

You Too Can Create
STUNNING

Watermelon Carvings



How to Create Masterpieces from Watermelons

Jay Ball

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NOTE:

This file contains the first 2 chapters. This book can be purchased online from amazon.com or barnesandnoble.com.

For more information, visit stunningwatermelons.com.

Enjoy!

You Too Can Create STUNNING Watermelon Carvings

By Jay Ball

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Summary: A popular pumpkin carver demonstrates a unique approach on creating stunning works of art out of watermelons.

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You Too Can Create STUNNING Watermelon Carvings

What do Pumpkin and Watermelon Carvers have in common?

One day I was talking with a good friend and fellow pumpkin carver. I told him that during our annual pumpkin walk event in October, what I enjoy most is to stand in the background as people pass by and listen to the comments as they stop and gasp, then ooh and aaah at the sight of my carved pumpkins.

“I’m so glad to hear you say that!” he exclaimed.

I was puzzled. “Why, what did I just say?”

He replied, “I have been accused of being vain when I preferred to stay home on Halloween night to hand out candy and listen to the comments about my front porch pumpkin display rather than take the kids out trick or treating.”

Admit it folks, we carve because we’re artists, and artists create art to be appreciated by others. Doctors are rewarded when the patient gets well. Businessmen are rewarded when their venture yields great profits. Artists are rewarded when they know their art has touched the heart of the beholder.

Call it vain, call it inflating my ego, call it what you want, but the truth is, I measure my success by the response of others to my carvings. When the response is positive, I know I’m a successful artist. I am not afraid to admit that I love it when that happens.

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Section One

Introduction to Watermelon Carving



Why Watermelons?

What do Halloween Pumpkin carving addicts do to curb their need for creative expression in July? They turn to watermelons, of course.

Where pumpkins can only be found in the fall season, watermelons are pretty much available year round. Yes, in many areas during winter months you may have to search harder for them and they will be more expensive when you find them, but they are usually still available.

Watermelon carving is becoming an increasingly more popular craft during summer months. You see creative watermelon art popping up at parties and other events more frequently. What was once a simple summer party snack is now becoming an elegant dinner event centerpiece. Creative watermelon carving has been featured in prestigious events, elite conventions and elegant weddings.

Now that you have this book, you can feature a work of watermelon art at *your* next party or event.

A Word About Temporary Art

My object in creating a beautifully carved watermelon is to create a special memorable moment. I like it when people not only enjoy my art, but remember it for a long time.

One great thing about ephemeral art (that means art that is short-lived or fleeting), is that it supports living in harmony with nature. Seasons change, leaves turn color, flowers bloom and wither. Life is always in a state of transition. Like Japanese sand and rock gardens, sand painting, ice sculpting, or sidewalk paintings, the art is on display only for a fleeting moment in time.

You may not want to see your child leave for their first day of school, or see them get married and move away from home, but there's no way to stop it. Life goes on, flow with it. Create something beautiful, then let it go. Then create something beautiful again. Don't try to stop the river, move with it. Live life to it's fullest, enjoy, then repeat.

On a more practical note, watermelons are biodegradable. You don't have to store them in your closet all year only to bring them out once for a short holiday season. It's sort of like disposable dishes. When you're done with them, you just throw them away.

Another bonus about watermelon carving, at least for me, is the joy creating a new work of art for each new season or event.

Finally, the temporary nature of a carved watermelon demands attention now, while it lasts. This makes them great attention grabbers and wonderful memory makers.

For Beginners and Experts Alike

How much can be written about a simple subject like watermelon carving? After all, it's quite simple really – just transfer a pattern, then cut it out – right? When you get right down to it, that's exactly right. Watermelon carving is simple, and I make no attempt to complicate it in this book.

With the growing interest in watermelon carving, more people are looking for information on the subject. Those new to it want to know how to get started. Those familiar with it want to learn more shortcuts and techniques for doing it better and quicker. In this book I have assumed the reader has no previous experience with watermelon carving. Beginners as well as those with experience will benefit from all the tips, tricks, and techniques I have included in these pages.



The temporary nature of a carved watermelon demands attention while it lasts.

Carving for Profit?

Watermelon carving is not just for fun either. Many carve watermelons for profit as well. Those trained in the art of creative fruit and vegetable carving can command \$80, \$100, \$130 or more per centerpiece display. You may be cultivating a talent that is rewarding in more ways than one.

There's More Than One Way to Skin a Melon

There are a variety of books and videos on methods and styles of fruit and vegetable sculpting available on the market.

