

NUBIA

A nubia or nubian is a lightweight shawl, scarf, or a head-covering. Although few patterns seem to appear in needlework books or period ladies' magazines, there were a number of references made to them in fictional stories. In *Godey's*, they also appear in lists of items sent to purchasers. Other than references to the African area of Nubia, the word "nubia" was not defined in mid-nineteenth dictionaries.

The first pattern below for a nubia is an excellent item for beginners since it is just a plain garter stitch and uses large needles. It is a great "mindless" knitting project for someone who need a project that does not require counting or rows or stitches. A nubia is as useful for a period wardrobe as for a modern one.

Below are two patterns. The first one is a simple pattern that employs a plain garter stitch and the second pattern, uses the herring-bone stitch which more advanced knitters may wish to use.

The original pattern and citation will be given first and then a modern interpretation or explanation (if any) will follow.

Original pattern

"Nubian — Always knitted. A scarf three yards long and half a yard wide, done with coarse needles and a light stitch in Shetland wool. The most comfortable and graceful wrap for the head and shoulders when exposed to evening air in a light dress." [No illustration was given of the nubian.] *The Lady's Manual of Fancy-Work: A Complete Instructor in Every Variety of Ornamental Needle-Work; . . .* by Mrs. Pullan. [Dick & Fitzgerald: New York, 1859]

Modern interpretation by Virginia Mescher.

Cast on seventy-five stitches. Knit plain (garter stitch) until the scarf is three yards long. Cast off. No fringe is needed.

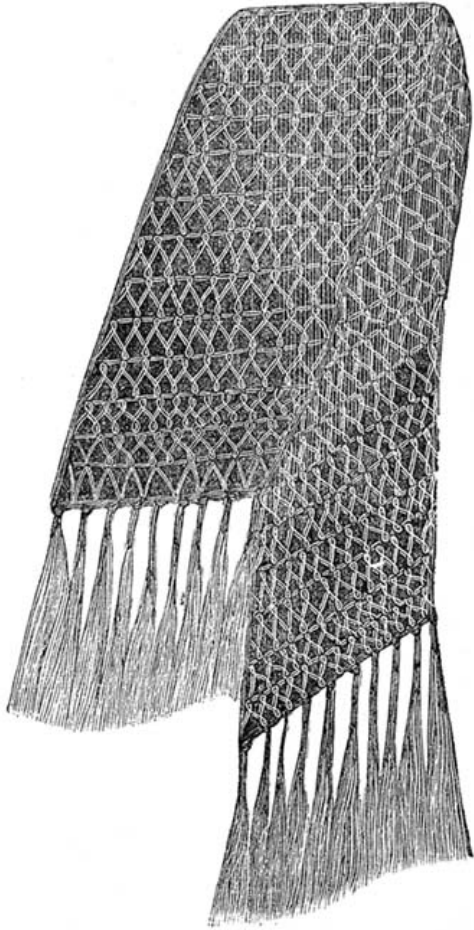


For the nubia pictured, I used a lace weight merino wool/silk blend instead of Shetland wool. The merino/silk blend gives it a softer hand and the Shetland would give it a bit more body. Size 10 wooden needles allow for a nice open stitch, which was airy but the scarf is still warm. With the lace weight blend, it took three to four ounces for the three yards. Make sure that you have enough of the same dye lot to complete the project.

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TO KNIT A NUBIA.

BY MRS. JANE WEAVER.



“TO KNIT A NUBIA — By Mrs. Jane Weaver.

Materials. — 2 oz. split zephyr, largest size wooden needles. Herring-bone stitch. We have designed this Nubia expressly for the fair readers of ‘Peterson.’

Cast on 300 stitches. Knit 3 rows plain, after which widen and narrow every row, knitting the Nubia 1 yard wide. Finish with 3 rows plain. Tie in a fringe 1/4 yard deep.”

Peterson's July 1859

No modern interpretation is included with this pattern.