

In 2016 I watched as one friend group after another heard about Mari Kondo's book, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, and completely fall hook, line, and sinker for this "new" way of simplifying and organizing a life. Just when I thought everyone I knew had heard of it, another friend would pop up with a feverish gleam in her eye, talking about whether her things brought her joy or not, and the cycle would start again. It even got a mention in the Gilmore Girls revival!

Disclaimer: I have not read her book. It doesn't matter, however, because this isn't about KonMari, or FlyLady, or any number of other organizational methods and masterminds out there, at least not specifically. This is about the pursuit of organization for organization's sake, for the fallacy that a clean closet will give your mind clarity and life will suddenly make sense once you fold your shirts a different way.

Because what I see, time and time again, is the same people going from system to system, guru to guru, trying to find the one way that will make their life what they think it should be. Pinterest-perfect or otherwise. And that's just not going to happen.

Why? Because organization is just one tool in the box. Having a nice set of socket wrenches doesn't make you a mechanic, nor does having an organized sock drawer make you more successful.

What is the purpose of a tool? To make a job easier. And if organization is a tool, what is its purpose: to clear the clutter so you can get on with living, working, and loving your life. Not just your color-coordinated bookcase.

To What End?

Why the next organizational trend is not necessarily your ticket to a peaceful life.

I see this a lot in the planner community, as well. Group after group waxing poetic about finding "planner peace." Until the next month, that is, when they've found their next perfect planning system. While I'm all for a good system (as evidenced by some of the printables in this issue), there's a lot to be said for accepting the one you've got and getting on with it. Whatever "it" is. School, career, your social calendar, or your blog schedule; use it like the tool it is and move on.

It's what we do after the organizing that matters most. No one is going to care whether you plotted your next big thing in a composition notebook from the dollar store or a \$150 planner with color-coordinated pens and washi on every page. Especially if you never get around to making it happen! So, use the tools you have (yes, even the pretty planners and shirt folding diagrams, just don't stop there!); make the best of the situation right here and now, and go out and make 2017 an amazing year!

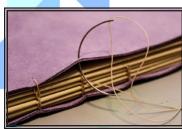
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Crafty Branch Acitivity Book for Grown-Ups is the creation of Jennifer Vanderbeek and The Crafty Branch, LLC. It is our hope that you'll find it as entertaining as an adult as you did similar books from childhood.

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ve been a paper planner-user for longer than I can really count. I know it goes back to at least high school when a big thrill was picking out my assignment tracker each year. For a while, though, I thought I was alone in my analog preferences, only to find a paper planner community alive and well, thriving and growing. On the one hand this is fabulous as there are so many different options and solutions out there. On the other hand, the glut of choices can be a bit overwhelming.

I've made my way through a variety of planners over the years, eventually moved into making my own when the existing systems just didn't work for me. I spent a summer in a Bullet Journal while my life was in flux, only to come full circle to the commercially-produced planners for 2017.

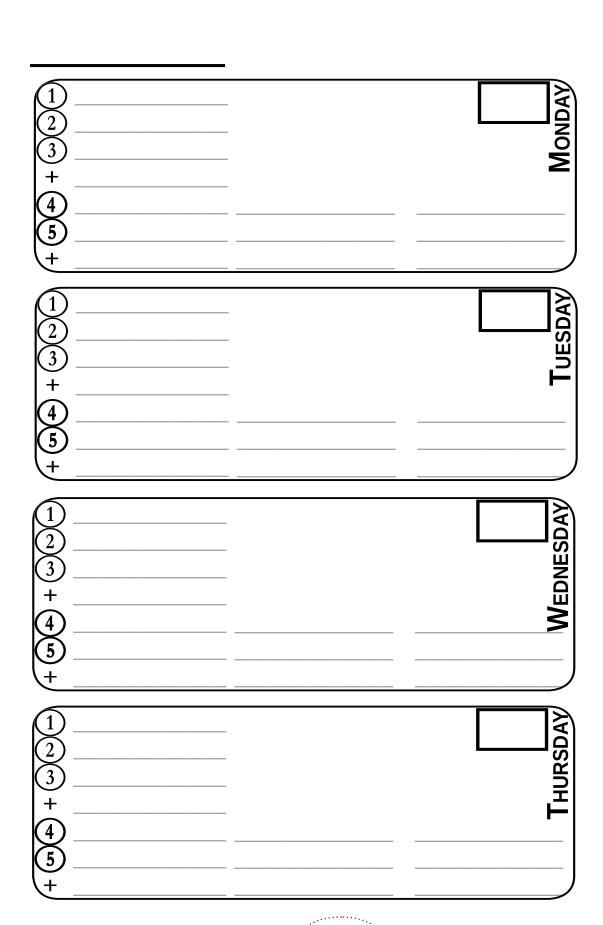
When I got to the point that I wanted to make my own, it helped to know how I used my planner, the things I needed to keep track of, and what size I was comfortable using. If you've used a paper planner or two recently, you

probably have a good idea of those elements, yourself. Often a company will have sample printable pages you can try out before ordering their notebook or inserts, or you can turn to a program as simple as Word or Google Docs to create your own.

