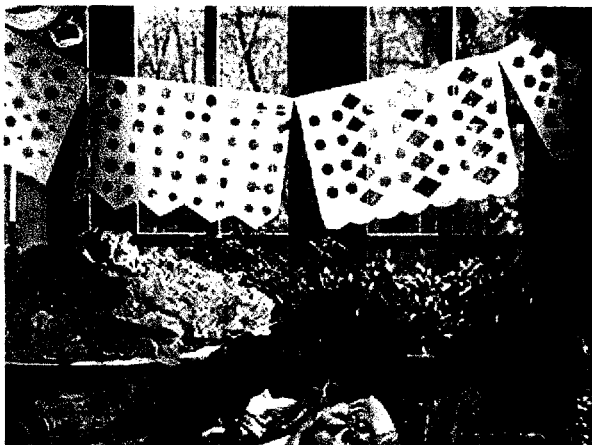


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MEXICAN PAPER DECORATIONS

Papel picado is the Mexican folk art of paper-cutting. The colorful, lattice-like designs, traditionally cut into tissue paper, are made to celebrate religious festivals and national holidays. Mexican craftsmen use punches, knives, hammers, chisels, and scissors to cut holes in the tissue. Sometimes the result is a simple symmetrical design, or it may depict a scene from the Bible. The decorations are placed in windows and hung as banners. You can also use them as table runners and place mats for a Mexican-style fiesta.

TECHNIQUE

Making Mexican Paper Decorations

10-inch-by-14-inch sheets of brightly colored tissue paper
Decorative hole punches
Iron
Craft scissors or pinking shears
String
Glue

1. **Make eight equal sections:** Fold one sheet of tissue paper in half the short way, then fold it in quarters, then in eighths. Unfold the paper and re-fold it accordion-style along the same folds. If desired, you can iron the paper now to make it flatter and thus easier to work with.
2. **Create a repeating pattern** by punching holes in the folded tissue paper using a variety of decorative hole punches. Do not use the punch on the folded edge or it will jam. Use scissors or pinking shears to cut shapes along the folded edge. Cut a curve that will make a scallop-shaped bottom edge. Leave a little room at the top. Open the folded paper. Using a warm iron, iron out the creases.
3. **To hang the decorations as banners,** fold the top 1/2 inch over, and crease. Run a string across the sheets, just under the fold. Carefully glue the folded edges down over the string.

SOURCES

Craft hole punches
Available at crafts stores

Craft scissors
Fiskars

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