

WE KNITTED OUR WEDDING DRESSES

Silk, lace and satin may be the more obvious fabric choices for a bride to wear on her big day. But not for these women...

We've seen Tom Daley knitting poolside at the Tokyo Olympics and heard how former First Lady Michelle Obama loves the craft, too. In fact, a staggering 1m of us have become keen knitters since the start of the pandemic, according to the UK Hand Knitting Association. Now meet the brides who are starting a new trend and knitting their own wedding gowns.

'It only cost me £200 to make'

MATILDA MILLER, 28, IS RETRAINING TO BE A GARDENER

Walking down the aisle in my hand-knitted dress felt like I was walking down the runway of my own fashion show. It was November 2018 and it felt so exciting knowing our guests were seeing a knitted wedding dress for the first time. My husband, Andrew, had known I was knitting it but couldn't visualise what the dress would be like. Luckily, he was pleasantly surprised and said I looked beautiful.

I had planned the dress in my head years before and after collecting ideas on a mood board, I chose a *Vogue* pattern. I was able to start knitting soon after the proposal and with plenty of time to knit I was able to enjoy the experience – apart from when I had to unravel 15cm because it was too long! I can't remember a time when I didn't knit, so knitting my wedding dress was the right thing to do. I used a soft alpaca wool so the dress felt lovely, and it only cost about £200. Because we married in Edinburgh in November, it was no bad thing to be wrapped up in wool!



A knitted dress was the perfect fit for Matilda



Coranda always knew she would knit her wedding dress one day



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'I'd wake at 6am to knit in secret'

CORANDA BUREAU, 32, IS AN ACCOUNTANT FROM BRISTOL

I was busy knitting a jumper when my partner, Will, called me to another room. I kept him waiting while I finished my row, not realising he was about to propose! It was April 2021 and straight after I said a delighted 'yes' I bought the pattern to knit my wedding dress. Even before the proposal I knew I would knit my wedding dress one day, as knitting had been in my life since my gran taught me as a child. Inspired by a beautiful dress in a magazine, I knew the Maddie pattern by Kari-Helene Rane would be perfect.

Due to Covid restrictions, we had to

keep our wedding small, but with little other preparation to do, I could focus on my dress. Wanting to keep it a secret from Will, I would get up at 6am to work on the dress until I heard his footsteps coming down the stairs. I did question my decision when I was casting on 600 stitches to restart the dress for the fourth time! But it was all worth it; walking down the aisle in my dress in September 2021 felt amazing. The first thing Will said when he saw me was, 'Did you knit your dress?' I think he was really impressed.

Words Michelle Rowley Photography, Kevin Murphy
Angelica Fraser Photography

'The guests kept stroking my dress'

GRACE O'NEILL, 34, IS A DIAGNOSTIC RADIOGRAPHER AND LIVES IN LIMERICK

I cried in frustration as my cat proudly dangled lengths of yarn from his mouth after I had spent around 50 hours hand spinning the beautiful silk wool for my wedding dress. I rescued what I could and spent another 50 hours knitting the dress before noticing that the wool looked discoloured where it had been chewed. With only two months to go before the big day, I had to start again. This was our fourth wedding date, as Covid restrictions meant we'd had to keep postponing – but at least that had given me more knitting time!

Making my dress was a joint effort with my mother and it was lovely to work on it together. For me, the most

time-consuming aspect was actually designing it; I self-drafted my pattern to get exactly what I wanted. In the month leading up to the wedding, I worked on it every evening and took my knitting everywhere with me. I have precious memories of a fantastic summer spent creating something special.

Fortunately, the dress was completed in time for the wedding in September 2021 and I loved it. As did my husband, James, and our guests. Everyone kept stroking it!

I started knitting in 2014, when I was saving money to go travelling. I ended up knitting as I travelled and now I can't stop. For me, knitting really is a joy.



Grace's dress was a true labour of love