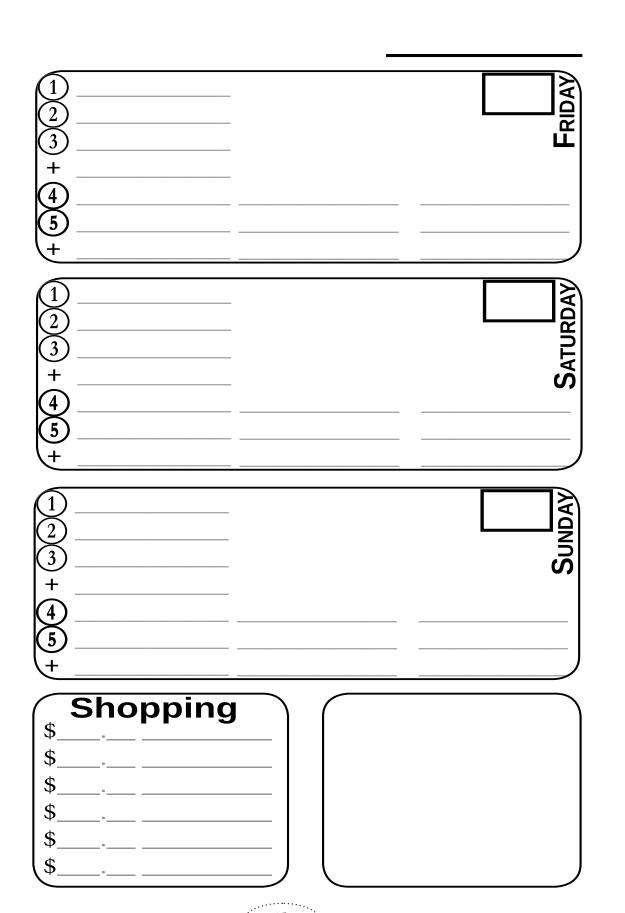
If you've been curious about paper planners—whether this is your first time using one or you're coming back after going digital for a while—I've included some of my favorite page layouts for you to try out. They are undated, so you can use them to start any time, and use them once or many times over.

They're set to print letter-size, but if you want to customize it to your traveler's notebook or ring-bound planner du jour, here are some common planner page sizes and what % you need to print the pages at to fit the best (based on comparing page width, allow enough of a margin on the top and/or bottom as necessary to get the correct height).

Description	Size (in inches)	Print Percentage
US Letter	8.5" x 11"	100%
A5	5.75" x 8.25"	68%
Classic/Desk (half-letter)	5.5" x 8.5"	65%
Compact (Franklin Covey)	4.25" x 6.75"	50%
Personal/Portable	3.75" x 6.75"	44%
Pocket (Filofax)	3.25" x 4.75"	38%
Mini (Filofax)	2.625" x 4.25"	31%



This horizontal week on 2 pages (WO2P) layout is a great way to plan out your week at a single glance.



CRAFTY BRANCH

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WINTER 2017

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Vertical is another way to go--still a week on two pages, but the columns make it easy to keep tasks, appointments, and other plan-ning in line. It always bothers me when Saturday and Sunday get squashed into one space, so I always design with that in mind.

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Sometimes called a gratitude journal, noting the high points of each day can be a beneficial habit. This log makes it easy to keep up with them right in your planner!

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Jabit

A very useful tool in many bullet journals is the Habit Tracker. List the habits you wish to cultivate on the diagonal lines up top and fuill in the boxes underneath that correspond to the day of the month that you met your habit goal.

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Drate Promoted

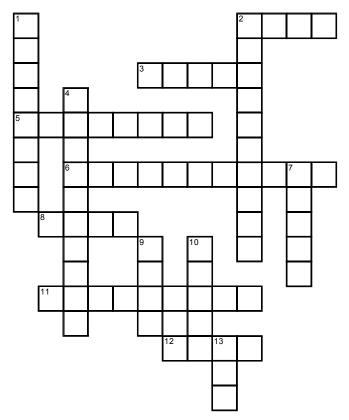
For the bloggers (and/or vloggers) among us, here's a page to list out your post ideas and keep track of where they are in the production process!

Crafty Branc

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WINTER 2017

Happy New Year!



Across

- 2 Auld ____ Syne
- 3 The first month of the year is named after this Roman god.
- 5 Festival with Catholic roots that continues the holiday fun.
- 6 It's important to appreciate other cultures, not them.
- 8 Auspicious food to eat at the Lunar New Year.
- **11** We're running a photo scavenger hunt over on this social media platform.
- **12** Happy New _____

Down

- 1 The round pastry popular this time of year in New Orleans.
- 2 One of the most common New Year's resolutions.
- 4 Konmari was the hot trend of 2016.
- 7 The motto of Mardi Grad is Laissez le bon ____ rouler.
- **9** A failure to ____ is a ____ to fail (same word).
- 10 The next leap year is _____ years away.
- **13** Tool used to bind a book.

