: Slip stitch as if to purl
Sts: Stitches
Wyib: With yarn in back
Tbl: Through the back loop
Kbf: Increase by knitting into the stitch first through the back loop, then through the front loop.
P1-wrap 4x: Purl, wrapping the working yarn 4 times around the needle before drawing it through.
Kbf-wrap 4xtbl: Insert the RN into the back leg of the stitch. Wrap the working yarn 4 times around the needle before drawing it through. Knit into the front leg of the stitch before pulling the stitch off the needle.
K2togtbl: Knit 2 sts together through the back loops

Techniques:

Standard I-Cord Cast-On: Cast 3 stitches onto LN using backwards loop cast on. *****Kbf**, K2. Sl 3 sts back to LN.* Repeat from * to * (Take note that the **kbf** is knit-back-then-front, not kfb.) See the video.

In this particular cast-on, every 8th stitch will be wrapped 4 times during the knit-through-the-back-loop portion of the kbf instruction. To do this, insert the RN into the back leg of the stitch. Wrap the yarn 4 times easily (not snugly) around the shaft, not tip, of the needle, and pull through. Complete the Kbf stitch by knitting once into the front of the same stitch. Each of the 4x-wrapped stitches counts as one stitch. I've demonstrated this in a video.

P1 Wrap 4 Times: This creates an elongated stitch. Insert the RN into the front of the stitch as if to purl. Wrap the yarn 4 times easily (not snugly) around the shaft, not tip, of the needle, and pull through. I've created a video so you can see that.

Slipping Elongated Stitches: When you return to the 4x-wrapped stitch, you will slip it. To do so, put the tip of the RN into the stitch purlwise just below the 4 wraps. Bring the yarn over to the RN, allowing the extra wraps to drop off the LN as you do so. There will be an excess of yarn hanging about that you can ignore. As you slip this stich on later rounds, the excess slack will be used up. I've created a video so you can see what that looks like.

I-Cord Bind Off: *K2, k2togtbl, sl 3 sts back to LN.* Repeat until 3 sts remain. Graft the remaining 3 sts to the beginning of round, as below.

Grafting I-Cord Ends: Cut the working yarn, leaving a 6-8" tail. Thread yarn onto a tapestry needle. Insert needle into the right leg of the first live stitch on your needle or stitch holder as if to purl. *Next, switch to the beginning of the I-cord round and insert needle under the two legs of that first stitch. Pull through. Return to the first stich on the needle and insert needle as if to knit, taking the stitch off the needle. Insert needle into next stitch as if to purl.* Repeat until all stitches are worked. I've created a video for you to see how this works.

Pattern Notes:

The plaid-like look of this pattern is created by working garter ridges and elongated stitches in two colors that are offset from each other, creating interlocking squares. In the first row of each garter ridge, the elongated stitch of that color is knit, ending its elongation. In the second row of each garter ridge, a new elongated stitch will be created.

These elongated stitches will be slipped in all rows other than their creation and ending row.

Stitches are always slipped purlwise with yarn in back.

If you prefer a cowl with a larger or smaller diameter, add or subtract a multiple of 8 stitches. If you want it taller or shorter, add or subtract a multiple of 16 rows.

The cast-on I've chosen is a bit fiddly, but it gives the cowl a very nice edge. If making the wrapped stitches at the same time as the I-cord is too daunting, you can instead do a standard I-cord cast on without the 4x wraps, then add a row of plain knitting in CC1 in which you do a k 1-wrap 4x every 8th stitch. This creates a larger CC1 section at the beginning of the cowl, so to balance the look of the top and bottom, add an extra row of plain knitting in CC1 just before binding off (working Round 59 twice) to make both ends match.

When counting stitches, each of the 4x-wrapped stitches counts as one stitch.

Yarn management: Working with three colors can create a tangle if you're not careful. I place my MC on one side of me, and the CCs on the other. When it's time for a garter ridge, the CCs will have twisted around each other four times. I leave one twist in to secure the spare color at the back of the work and undo the remaining twists before knitting the garter ridge. Alternatively, you could cut the CC yarn after each garter ridge, leaving at least a 6" tail for weaving in.

Pattern:

Cast on:
Using CC1 and I-cord cast-on, cast on 112 stitches as follows, creating an I-cord edge in which every 8th stitch is wrapped 4 times: *I-cord cast on 7 sts, on the 8th stitch Kbf-wrap 4xtbl*. Repeat until 112 sts are on the RN (counting each 4x-wrapped st as 1 st) and 3 additional sts remain on LN. Place the final 3 sts onto a stitch holder to be grafted later. Add MC. Join the 112 stitches that are on the needle, being careful not to twist.

Round 1: With MC, *k7, sl 1 purlwise wyib dropping the extra wraps off the needle,* repeat to end of round.
Rounds 2-4: With MC, *k7, sl 1 wyib,* repeat to end of round. Add CC2.
Round 5: With CC2, *k7, sl 1 wyib,* repeat to end of round.
Round 6: With CC2, *p3, p1-wrap 4x, p3, sl 1 wyib,* repeat to end of round.
Round 7: With MC, *k3, sl 1 wyib dropping the extra wraps off the needle, k3, sl 1 wyib,* repeat to end of round.
Rounds 8-10: With MC, *k3, sl 1 wyib,* repeat to end of round.
Round 11: With CC1, k3, *sl 1 wyib, k7,* repeat until 4 sts remain, k4.
Round 12: With CC1, *p3, *sl 1 wyib, p3, p1-wrap 4x,* repeat to end of round.
Round 13: With MC, *k3, sl 1 wyib, k3, sl 1 wyib dropping the extra wraps off the needle * repeat to end of round.
Rounds 14-16: With MC, *k3, sl 1 wyib,* repeat to end of round.

Rounds 17-52: Repeat rounds 5-16 three times.
Round 53: With CC2. *k7, sl 1 wyib,* repeat to end of round.
Round 54: With CC2, *p 7, sl 1 wyib,* repeat to end of round.
Rounds 55-58: With MC, k7, sl 1 wyib,* repeat to end of round.
Round 59: With CC1, Knit.

Bind Off:
With CC1, bind off in I-cord, leaving the final three stitches live on the needles to be grafted to the beginning of the round.

Finishing:

Graft the ends of the I-cord together at the cast-on and bind-off edges.

Weave in ends, taking care to weave each tail into stitches of the same color.

Block gently. It is not necessary to stretch the cowl, but pinning to its full vertical height will help the elongated stitches and I-cord edging stay straight.

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