

Artist Creates Intricate Leaf Carvings

Lito from Kanagawa, Japan, creates intricately carved, whimsical art from a single leaf.

“My journey into art began through necessity rather than traditional artistic training,” the artist says. “In 2018, I was diagnosed with ADHD. I started my Twitter account to document and share my experiences with this condition, posting daily about my struggles and daily life. I left my job shortly after and began studying ADHD more deeply. This led to the discovery that the intense focus characteristic of ADHD could be channeled into art. I transitioned from posting about my disability to sharing art pieces.”

Lito initially experimented with various artistic styles, including scratch art, ballpoint pen drawings, and other techniques that showcased his detailed craftsmanship and harnessed his intense focus.

“Despite creating good work, the public response was middling,” he says. “I was losing money and not growing my audience.”

Things changed when he discovered leaf-cutting art by a Spanish artist.

“That was it,” Lito says. “I immediately went out to collect leaves. Leaf cutting became my chosen means of expression. I had no money to study painting or buy art supplies, no knowledge of color theory, and felt I lacked artistic skills. However, I could draw simple animals, and leaf cutting made it possible to create beautiful works even with a poor sense of color. Above all, the palm-sized leaf canvas gave me the joy of challenging myself to create intricate expressions within the limited space.”

Lito uses a design knife to carefully cut out details, including holes and lines less than 1 mm wide.

“It requires patience and precision to cut each element meticulously and reliably,” he says.

Simple designs take him between two and three hours, while more detailed carvings



Photo courtesy of @lito_leafart (Instagram)

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can take up to eight hours to complete. He prepares the fresh leaves in advance by soaking them in a special liquid and then drying them.

“Using dried leaves makes it easier to cut them and also allows me to preserve my work.”

On Instagram, Lito shares his finished artwork along with progress photos that show the light sketches he makes on each leaf before carving.

He currently displays his work at art exhibits across Japan and looks forward to expanding his exhibits worldwide. In 2024, a private museum, “Lito Leaf Art Museum Fukushima,” opened in Fukushima, Japan.

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Millet-Based Snacks Are Worth Trying

Millet might make you think of bird seed, but this tiny grain provides impressive nutrition. As a whole grain, millet belongs to a diverse family of grasses first domesticated around 10,000 years ago in northern China. It remains a valued ingredient in Chinese, Nigerian and Namibian cuisine.

Today, millet’s popularity is increasing. The crop matures in just 45 days and can withstand tough weather or poor soil conditions. It’s also a light feeder, requiring minimal pesticides or fertilizers to reach maturity. The tiny grain has gained attention in recent years, with the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization declaring 2023 the “International Year of Millet.”

Millet is rich in protein, magnesium, phosphorus, zinc, copper, manganese and various B vitamins, along with antioxidants. Since millet is gluten-free, it’s a suitable grain choice for people with gluten intolerance or sensitivity.

Its high fiber content supports healthy digestion and gut health, while a naturally low glycemic index helps prevent blood sugar spikes. This supports stable energy levels, reduces sugar cravings, and improves insulin sensitivity in individuals with diabetes and prediabetes.

The high protein content promotes satiety and sustained energy without a crash. This makes millet a great option for a pre-workout snack or a mid-afternoon pick-me-up. And since millet snacks are usually roasted or baked rather than deep-fried, they help reduce intake of unhealthy fats.

Like all grains, millet tastes best when cooked. One cup of dry millet with two



Millet is popular in a variety of snacks, including cookies, breakfast bars and trail mixes.

cups of water, boiled for 20 min., works well. Alternatively, skip this step and add raw millet to dough before baking. Ground millet can be used as a substitute for wheat flour, although recipes usually recommend keeping the millet-to-total-flour ratio at about one-third.

Today, millet is popular in various pre-made snacks, including cookies, breakfast bars and trail mixes. It’s just as flavorful in homemade treats. You can also sprout millet seeds to use as a salad topping or as a lettuce substitute in sandwiches.

The tiny grains can even be popped into “popcorn” that looks like Rice Krispies. Add raw millet to a dry skillet and heat over medium heat. Stir or shake the skillet constantly until the crackling sounds stop. Season the puffed grains as you would popcorn, or consider adding them to your favorite baking recipe.

How To Grow And Use Celeriac

Celeriac, a less common fall vegetable, is worth including in your garden and meal plans. These knobby bulbs may resemble beets and radishes more than long-stemmed celery, but they’re part of the same family. Unlike traditional celery, the stalks are hollow and seldom eaten.