You can also solve the puzzle online at CrosswordHobbyist.com/232224

Most of the answers to these clues can be found in the pages or articles of this issue. To check your answers after you're finished, you can find all of the solved puzzles at thecraftybranch.com/blog/Winter-2017

JUST FOR **F**UN



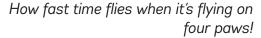
If you're starting 2017 feeling a lot like 2016 (but with a lot more scribbling out 6s in your dates), maybe you're not feeling all that new in the you department. This month's Instagram Scavenger Hunt is all about those things that rhyme with you. Reinvention is so last year!

Jump in at any time--start whatever day you read this, catch up if you want to, or don't, take a weekend and make it a full-on photo safari, use the prompts to create art or doodles for each "day." Make it your own and have fun with it!

☐ 1 View	☐ 11 Bamboo	☐ 21 Deja Vu
☐ 2 Hairdo	☐ 12 How To	☐ 22 Wohoo
☐ 3 Shoe	☐ 13 Stew	☐ 23 Avenue
☐ 4 Brew	☐ 14 Guru	☐ 24 Fondue
☐ 5 Crew	☐ 15 Corkscrew	☐ 25 Rendezvous
☐ 6 Hue	☐ 16 Haiku	☐ 26 Horseshoe
☐ 7 Mew	☐ 17 Preview	☐ 27 Shampoo
☐ 8 Roux	☐ 18 Breakthrough	☐ 28 Voodoo
□ 9 Zoo	☐ 19 Tattoo	☐ 29 Statue
☐ 10 Review	☐ 20 Blue	□ 30 To-Do

Make sure to tag @thecraftybranch and #tcbnewyear17 to let us know you're playing along!

Happy Bark-Day, Duncan!





ast year, at the end of April, we welcomed a wriggly Basset hound puppy into our lives. Nothing has been the same since. We thought he was 12 weeks old at the time we adopted him and, when we counted back, it seemed like he was even more perfect for us, having been born at the beginning of the Chinese Year of the Monkey (monkeys are a big deal in our house). When we took him to the vet, though, they were pretty adamant that he was a month older than represented based on his teeth and so forth, so his monkey status turns out to be wishful thinking.

Still, without a definite birthdate for our fur-kid (and his gotcha-date being only 2 days away from my own birthday), we decided the Chinese New Year was as good a time as any to celebrate Duncan's birthday.

Duncan's a bit of a chow-hound on a regular day, so I know he'll be happy with any treat we give him. Since

it falls on Saturday, January 28, 2017, this year, we'll definitely be treating him to a day at the park and a trip to our favorite downtown pet store (Hugga Mugga). And if we're lucky, the froyo place will have their no-sugar-added vanilla on tap and he can have a frosty treat to finish out his day.

Duncan, being a dog and very much still a puppy, often earns the nickname Duncan the Destroyer-very few toys survive a week between Duncan's jaws, though we'll occasionally luck out with one or two that will hang tough for longer. Still, for all the fluff we have to pick up and the various socks, slippers, pens, and other items he absconds with, we're grateful to have him as the newest member of our little family.

How do you celebrate milestones for your furry family members?

Color Fun



Connect the dots to finish Rover's little house, then add some color to his world; he'll love you for it!

FEATURES

or the people side of the celebratory day, we do our best to honor and appreciate the traditions of the Chinese New Year. The holiday is a food-centric one, with not just the dishes themselves having meaning but the number of dishes being significant as well.

Last year I prepared six dishes for our Lunar New year supper because the Chinese word for 6 sounds a lot like luck

and homonyms (and wordplay in general) are a big part of the rituals and customs at the new year's celebrations.

- •Steamed Catfish (for surplus at the end of the year)
- •Longevity Noodles with Cabbage

(for long life and prosperity)

- Spring Rolls (for wealth)
- Steamed Dumplings (for wealth)
- Tangerines (for luck)
- Sticky Rice Cakes (for prosperity)

It's always fun to see how different cultures have similar food symbolism-in the

South it's common to eat greens (very often cabbage) on New Year's Day for wealth in the coming year, and this holds true for the Lunar New Year as well. I was also surprised that catfish was a common fish to have this time of year in China as I've gotten so used to other parts of the United States considering it a trash fish or bait. But since cats are iconic in China and Japan, maybe it's not so surprising, at that!

The broth I concocted to steam the catfish (and cook the noodles in, afterwards) was maybe one of our favorites from the meal. Chicken stock flavored with a bit of fresh ginger, a bit of soy and fish sauces, and a good handful of green onion tops was wonderful with the simple rice noodles (the longer the better, and uncut by the cook, symbolizing a long life) and cabbage.

