

Round Cat Head Basket

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Weaving Level: All Levels



Dimensions: Approximately 10" x 10" 12" tall at handle

Materials:

1/2" flat reed (stakes)

1/4" flat reed dyed

#2 round reed

11/64" flat oval (weavers and lasher)

3/16" flat oval (weavers)

1/4" flat (rim row)

1/2" flat oval (rim)

Seagrass for rim filler

10" Square Notched Handle (the one pictured is a square Shaker oak handle from North Carolina Basket Works)

NOTE: A special thank you goes to Paula Harrison for generously sharing her basket pattern and teacher's notes with the Missouri Basketweavers Guild. This pattern is for personal use only. Permission for any other use must be obtained directly from Paula.

Teachers Notes:

The following are a few of the general topics I cover with my student's each time I teach this basket:

WATER: Soaking time varies depending on reed thickness. A minute or so is usually enough for all but the thickest flat reed. Round reed and flat oval require longer soaking depending on their size. If your weaver begins to slip – spray your basket. Just remember to dampen where you are and where you are headed – there is no need to “drown” the areas you've already woven. Always spray the areas when you are upsetting stakes or cutting and tucking at the end of your basket. When I weave at home I never complete a basket in one sitting. I weave it up to the rim row and let it dry at least overnight. When I'm ready to rim I lightly “spritz” the basket so the weavers won't slip, then I repack the rows to take advantage of the shrinkage that occurs when the reed dries. Next, I wet the top of the stakes and proceed to cut/tuck and rim.

PROPER MATERIALS: Don't waste your time weaving with inferior materials. The greatest cost of your basket is not the materials but your time. Use good quality reed. Stake material should always be stronger and usually larger than the material you are using for weavers. Flexible weavers (particularly in the first 3 rows of your basket) will make your life easier. Save the really thick reed for larger baskets and use lighter weight materials for smaller baskets.

PACKING: Don't wait until you reach the top of your basket to pack the weavers down. Get into the habit of packing after every one or two rows. This is particularly important if you are weaving a shaped basket where the weavers at the bottom are shorter than those near the top.

SHAPING TIPS: What do tummies, tables and the heels of your hand have in common? All can either help shape or misshape your basket. Pay attention to the areas that your basket comes in contact with and use them appropriately. Maintain an even tension on your weaver – weave with a firm, even hand – do not pull on the weaver.

FINALLY: Weaving baskets is like raising children. You should do so with a firm and even hand. And, even by doing so, each one turns out differently.

Happy Weaving,

Paula

Preparation: From 1/2" flat cut 14 stakes 24 inches long. On the rough side mark centers on at least two stakes.

Weave an over/under base. The stakes should be placed very close together with about a quarter inch between each stake. The base should measure approximately 5 1/2" x 5 1/2". Twine one row using #2 round reed taking care to create sharp square corners. The twining locks in your base and keeps it from shifting as you begin to shape the basket.

Sharply upset the 2 stakes on either side of the corners. This will help them buckle properly to make the "feet" of your basket.

NOTE: The sides of this basket are woven in start/stop rows. As with any shaped basket, it is vital that you pack and closely examine your shaping after each row. Before you proceed to weave the next row examine your basket from all sides to make sure it is symmetrical, the rows of weaving are level, and there is an equal space between each stake. If your basket passes these tests – proceed. If not, back up and perform repairs now.

Turn your base over so the **right side is facing you.** The early rows are critical to the shape of your cat head. Before you begin the first row and before each subsequent row gently "fan" the stakes out. Fanning moves the stakes further apart and is an important element in creating the "feet". Your goal is to create a sunburst pattern with equal space between all the stakes (including the corners) by the 5th or 6th row.

Rows 1-5 are start/stop rows woven with flexible 11/64" flat oval. As you weave these rows you will be simultaneously weaving snugly against the prior row of weaving and working to spread the stakes. As you round each corner use your left thumb and index finger to move the corner stakes closer together and uplift the corners to form the "feet". The corners of the basket should rise increasingly upward with each subsequent row. The rest of the basket should remain flat against the table.

Row 6: Change to a piece of flexible 3/16" flat oval and continue to weave with your basket flat against the table. The combination of "fanning" and using your fingers to lift the corners establishes the shape of the base and determines how pronounced your "feet" will be on the finished basket.

NOTE: By then end of the row 6 you should consider your "feet" fully grown. It is now time to focus your attention to getting the sides to come up. From this point on as you weave each row you will gently move the stakes closer together. Your goal will be to have equal space between each stake with that space decreasing slightly each row until the sides of the basket are straight.

Rows 7-19: Continue weaving using the 3/16" flat oval. **At this point remove the base from the table and begin weaving from the outside of the basket.**

Rows 20-26 are woven with 1/4" dyed reed.

NOTE: As you weave these rows continue to flare gently as the sides progress from slightly flared to straight up once a width of about 10" is achieved. Periodically insert your handle to make sure it will fit when you are finished.

Rows 27-30: These rows are woven with 3/16" flat oval reed.

Row 31: This is your rim row and is woven with a piece of 1/4" flat reed that has been trimmed so that it, together with the seagrass, equals the width of the 1/2" inch rim stock you will be using.

One last time examine your basket, pack and make final adjustments. Cut and tuck your stakes taking care to fold tucked stakes snugly against the rim row. Cut inside stakes flush with the top of the rim row.

Insert your handle into the center stakes of the basket so that the notch corresponds with the rim row. NOTE: There is a heavy "throat" area just below the handle notch. Don't try to tuck this portion of the handle. Start the tucking just below it.

The basket is rimmed with 1/2" flat oval reed. Carefully "walk" your tape measure around the top of the basket and add approximately 4" to that measurement. This will be the length of your outer rim. The inner rim should be approximately 2" shorter.

Scarf the edges and soak until the rim stock is flexible. Starting with the inside rim. Fit the flat oval reed snugly against the basket. On this basket I usually place the rims so that they overlap on the ends but overlapping on the long sides is also acceptable. Using a long piece of 11/64" flat oval lash the rim placing an "X" over the handle.

Variations for Round Cat Head Basket Pattern



10" x 13" oval
7" x 7" base
1/2" stakes 9" x 9"
cut: 24" long

Handle is a 10" low ash handle with a dip



8" x 12" Oblong
4 1/2" x 7" base
3/8" stakes 7" x 11"
cut: 11 - 19" long
cut: 7 - 23" long

Uses 8" handle (same style as 10" round basket)

