

Forest-and-Cream Checker Mat



Original prototype-ready pattern draft based on the supplied design. Not physically crocheted or washed. Dimensions, yarn use, stitch selection and performance require a real sample.

Project	Written version
Skill	Intermediate colorwork
Finished target	approximately 43 x 53 cm (16.9 x 20.9 in)
Yarn	Smooth medium/worsted cotton with suitable care instructions
Starting hook	4.0 mm; adjust to the washed swatch

Materials and gauge

Allow about 470 m (514 yd) total yarn, including a planning margin, not measured consumption. Colors: forest green and cream. Also: hook, yarn needle, removable markers, scissors, tape measure and the actual bowls.

Washed body-gauge target: 18 stitches and 20 rows/rounds per 10 cm in the stated body stitch. Gauge is a design target, not a reading from the photo. Make a sample at least 15 x 15 cm in the actual stitch and colors; measure the central 10 cm after washing and drying.

1. Measure before you start

Arrange the bowls as they will be used. Measure the outside footprint including the gap between them, then add the margin you want around all sides. Keep the mat out of walking routes. Choose the mat by the bowl arrangement, not by the pet's weight.

For a row-worked mat, subtract twice the planned border depth from each desired final dimension. With g = washed stitches per cm and q = washed rows per cm, body stitches $N = \text{round}(\text{body width} \times g)$, and body rows $R = \text{round}(\text{body length} \times q)$. Chain $N+1$ for sc or the alternating sc/dc fabric. Turn with ch 1, not counted. Recalculate colorwork repeats when resizing.

For the ribbed version, the foundation follows the long side. For the oval and center-out version, use their shaping instructions and measure the growing piece. Do not apply the row-worked formula to rounds. More stitches per 10 cm makes the fabric narrower; try a larger hook for fewer stitches per 10 cm and a smaller hook for more, then wash and remeasure.

US stitch terms

ch = chain; sc = single crochet; hdc = half double crochet; dc = double crochet; sl st = slip stitch; st(s) = stitch(es); BLO = back loop only. Hdc: yarn over, insert hook, yarn over and pull up a loop, yarn over through all 3 loops. Dc: yarn over, insert hook, pull up a loop; yarn over through 2 loops twice. inc = 2 stitches in one stitch.

2. Crochet the body

Foundation. With forest green, ch 73. Row 1: sc in the second chain and every remaining chain: 72 sc. Ch 1 and turn. For colorwork, apply the color instructions below from Row 1.

Rows 2 onward. Work one sc in every actual stitch, ch 1 and turn. Do not work into the turning chain. Maintain exactly 72 stitches for 100 rows total, including Row 1.

Each block is 9 stitches wide and 10 rows high. In Rows 1-10, the right-side chart from left to right is (green 9, cream 9) four times. In Rows 11-20, reverse those colors. Repeat this 20-row pair five times for 100 rows. Work right-side odd rows from the chart right-to-left, and even rows left-to-right. The chart and written row order on page 5 remove any ambiguity.

Use one supply of each color. Carry the unused strand inside every sc by crocheting over it, including at row ends and turns; keep it relaxed. Change color on the final pull-through before the next block. Do not leave exposed floats on the back. The resulting fabric may be thicker; test with the actual bowls.

Before the border

Measure the relaxed body without pulling it straight. Count several rows and check both side edges. Finish the last row, fasten off and weave body tails in at least two directions through the stitch backs. Inspect the color joins before covering the edges. Remove all temporary pins and markers except the four corner markers used next.

3. Work the flat border

Use forest green through both loops. Put a marker in each of the four actual body corner stitches: the first and last stitches of the top row, and the two corresponding foundation corners. Ch 1 and join do not count.

Border Round 1. Work 3 sc into each marked corner, marking the middle sc of the group. Between the corners, work 70 sc along the top and 70 sc along the bottom, one per actual body stitch. Along each row-end side, distribute 88 sc BETWEEN the corner groups. Do not count the corner stitches again. Starting total: 328 sc.

For side placement, mark the row-end edge in four roughly equal sections. Distribute 22 sc per section, adding one extra pickup in each of the first 0 sections. Place the stitches evenly within each section. Skip row ends or use two pickups in a row end only as needed for even spacing; do not put every extra stitch in one spot.

These pickup numbers come from the target gauge. The actual edge length is the deciding check. If the side ripples, undo it and use fewer evenly distributed pickups. If it draws inward, undo it and use more. Match opposite sides and record any revised count; blocking does not repair excess stitches.

Border Rounds 2-3. Sc in each non-corner stitch, and work 3 sc into the marked middle stitch at each corner. Move each marker to the middle of the new group. Join each round. Every round gains 8 stitches.