Happy Lunar New Year!



From what I've read, coconut symbolizes togetherness, so the little bit of toasted coconut in the sticky rice cakes (which symbolize prosperity on their own) I made were doubly special as, to me, the combination means you will prosper together.

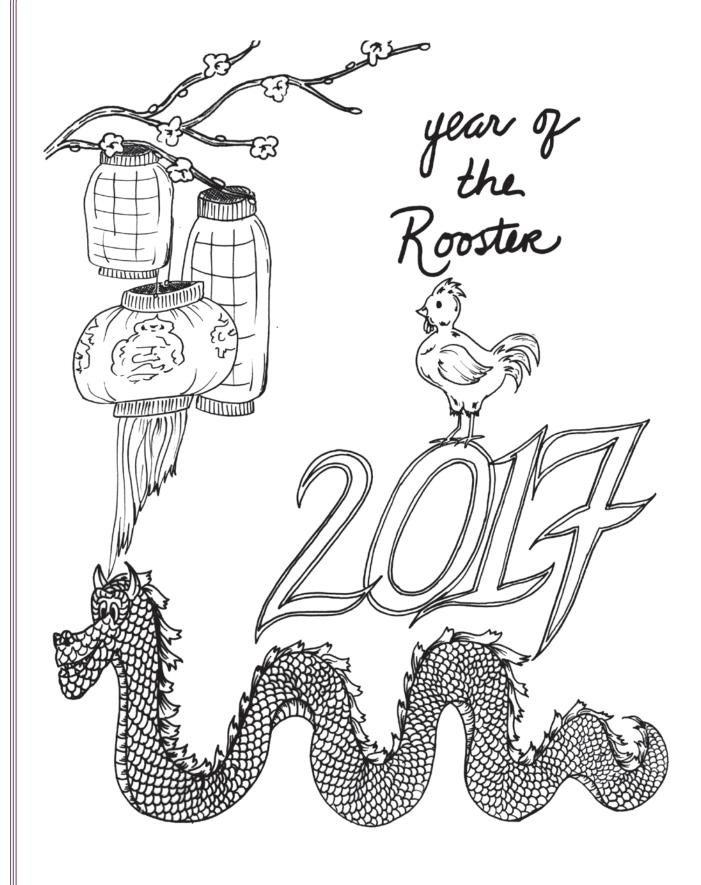
Being mindful of what we're eating and why is never a bad thing, but adding it to cultural exploration makes it far more interesting!

For more tips and plenty of recipes for creating your own Lunar New Year meal, click over to these sites:

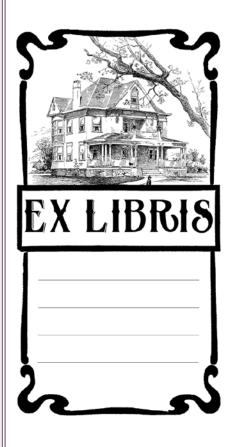
travelchinaguide.com/tour/food/chinese-cooking/festival-food.htm

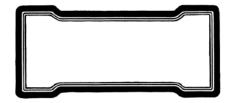
chinahighlights.com/travelguide/chinese-food/chinese-new-year-food.htm

nationsonline.org/oneworld/Chinese_Customs/food_symbolism.htm

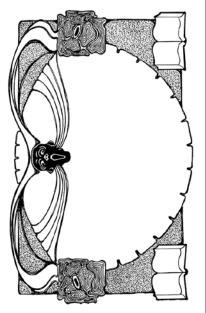


The Lunar New Year for 2017 falls on January 28th







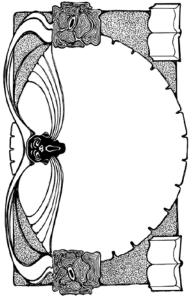








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FROM THE LIBRARY OF...

Print onto sticker paper and trim to add to your own books--handmade or otherwise.



Take a Look, Bind a Book

Even in this oh-so-digital age, a physical book has a tremendous amount of power.

Museums highly prize and protect ancient books, heavily decorated illuminated manuscripts, novels, journals, and more. As literacy rates increased and printing presses flourished, First Editions became collectibles. And these days, even with the rise of digital self-publishing, most authors are still positively giddy when they get to hold their book in their hands!

The instructions on the next two pages make a great blank book, ready to be filled with your choice of words, pictures, dreams, etc. The technique is pretty universal and can be used to make more blank books or to put together photo albums, bind up cards or correspondence from friends, even children's artwork!

And that's only the tip of the iceberg: there are other stitch patterns, cover methods, and more to explore if this tutorial sparks a greater interest!

What You'll Need:

- * 6-10 sheets of paper, 19x25"
- * 1 piece sueded leather
- * Latigo laces
- * 1 bone folder
- * 1 craft knife
- * 1 awl
- * 1 curved upholstery needles
- * 1 package waxed thread

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A pair of scissors might also come in handy, along with a straight edge or metal ruler for trimming the finished book.