My style of watermelon carving lends itself well to the beginner, where you are guided by a pattern and it is more structured and easy to follow. The method I show you in this book will set you apart from most, but in the world of food garnishing, this is just one style among many.

The more advanced and free-form methods are in the area of Thai style carving, called kae-sa-lak in Thai.

While I do well with the form of watermelon carving that I show in this book, for the more advanced styles of fruit and vegetable sculpting I recommend the following great resources:

*DVD by Chef Ray Duey, C.E.C.:
Fruit and Vegetable Sculpting
available at www.chefgarnish.com*

*The Complete Step-by Step Vegetable and Fruit Carving book,
hardcover 190 pages, edited by Nidda Hongwiwat, published by
Sangdad Publishing, Thailand. ISBN 9747162601*



Advanced 3D styles of fruit and vegetable sculpting include Thai style carving.

*Photo courtesy of www.chefgarnish.com,
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Watermelon Carving - In Three Easy Steps

In this book I reveal my own method of watermelon carving. This method involves the following three steps.

- Hollow Out the Melon
- Transfer the Pattern
- Carve the Design

(I told you it was easy.)

Are you ready to get started?

Section Two

Hollow Out the Watermelon



You will need to hollow out the watermelon when you want to light it from inside. If you do not plan to light your watermelon, skip this section.

Most of the patterns in this book can be used cut all the way thru or sculpted (where the outer skin only is removed). More on this in Section Three.

Adding a light to the melon (whether it is cut all the way thru or sculpted), adds an element of flair to your final display. I recommend it.

Typically, cutting the pattern all the way thru is easier, and this will *require* the melon be lit in order to see the design as intended.

Pick Your Watermelon

How do you pick a perfect watermelon for carving?

If the watermelon is perfect for eating, it's also perfect for carving. How do you know if a watermelon is ripe? Janet Ford of www.DietPower.com gives the following advice from an article entitled, "New Miracle Drug: Watermelon".

Is That Melon Ripe? The Straight Dope

Most experts agree: start with the color of the rind. It should be a dull green, depending on the variety -- but more importantly, the side that has lain on the ground during ripening should be creamy yellow. If it's white, it's not ripe.

Another major clue is the vine. If a stem is still attached, it should be brown. If it's green, put the melon back.

Its density should also give it away. "You should pick it up and say, 'Oh, that's heavier than I thought it should be,'" says Dana Abercrombie, director of the California-Arizona Watermelon Association. Heaviness means the melon has absorbed a goodly amount of water.

Kicking the Tires

There is no consensus about the "thump" test. Abercrombie recommends slapping with the palm of your hand, not your knuckle. "You should hear a hollow, reverberating sound, like in a basketball." If the melon pings, it's not ripe, she says.

Many people swear by the acoustic method, but others say it's like kicking the tires on a car. "It makes you feel good when you do it, but you don't know what it will accomplish," says Warren Roberts, a watermelon expert and an associate professor of horticulture at Oklahoma State University. Only an experienced ear can tell the difference, he says.

"A lot of people talk about that, but they can't really tell you what they're listening for," says Samantha Winters, a spokeswoman for the National Watermelon Promotion Board. If you're not sure, you can always ask the grocer to cut it for you.

Once you have the melon home, it will keep at room temperature for two to three weeks. After you've cut into it, however, it needs to go in the fridge. Or you can take care of it the way Roberts does. "I like to cut it open, eat the heart out, and then go on to another melon."

Tools

To hollow out your melon, gather the following items:

Saw. Since I have children I have a few safety pumpkin carving saws on hand and they work great for cutting an opening in the melon. A serrated steak knife or even a keyhole saw will work as well.

Parisian scoop. These are sometimes called melon ballers. Even an ice cream scoop could work. The idea is to use something that will create appetizing morsels fit for eating. You could just scoop it all out into a big heap with a big spoon, but who would want to eat that?

Pumpkin scoop - scraping tool. I have found that the scoop that comes with the kits sold by Pumpkin Masters® during the Halloween season works perfectly for scraping (visit www.pumpkin-masters.com for more information on their tools). You will use this for the final cleaning and scraping of the inside of the watermelon.



Safety Pumpkin Carving Knife



Parisian Scoop



Pumpkin Masters® Scraper Scoop™

First Things First

Before you begin, take a look at your pattern. What orientation is it?

This will help you determine how to position the pattern on your watermelon, and if you will be hollowing it out, where to cut the access hole.

I like to light the melon from underneath, but you can also drop a light in from the top, or even place a candle inside like you would a jack-o-lantern.