Border round	Count at the stated pickup count
1	328
2	336
3	344

Fasten off, weave in the remaining ends and remove all markers. Keep the edge single-layered, with no appliqués, fringe, hanging loops or stiff binding.

4. Wash, measure and check the finished mat

The title describes the intended use. Washability, colorfastness, finished dimensions and border flatness have not been physically verified. Choose a yarn whose label supports your intended cleaning method and test it before making the full mat.

First wash. Follow the actual yarn label for water temperature, detergent and drying method. Wash contrasting colors together in a sample first and check for transfer. Do not assume that all cotton yarn tolerates a hot wash or tumble drying.

Dry and remeasure. Dry completely as the label permits. Lay the mat on a level surface without pins, bowls or weights. Measure both dimensions and check every edge. A corner that rises again when released needs correction. Record the washed size below.

Check the feeding setup. Put the intended bowls on the dry mat and press gently at their rims. They should sit steadily. Test for movement on the actual floor while supervising your pet. Remove a mat that slides, bunches, catches paws or is chewed. No slip-resistance, waterproofing or chew-resistance claim is supplied.

Between meals. Keep food inside dishes, lift crumbs out of the fabric, and remove and clean a damp or dirty mat promptly. Check and dry the floor beneath it, especially wood or laminate. Keep the fabric completely dry between uses.

Wash pet food bowls after each use with soap and hot water, as advised by the FDA. The mat does not replace bowl cleaning. Follow material-specific cleaning instructions for the mat; the CDC also recommends following pet-supply care labels.

Problem	Correction to check
Ruffled edge	Count corners; reduce excess side pickups and remake.
Cupped mat	Check tight border stitches or missed shaping increases.
Bowls rock or mat slides	Choose a flatter fabric or a different feeding setup.
Colorwork puckers	Relax yarn joins/carried strands; remake the affected rows.
Corner gap	Verify placement first; discreetly close only a residual small gap.

Design-specific note: The small lifted corner is a useful reminder to check the mat without bowls weighing it down. Adjust the border if the corner will not settle.

Physical sample record

Yarn brand / fiber / dye lot: _____

Hook: _____ Washed gauge: _____ sts / _____ rows per 10 cm

Finished dimensions: _____ Used yarn: _____

Side pickups / shaping revisions: _____

Wash cycle and drying method: _____

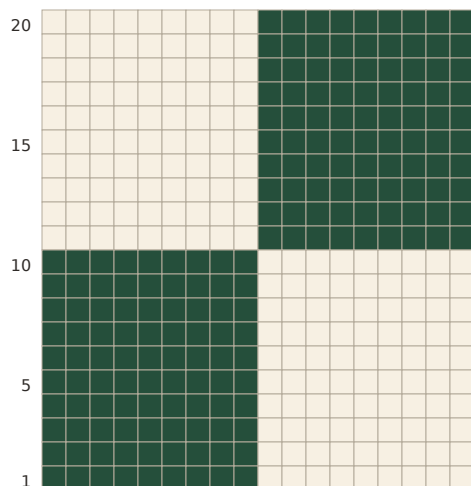
Flat border / steady bowls / floor checked: _____

Maker / date / revision: _____

Care sources: FDA pet-food handling; CDC pet-supply cleaning. Stitch terms: Craft Yarn Council.

Checker repeat and full band schedule

The repeat below is 18 stitches wide and 20 rows high. Repeat it four times across and five times upward. Green = dark squares; cream = pale squares. One square equals one sc. Nine stitches at the target gauge span about 5 cm; ten rows span about 5 cm. Wash the two-color swatch before using those dimensions.



Each square = 1 stitch. Read from the bottom upward.

Rows	Odd rows: working order	Even rows: working order
1-10	cream 9, green 9 x4	green 9, cream 9 x4
11-20	green 9, cream 9 x4	cream 9, green 9 x4
21-30	cream 9, green 9 x4	green 9, cream 9 x4
31-40	green 9, cream 9 x4	cream 9, green 9 x4
41-50	cream 9, green 9 x4	green 9, cream 9 x4
51-60	green 9, cream 9 x4	cream 9, green 9 x4
61-70	cream 9, green 9 x4	green 9, cream 9 x4
71-80	green 9, cream 9 x4	cream 9, green 9 x4
81-90	cream 9, green 9 x4	green 9, cream 9 x4
91-100	green 9, cream 9 x4	cream 9, green 9 x4

At every color change, use the incoming color on the last pull-through of the preceding stitch. Keep the inactive yarn enclosed inside the sc stitches, with no exposed floats. Recheck the width after a full 20-row repeat. A tight carried strand can narrow the entire mat.