

# Pumpkin Carving Tips

from Marc Evan and Chris Soria of Maniac Pumpkin Carvers



## Picking the Perfect Pumpkin

- Look for a pumpkin with a healthy, green stem.
- Check to make sure the pumpkin doesn't have any soft spots.
- If it feels heavy for its size, or if it has a thick stem, it will have thick walls and be better for carving.



## Choosing Your Tools

- Use a washable marker to draw your design on your pumpkin.
- Longer, thinner knife blades are better for carving.
- A linoleum cutter is ideal for detail work, but be careful—they're very sharp.
- Ceramics sculpting tools are great for scraping off areas of the outer flesh.
- Pumpkin carving kits you find at the grocery store generally work well, too.

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## Carving Like a Pro

- Wash and dry your pumpkin before carving.
- If you are right handed, work from right to left so as not to rub off your design—lefties should work left to right.
- A pumpkin will last longer if you don't hollow it out.
- If you choose to hollow out your pumpkin, cut a hole in the back rather than cutting around the stem—the stem area of a pumpkin has lots of nutrients that will keep your pumpkin stronger longer.
- Cut out small areas first—carving out big sections of your pumpkin weakens it structurally, which could cause it to break when you try to do the finer work.
- If you are carving a hollowed pumpkin, periodically stop, turn out the lights, and put a light source inside your pumpkin to check your progress.



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## Preserving Your Creation

- When you've finished carving, spray the exposed/cut areas of your pumpkin with diluted lemon juice to help keep it fresh and prevent mold.
- Rather than keeping your carved pumpkin on display 24 hours a day, cover it with plastic wrap or coat the exposed areas with petroleum jelly. Then place the pumpkin in the refrigerator during the day to keep it fresher, longer.
- The very best way to preserve your handiwork for posterity, of course, is to remember to take photographs!