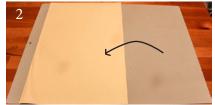
Most items can be found at any craft store and many items at your local big box store. For the larger sheets of paper, you may need to head to a specialty art shop. Or you can order the Bound kit from The Crafty Branch shop and get everything you need for this and a second book project delivered straight to your door.

FEATURES

Folding a Signature

The insides of books are made up of groups of pages called signatures. These can be multiple sheets, folded in half and nested together or a larger sheet folded multiple times. We're going with the big sheet option:









- 1. Start with the sheet laying in front of you on a flat surface.
- 2. Fold one short side over to match the other side, smoothing down the crease with your bone folder.
- 3. Fold the bottom of the folded sheet up to match the top edges, smoothing down the fold with your bone folder.
- 4. Finally, fold the new short side to match the other side, smoothing down the fold with your bone folder. This makes a 16-page signature.

Repeat until you have enough signatures for your book!

Coptic Binding

Coptic binding is an exposed binding style that connects the signatures (and the covers) using loops that resemble chain stitches on the outside of the book to hold everything together.

With one signature and your awl, punch holes along the folded edge (A). Keep the outsideholes at least 1 inch from either end of the spine.

Using the first signature as your guide, transfer the holes to the rest of the signatures (B). Stack them up as you go, keeping the holes lined up (C).

Split the piece of suede into two 6 inch wide pieces (D). Trim the length to match the height of your book block (E). We'll trim it further once the signatures are bound together. Punch holes in the leather covers that match the spacing on the spine but 1/4" in from the long edge (F).

(G) Bring the threaded needle through the last hole of the bottom signature from inside to out (1), around through the matching hole on the cover (2), and back into the signature through the same hole you started with (3). Tie a square knot on the inside of the first hole to anchor the binding thread (H), then move to the next hole along the spine.

Continue sewing the cover to the signature, looping around the outside edge of the cover with each

stitch (I). (You don't need to knot any of the other stitches, though.)

Instead of re-entering the last hole of the signature, stack the next signature on top and insert the needle into the first hole of the new signature (J). Come out of the next hole (1) and use the needle to bring the thread behind the stitch just below this hole (the one connecting the signature to the cover(2)) before re-entering the signature. (K) This is where the curved needle really comes in handy!

When you get to the end of each signature, loop the last stitch behind the stitch below, like before, but enter the corresponding hole of the next signature up (L). Continue stitching and looping, connecting the signatures together, until you get to the last signature (M).

Stack the last signature and the cover on top and go through the hole on the cover, first (N). Loop the needle behind the previous chain stitch, then enter the final signature at the first hole (O). When you come out the next hole, loop behind the chain stitch below as before (P), but bring the threaded needle through the cover before re-entering the signature (Q).

Once you've stitched through the final holes and re-entered the signature, tie a square knot to secure it and weave the tail through the last few threads (R).

Trim off the top, bottom, and open edge to remove folded edges and make the book block match the cover (S). A straight edge helps to guide your craft knife, here.

(OPTIONAL) To add a tie to your book, make three small slits on the back cover, about an inch apart (T). Thread the latigo lace through the slits (U). Wrap the free end of the lace around the book and secure it with a loose

And your book is done!

Other Covers

You'd be amazed at what you can harvest or repurpose for book covers. Denim, upholstery fabric, and even placemats can be put into service as flexible covers. Paperboard can be recycled from cereal boxes and covered with fabric or paper, and lightweight vinyl tiles or even wood can work for sturdier options. Get creative!



What a Doll

When I was a little girl, I remember Mom would regularly buy Good Housekeeping magazine. In each issue would be a page of paper dolls by <u>Joan Walsh Anglund</u> that Mom would glue to a piece of paper board and cut out for me.