Celeriac bulbs have a creamy white interior beneath a gnarly, brown skin. Once peeled, they can be eaten raw, roasted, stewed, blanched or mashed. Think of celeriac as a nuttier, earthier version of celery stalks with less water content, making it a great potato substitute. In texture, celeriac resembles rutabaga or kohlrabi. In fact, it can replace almost any root vegetable.

The plant is a good source of vitamins B6, C and K. It’s also high in fiber, with half the carbohydrates of potatoes. When shopping, look for firm, non-wrinkled bulbs, which indicate freshness and are easier to peel. Use a sharp chef’s or paring knife, and keep the white part in acidulated water before cooking or eating. Otherwise, it’ll brown like an apple.

Celeriac is easy to grow in the right conditions. It’s very hardy and can stay in the ground through winter until spring, developing a stronger flavor over time. It takes at least six months to mature and requires consistently moist soil for successful growth.

Most gardeners start celeriac indoors to transplant in late spring or early summer. Several celeriac varieties are available, some with smoother bulbs for easier peeling, while others are less prone to bolting.

Young celeriac plants can be transplanted outdoors once the danger of frost has passed. Space the plants about 1 ft. apart to ensure



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good airflow. All varieties grow best in sunny locations with rich, moisture-retaining soil. Compost can significantly improve growth. Covering the planting bed with thick mulch tends to work well; just be careful to leave the plant’s crown uncovered. As the plants mature, remove their outer leaves to expose the crown, allowing it to develop.

The plant is ready for harvest from October through the following March. To harvest, use a knife to lift the bulb above the soil and cut it from the roots. Keep some soil on the root ends if you plan to store them, as it prevents them from drying out. Once harvested, celeriac can be stored for six to eight months in a sealed glass container in the refrigerator.

How To Make Perfect Hominy

One look at its oversized kernels might make you think hominy is far removed from corn. But it’s simply a bit of kitchen magic that transforms this common crop into something special. Hominy has a rich, earthy flavor that contrasts with its soft, pillow-like texture. It’s a staple ingredient in Mexican cooking, used in atoles, pozoles, arepas, tamales, tortillas and more.

The secret to hominy is a process called nixtamalization. Dried field corn is soaked in an alkali solution, usually lime or lye, and then thoroughly rinsed to remove the hulls and skin. The resulting kernels are tender and plump, providing better nutritional value. Your body can more easily absorb the kernel’s niacin, phosphorus, calcium and iron.

Even better, nixtamalization reduces mold growth and prevents corn from sprouting, acting as a long-term preservation method before refrigeration was common. Historically, cultures that consumed hominy experienced lower rates of pellagra, a disease caused by vitamin deficiency. The process also changes the kernel’s protein and carbohydrate structures, forming emulsifying agents that help the ground grain stick to water—a vital step in Mexican cooking.

Interested in trying hominy? It’s available dried or in cans. Canned hominy is ready to use, while dried needs soaking and boiling, similar to dried beans. Masa harina, which is ground hominy, is also popular and used for grits or dough.

Homemade hominy requires flint, flour or dent corn. Some people find success using popcorn, although the result might be chewy. Hardwood ash acts as the lye agent for nixtamalization, but pickling lime can also be used.

An easy recipe calls for 2 quarts of dry corn kernels and 4 tablespoons of pickling lime. Use a stainless steel or enameled pot for the kernels, covering them with 2 in. of water.



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Sprinkle the lime on top and stir until it dissolves. Then, bring the mixture to a simmer, keeping it just below a boil for 30 min. Cover the pan, turn off the heat, and let it cool on the stovetop overnight. In the morning, drain and rinse the kernels thoroughly.

By this point, the kernels should be puffed up to about three times their original size. Test a few to make sure they are firm and chewy without a hard center. If the center remains hard, simmer them for a few more minutes. Then keep the kernels submerged and rub them between your fingers to remove any pericarps, the outer skins of the kernels. Keep in mind, this step is mainly for appearance and not something to stress over.

Fresh hominy will keep in the refrigerator for three days or in the freezer for up to three months. Dehydrated hominy stays fresh in airtight containers for years, and canning is nearly as simple. Add room-temperature, drained hominy to sanitized jars, leaving 1 in. of headspace. Remove any bubbles and wipe the rim clean with a damp cloth. Place hot lids on the jars and screw them down tightly with the rings. Process in a pressure canner at 10 lbs. pressure for 55 min. for pints or 85 min. for quarts.