

Make a Rice Paper Lantern

Lanterns have been used in Japan and China for hundreds of years—during religious ceremonies, to advertise for businesses, and to light up the home. Many people hang their lanterns outside their doorways from the roof for luck, or carry lanterns in festivals and parades to celebrate. Here's an activity that can bring the warmth and light of these lanterns into your home.

Paper lanterns make beautiful decorations and are a summer art project your child can easily make and enjoy. Your child will love choosing the right paper, stringing the lantern together, then hanging it for all to see. It's also a great experience in teaching her how to carefully measure, cut, and assemble something hand-made.



What You Need:

- Art paper or rice paper (Note: If you plan to light the lantern from within, a light-colored paper is best to allow more light through.)
- Sturdy cardboard or heavy duty card stock
- Glue
- Hole punch or a thick, sharp sewing needle
- Utility knife
- Crochet or embroidery thread or thin yarn
- Optional: Small beads
- Optional: Light bulb on a long cord, found in any hardware store

What You Do:

1. Cut four cardboard or card stock rectangles so they measure 12" x 6". These will form the structure and hold your lantern together.
2. For each rectangle, measure 1/2" in on all sides, and cut out the interior rectangle with a utility knife.
3. Cut four rectangles from your art paper measuring 13" x 7". These will be mounted to your cardboard, and need to be larger so you can fold the paper over and glue the structure together.
4. Carefully place one of your cardboard pieces in the center of one cut piece of art paper. Fold the art paper so it overlaps the cardboard on either side. Use your ruler or fingernail to help crease the paper if needed. Be careful not to tear or wrinkle the art paper on the other side—you are mounting the paper to the inside of the lantern structure so that the cardboard won't show.
5. Trim the paper to fit neatly, then glue it to your cardboard. Repeat steps four and five with each piece.
6. On the long edges of each of the rectangles, measure and draw a small dot every 2" to 4". Make sure the dots are in the same place on each of the rectangles.
7. At each dot, use your hole punch or sewing needle to make a hole large enough to pull string or yarn through.
8. Now you're ready to assemble the lantern! Take your thread, and cut 4 strips that are about 40" long.
9. Gather these 4 threads and bundle them. Make sure they're of an even length. Then fold the bundle in half so all the ends line up.
10. Knot your thread bundle near the fold on top to form a loop. This is the loop you'll hang your lantern from. You should now have a thread bundle with a loop on top and with all the strands

hanging down toward the ground.

11. Separate the dangling strands into four groups of two. These strings will be used to thread your lantern with.
12. Place two of your rectangles side by side, and lace them together with two strands of thread, just as you might tie a shoelace. Make sure to leave at least four inches in your thread from the top knot before the lacing begins to ensure that your rectangles can hang evenly.
13. Repeat step two until your rectangles are all assembled. When done, they should look like a square from the top and hang together in a lantern formation!
14. Make sure the lantern sides hang evenly, and tie off the ends of the strings so that the edges are secure. You can cut the ends of the strings or leave them to dangle. If you like, you can even tie beads on them for decoration.
15. Optional: You can light up your lantern with by attaching a light bulb on a long cord to the inside of the lantern when you hang it. The bulb will provide a lovely ambient light when illuminated through your art paper.

Now all you have to do is hang your finished lantern from a hook in the ceiling, sit back, and enjoy!

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