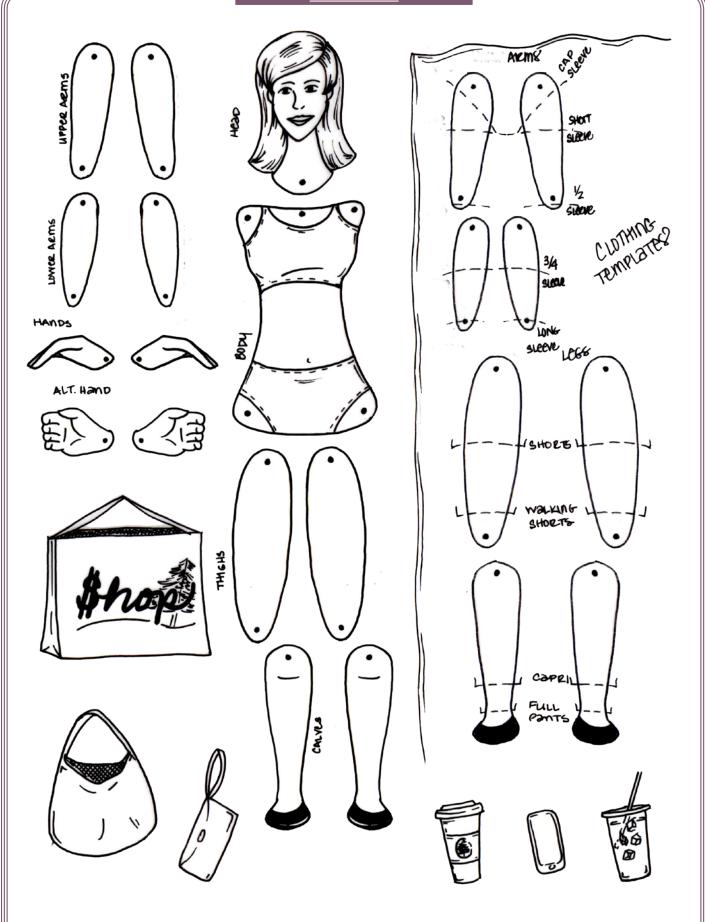
I'm quite a bit older, now, but I still love the simple pleasure of playing with paper dolls. Last year a penpal gifted me books of both Little Women and Pride and Prejudice paper dolls and I spent a happy evening cutting out their detailed clothes with very small scissors.

Whether you share my childhood nostalgia of paper dolls or are trying them for the first time, the next page is your chance to explore or re-explore that simple pleasure. Print, color and cut out the following page to build your own poseable paper doll. All you need to add are 11 brads or paper fasteners to join the limbs to the torso at the dots.



Use scrapbook paper, wrapping paper, or anything else you want and the included guides to create clothes for your doll that move with them!

All dolls need their accessories, so I've drawn a few of those for you, too. (If you cut along the line on the thumb the smaller, hand-held bits can actually be held!)



CRAFTY BRANCH

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WINTER 2017



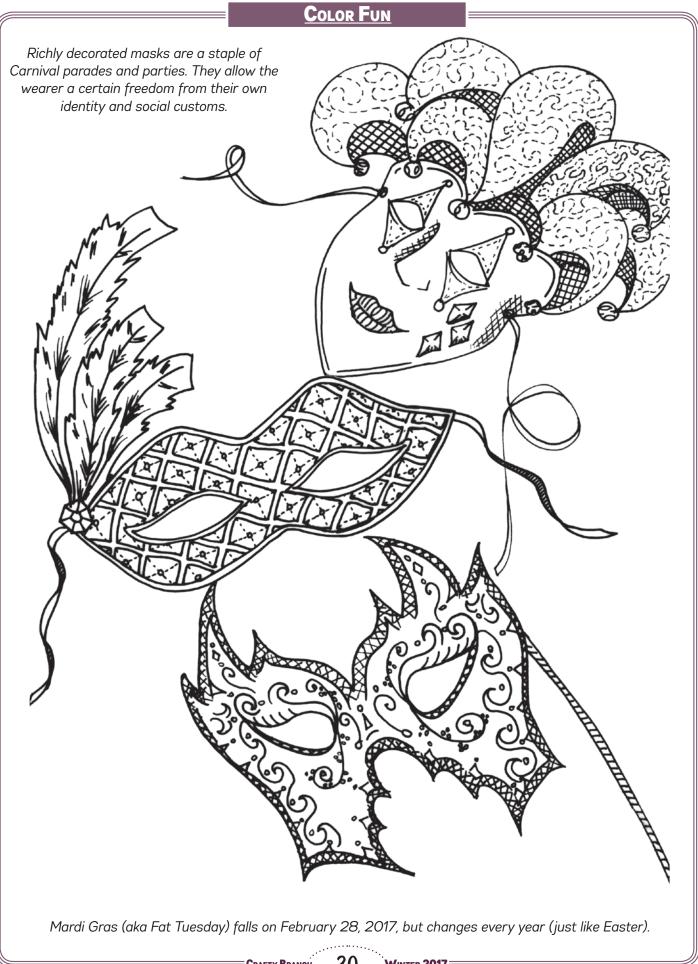
Valentine's Day is Tuesday, February 17, 2017. Print, color, and cut out these images to make cards for friends and loved ones.



Galentine's Day (on the 13th), would be another great use for them!



Get creative with your lettering by imagining the straight and curved lines as pieces of some other object. For this alphabet, the straight pieces are arrows and the curves are the bows.



Let's Keep the Party Rolling!

Even though New Orleans is the epicenter of the celebration that is Mardi Gras, did you know that it didn't actually start there? In the U.S., the first Mardi Gras was celebrated in Mobile (yes, the one in Alabama, but it wasn't Alabama then, it was still part of "French Louisiana" back in the early 1700s). Even before that, Carnival was a big deal in predominantly-Catholic cultures throughout Europe and the rest of the world as it was a last hurrah before Lent (a time when staunch followers abstain from meat, the word carnival is believed to come from the Italian for "take away the meat").

