



FLOWER DECORATIONS



Paper flowers are an important part of every Mexican fiesta. No one is completely sure how the tradition of paper flowers began in Mexico, but it is thought that Spanish settlers brought tissue paper (papel de chino) from China. It is believed that paper flowers were used to decorate churches during the winter when flowers were less available. Once people figured out how to make tissue paper in Mexico the cost of the paper went down and more people started to make paper flowers to decorate their lives. Paper flower designs can be very simple, like the carnation that you will make, or really complex. In addition to carnations, paper flowers come in roses, birds of paradise, bougainvillea, bluebells—any flower imaginable!



Make your own paper flowers!

SUPPLIES TO MAKE ONE FLOWER

Tissue paper—any color,
two 12" X 18" sheets

Pipe cleaner
Scissors

Step one: Take the two sheets of tissue paper and fold in half one direction and then the other to make the sheet a quarter of the size. Cut along the folds—you should have eight 6" X 9" sheets.

Step two: Stack all eight sheets of paper and orient them so that one of the long edges is facing you. Begin to accordion fold the paper back and forth to bring the two long ends together.

Step three: Use your pipe cleaner to make a stem. Pinch the middle of the folded paper and wrap the pipe cleaner once around the middle. Twist to secure.

Step four: Here you can customize your carnation some. Using your scissors, carefully trim the two short ends of the folded paper. You can cut the ends into points, round them, cut them into a zig-zag, or something more creative!

Step five: Carefully fluff your flower. Gently unfold the paper and lift each layer away from the stem.

Make enough beautiful flowers for a bouquet or wreath! Experiment with different colors, shapes, and sizes.



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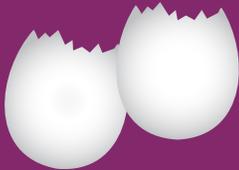
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CONFETTI EGGS

Cascarones are hollowed out eggs filled with confetti. Cascarones originated in China, and were brought to Spain and then Mexico. Legend has it that Empress Carlotta popularized cascarones in Mexico, but there is conflicting evidence that says they were used during festivals like carnival before the 1860s. In the 1930s, young people in Arizona used cascarones to flirt with people they liked, cracking the confetti-filled eggs on their crush's head. Today, cascarones are more popular with young kids, and are sometimes filled with small toys.



How to make cascarones

SUPPLIES

- Eggs
- Confetti
- Tissue paper squares
- Glue

TO HOLLOW OUT THE EGGS

In order to make cascarones, you need eggshells. With the help of an adult, use a knife to carefully cut off only the top of the eggshell. Pour the egg yolk and white into a bowl and use for cooking. Carefully wash the eggshell inside and out and allow to dry undisturbed.

MAKING THE CASCARONES

Now that your eggshells are clean and dry, fill with confetti. We like to use biodegradable confetti, dried flower petals, or seeds to make clean-up outside easier. Carefully plug the hole in the eggshell with a small piece of tissue paper glued over the opening. You can either use glue or you can wet the tissue paper to make it stick to the eggshell.

These are cascarones in their simplest form. In border towns in the American Southwest, cascarones can be highly decorated with favorite cartoon characters, sports teams, or lots of colors. Sometimes the cascarones are at the end of decorated paper cones or wear full costumes. You can dye your eggshells before you remove the egg or use magic markers to decorate the shell after it's clean and dry.

*If you make enough cascarones, you can have a **papaqui**, or an all-out confetti egg fight!*



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