



Directions

MATERIALS

- Pumpkin
- Printed stencil
- Tape
- Pushpin/awl or needle
- Marker (optional, for connecting dots)
- Pumpkin scoop/large spoon
- Small serrated carving saw or craft knife
- Newspaper or tray
- Battery LED candle (recommended for safety) or small tealight
- Paper towels
- Petroleum jelly (optional)

STEPS

1. **Choose your design:** Scale and print a stencil that best fits on the flattest surface of your pumpkin.
2. **Prep the area:** Cover your workspace with newspaper. Set out a bowl for the guts, and arrange your tools nearby.
3. **Cut the lid:** Cut a circular or square lid around the stem at a 45° angle to prevent it from falling inside. Remove the lid.
4. **Hollow the gourd:** Scoop out all seeds and stringy pulp. Scrape the interior wall where you'll carve until the flesh is about 3/4–1 inch (2–3 cm) thick.
5. **Transfer the stencil:** Tape the stencil flat onto the pumpkin. Smooth out wrinkles so the design transfers cleanly.
6. **Trace the pattern:** Poke small holes along the black stencil lines with a pushpin or awl (dot spacing: 3–5 mm). Remove the paper. Optional: Connect the dots with a marker to create a clear cutting guide.
7. **Carve the design:** Start carving small or detailed areas first, then move to larger sections. Use a gentle sawing motion with short strokes and keep the blade angled slightly inward. Take your time — forcing the blade can cause slips.
8. **Refine and clean:** Push cut pieces out carefully. Refine edges with the tip of your tool or craft knife for fine detail. Wipe away marker dots with a damp paper towel.
9. **Light it up:** Place the LED candle or tealight inside and replace the lid. (If using a real candle, ensure good ventilation and never leave it unattended. Battery lights are strongly recommended.)
10. **Preserve the carving:** To extend freshness, rub cut edges with petroleum jelly. Keep the pumpkin cool and shaded, and bring it indoors overnight if it gets very cold or hot.

QUICK SAFETY NOTES

- Carve away from your body. Keep your stabilizing hand out of the blade's path.
- Supervise kids closely and limit them to safer tasks like scooping, taping, or dot-poking.
- Use battery-operated lights instead of open flames.

Bonus: Save the seeds and roast them with salt for a delicious snack!