Of course, you don't have to be Catholic to enjoy the party, especially in the South, where southern hospitality rules the day. That said, there are a few things you might find helpful should you wish to partake in the funat home or in the French Quarter itself

Take it from someone born there: do not try out your "southern" accent on the locals. Chances are they'll be polite and nod and laugh "with you" but in their mind they are rolling their eyes so very hard. Just don't do it. Same goes for pronouncing New Orleans any way, shape, or form of "N'awlins." Just don't try. Yes, it's true, most of us pronounce the -leans as more of a -lins, and the two words do run together when you've said it enough, but it's one of those things that you can't fake, it just sounds wrong coming out of the mouth of

New Year's Day is not the end of the holiday season in certainly parts of the world.

a non-native. Save yourself the humiliation and just pronounce it like it's written. Yes, you'll sound like an outsider, but that's okay. They know you are anyway. Embrace it.

Mardi Gras is one day: Fat Tuesday, the day directly before Ash Wednesday. The celebration of Carnival, however, starts on January 6, the night of Epiphany (aka Twelfth Night), and continues for a month or more, depending on when Easter falls. This means there are lots of parties to go to, lots of parades to watch, and lots of chances to catch beads, eat muffuletta, and drink hurricanes.

Parades and other events are put on by Krewes-social (and often civic) organizations responsible for Carnival events. Some of the best known are Zulu (and their coconut throws), Bacchus (with their celebrity headliners), and Rex-the king of Carnival. Some Krewes have very inolved admission criteria and processes while others, like the crew of Chewbacchus, is open to all comers, just pay the \$42 dues and you can dress up and parade along with the rest!

FEATURES

The round cake you'll see everywhere, decorated in gold, green, and purple sugar, is called a King Cake and, yes, there's a baby inside; be careful when you take a bite until the baby is found. It represents the baby Jesus (again, this is a festival with heavy religious roots) and, traditionally, the one to find the baby is the King or Queen of the party and is expected to provide the next King Cake at the next get-together.

And about those colors... The green, gold, and purple of Carnival were declared the official colors of Mardi Gras back in 1892, with the purple standing for justice, the green for faith, and the gold for power.



You Don't Have to Be There, to See It Live

Thanks to the power of the Internet and high-speed streaming, anyone can see the Carnival spectacle on their nearest computer, tablet, or phone.

The Carnival spirit is alive and well in many homes and towns far away from the big shindigs in New Orleans, LA, or Mobile, AL, but don't let distance (or the overwhelm of the crowds) prevent you from seeing the parades as close to personal as you can get.

Nola.com has a parade cam that streams various parades throughout the Carnival season, just check the parade schedules over at MardiGras.com. Most of the parades are scheduled in the two weeks leading up to Fat Tuesday, so you have plenty of chances to catch one online.

NOLA Parade Cam: http://www.nola.com/parade-cam/

Parade Schedule: http://www.mardigras.com/parades/#incart_m-rpt-2

Now, having done this last year I have a couple words of warning to y'all:

First, New Orleans is on the Central time zone, so make sure you're converting your times correctly so you don't watch too early (when nothing's going on) or tune in too late and miss all the fun.

Second, even if you're running late, so are they most likely. There are frequently delays and depending on where on the parade route the camera is, 10 am might mean closer to 11 am. What I'm saying is just don't set your watch by the parade's start, is all.

Third, if you're watching at work, I suggest headphones and some privacy. Now, the daytime parades aren't necessarily all that racy, but they are still a parade and raucous is the name of the game. Also, try to refrain from shouting 'Hey mister, throw me somethin" at the computer. Not only will it not do you any good, it will make it transparently apparent you're not on task at your desk.

Otherwise, let the good times roll, my friend!

laissez les bons temps rouler

The Mighty Muffaletta

How did what is, essentially, an Italian sub end up one of the flagship foods of New Orleans? One port city to another, my friend, it's as simple as that. The sandwich gets its name from the round, sesame loaf called a mufful etto, baked by Sicilian immigrants in the Italian Sector of the French Quarter, back in the day. Next to the bread, the olive salad is an essential part of a muffaletta, the best is still sold by Central Grocery in New Orleans. While I've found good stand-ins from time to time, making your own is not difficult, at all.

Olive Salad

In a large bowl combine:

3 large garlic cloves, crushed

1 cup chopped green olives with pimentos

1 cup chopped black olives (pitted, of course)

½ cup roasted red bell peppers, chopped

1 cup olive oil

3 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley

2 Tbsp white wine vinegar

And let sit for several hours or, if possible, overnight before use.

To construct your sandwich, use some of the flavorful oil from the salad to moisten the bread and then layer on your genoa salami, ham, mortadella, provolone and Swiss cheeses--plus a generous amount of the olive salad--and enjoy.

