



Knitting Around

Elizabeth Zimmermann , Meg Swansen (Editor)

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In this book, Elizabeth teaches you to be the boss of your knitting. Her liberating teachings have inspired generations of knitters and the classic patterns will keep you knitting for years. 25 projects — 192 pages | Hardcover

Knitting Around Details

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Lindsay says

I have read this book several times and knitted garments using E. Zimmermann's percentage system. This is a wonderful book for beginning and advanced knitters but it's Elizabeth's story that is so compelling.

Mckinley says

Variety of projects.

Nadia says

This was not your average knitting book, it was more like a mini-memoir with lovely inclusions of Elizabeth's art & photos helping to illustrate her journey literally & figuratively. And for this reason, I enjoyed it immensely! The knitting projects, other than the Aran coat are a bit on the 'old fashioned' side having been designed in the mid to late 20th century and would need to be updated for the 21st century. Definitely more advanced knitting than my novice self is capable of; however, when the time comes for large items, I'll definitely be trying the Aran coat. EZ was a fascinating & extremely creative Woman and her style lives on.

Tracy says

I found samples of Elizabeth Zimmerman's writing on Amazon and enjoyed her wit and humor. I ordered this book because several reviewers named it as their favorite of the five or so available. It arrived yesterday and I was in for such a treat! The book is loaded with knitting patterns and inspiration, as expected. What I didn't expect was the story of Elizabeth's life up until retirement. It is beautifully told, complete with photographs. I enjoyed it thoroughly.

Tina says

My favorite parts of the book came at the end of each chapter when Elizabeth gave her digressions. Don't get me wrong, I love reading about knitting, and I really love reading about Elizabeth's approach to knitting. In her own words, she is an opinionated knitter...and I love it. Nonetheless, my joy in reading this book comes from Elizabeth's memories of her life growing up in England, going to art school in Germany where she met her husband, and finally their life together in the states. The part where her husband talks about his escape over the German border in WWII was particularly interesting.

Shari Blakey says

Outstanding, as all of her books are! I particularly enjoyed the segments outlining the history of her life, but since I am a knitting nerd, I enjoyed everything about knitting also.

Tam G says

The part memoir/part instructional booklet is always a hard thing to pull off. The two things don't always feel like they belong together and generally it seems like a fit of arrogance in the author or the desperate need for book filler. However, Zimmermann pulls it off, because her past contains many insights as to what made her such a creative and innovative designer. The book also contains some of her more historic patterns (seamless sweater, bog jacket, moebius scarf, artistic socks, etc.).

I like Zimmermann's casual style, and her insistence that knitting is not a set of instructions but a deeply creative and satisfying endeavor. She wants to give you outlines. She wants to give you basic percentages so you can tweak it to work for you. She wants to give you reasons things are done. She doesn't really want to give you a pattern. I do love that about her.

svm says

when i first got this book from the library, i idly flipped through it admiring the genius patterns. i noticed that there were some 'digressions' along with a healthy dose of family photographs scattered throughout the book but i didn't really study them as much as the patterns. then, a few days later, i picked the book up again and started at the beginning. non-knitters, you CAN read this like an autobiography and it is fascinating! elizabeth zimmermann describes her wild life from growing up in england to youthful adventures in switzerland, czechoslovakia, germany, and even finland before moving to the new world with her german beer-brewer husband in order to escape hitler in the late 30s. of course, knitters will enjoy personal yarn-centric glimpses into EZ's amazing life. she's a genius!

Jane Lebak says

Finished EZ's "Knitting Around" yesterday because it was the Ravelry Goodreads pick for January. I enjoyed the memoir part because it's just such an alien childhood to my own, and I loved hearing about NYC in the 30's when she finally got there. I skimmed the knitting patterns but made sure to read the note parts where she discussed options. I liked her Phoney Seams and will have to remember that. :-)

Anne says

I loved hearing about EZ's life - almost more interesting than the knitting patterns!

Kristen Stieffel says

I hadn't intended to read this book in a week, but it is so engaging I wound up reading two chapters a day instead of one. Elizabeth's writing style is so chatty and fun, I could scarcely stop reading.

This book is less a book about knitting than it is a memoir, but since it's the memoir of a knitwear designer, you get some knitting instruction as a bonus. Some reviewers looking for a knitting book have expressed disappointment about this. I find it part of the book's charm. Elizabeth Zimmerman was one of the greatest knitwear designers of the twentieth century, and learning about her life and what made her unique—her upbringing and art school studies—was delightful. As if that weren't enough, Arnold Zimmerman's account of his escape from Nazi Germany gave me chills.

My only disappointment with this book is how much of the knitting information seems duplicated from her other books. The state mission of the book is to teach you to be boss of your own knitting. But Elizabeth's other books do the same, so once you've read them, this book adds little new material, although the bog jacket and pie are square shawls are perhaps enough.

Which doesn't alter the fact that I love this book. A lovely, nostalgic memoir by one of the best writers in the genre.

Bibliothekerin says

Another of Zimmermann's primers on her EPS system of knitting. (See my reviews of her other books for greater detail.)

Much like *KNITTING WITHOUT TEARS*, this book features patterns for pullovers (aka jumpers) knit in the round on a circular needle, each with several variations, either in design or dimension (e.g., a different neck opening or a Child's version). Here the patterns include the "Seamless Yoke Sweater", a round-yoke pullover design first published in 1958, and "a Norwegian Sweater", a drop-shoulder fair isle pullover first published in 1955. There is also a doublesided/reversible ski cap pattern called the "Very Warm Hat".

Lucy says

A sort-of biography with knitting. Elizabeth wants to teach everybody how to analyze their knitting and do their own thing, instead of blindly following someone else's pattern (even hers).

English Elizabeth, aka Betty, Lloyd-Jones went to Germany to study art. There she met German brewer-apprentice Arnold Zimmerman. How she grew up in England, her life in Germany, their eventual marriage, and how they came to the United States. Their lives in various locations there.

After all, she wasn't always Elizabeth Zimmerman, knitting guru to so many.

Recommended. Someday I hope to get good enough to try one of the patterns/suggestions in this book, perhaps the Bog Jacket, maybe the Pie Are Square shawl.

Lise says

You either love Elizabeth Zimmerman or you hate her, *particularly* when it comes to her style of pattern writing. She very deliberately does not use 'standard' pattern writing style, in part because of some very bad early experiences when magazine editors seriously changed her pattern designs to fit in with the style, and partly because she is more interested in teaching people to think in terms of design than she is in teaching particular techniques or patterns.

Personally, I love her. She is so encouraging and relaxed in her descriptions that on reading her I want to try things I wouldn't otherwise consider (such as steeking). Almost every project in the book is one I'd like to do some day.

I found the 'digressions' fascinating, though I often wondered about the omissions. She must have left a lot out, but the parts she put in were obviously chosen to be the most interesting and informative, not the most flattering to herself or her loved ones.

Very different, but a definite winner.

Karen says

I wish I discovered her and her books earlier - the years of knitting evolution I had to learn on my own, when all along she was here with all these beautiful secrets, ideas, and advice. And that's without talking about her patterns, and sweater calculations...