*Portrait
Orientation*



*Landscape
Orientation*



*Portrait
Melon*



*Landscape
Melon*

Hollow Out the Melon

Before carving allow the watermelon to acclimate to room temperature, or it may have a tendency to crack or split.

Cut an access hole big enough for your hand and a tool for cleaning and scraping the inside of the melon to fit into.

An ice cream scoop can work well for removing the fruit, but you may prefer to use a Parisian scoop, a tool specifically designed for creating delicious little watermelon morsels.

Finally, use a fat spoon or pumpkin scraping tool to clean the inside of the melon to a smooth inner surface. Remove all the fruit until most of the red areas are cleaned away.



Any good sharp kitchen knife will work well for cutting an access hole in the melon.

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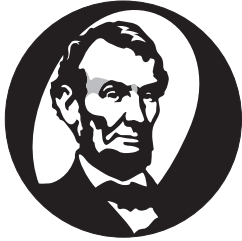
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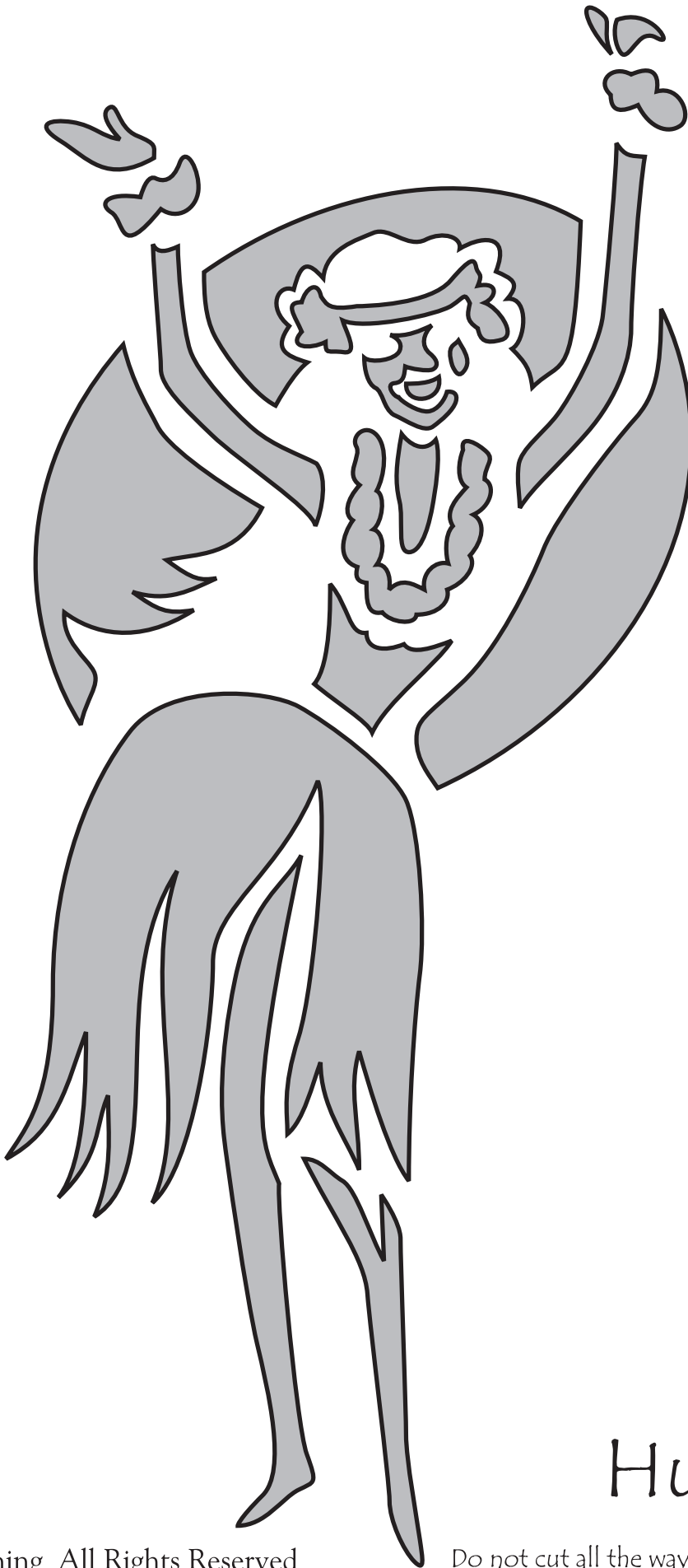


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Level 1
Easy



Full Sculpt Option

Hula Dancer