Top off any remaining olive salad with enough olive oil to cover the top and keep refrigerated in a sealed container.

If you can't get your hands on the right bread or you're looking for something a little lighter, dice up the sandwich fillings and put them on top of salad greens for the next best thing. You could also toss the lot with pasta for an upgrade on your entree. Meanwhile, the olive salad is fabulous on toast points with a slice of Manchego or other cheese.

may affect Howe create but as long as we we can't go wrong

Words in a Word

How many words can you make from the letters in APPROPRIATION?

My my sources tell me that it's possible to make 117 of them--can you figure them all out?

3-letter words (36)	4-letter words (3	33) 5-letter words (25)	6-letter words (13)
			
			
			
			
			7-letter words (6)
			7-letter words (O)
			8-letter words (1)
			o loctor words (1)
			9-letter words (1)
			9-letter words (i)
		It's important to appre-	
		ciate different cultures, to be inspired by them,	
		but we have to do it	10-letter words (2)
		with respect and ac-	
		knowledgement, lest we	
		find ourselves appropri-	
		ating some else's sacred	
		traditions.	

Crafty Branch 35

WINTER 2017

Luck of the Irish!

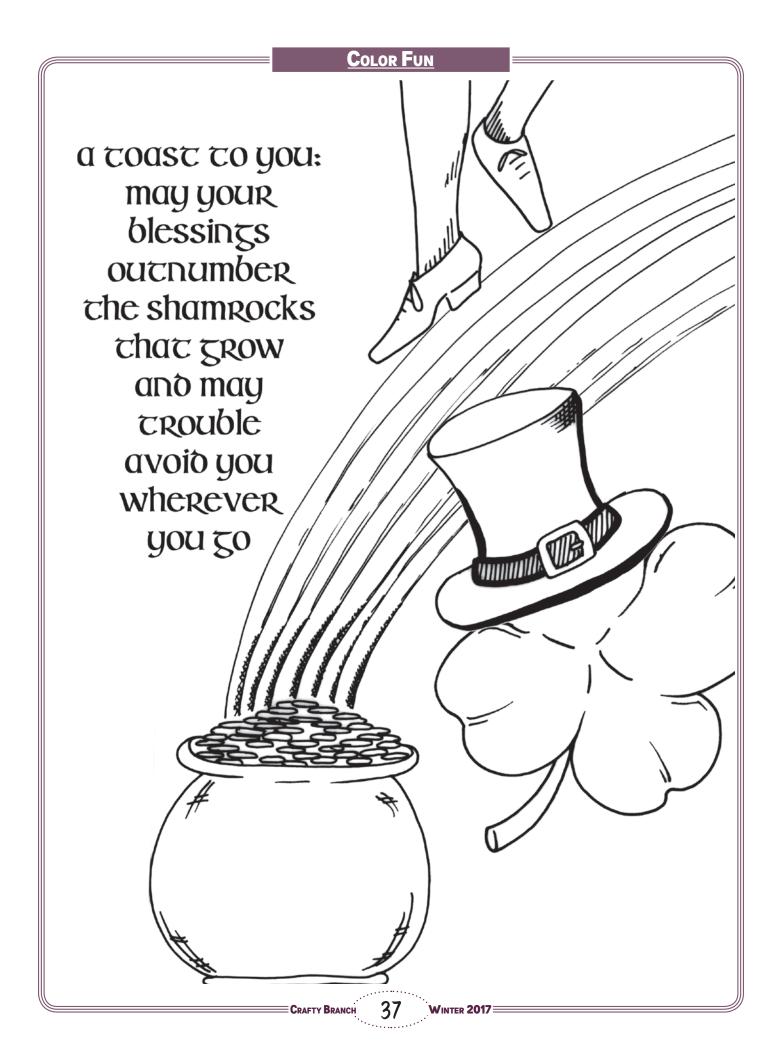
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SEVBKNMC
                              CZXGU
       E U X B W
Z F
                      Χ
            B L
                         ΡН
      V
              Ε
                                S
                                 Ε
       Q O
            N C
                               С
                                   X Q
      XGCTYSLJ
                           QUHWMZCI
```

WORD LIST:

ARAN ISLANDS	EMERALD	LUCKY	SNAKES
BLARNEY STONE	GREEN	NEWGRANGE	SODA BREAD
BOOK OF KELLS	GUINNESS	PINTS	SPRING
CABBAGE	IRELAND	POTATOES	STOUT
CLIFFS OF MOHER	IRISH	POT OF GOLD	ST PATRICK
COLCANNON	KILLARNEY	RAINBOW	WHISKEY
CORNED BEEF	KISS	SHAMROCK	
DUBLIN	LEPRECHAUN	SHILLELAGH	

You can also solve the puzzle online at MyWordSearch.com/90584

On Friday, March 17, 2017, everyone will claim to feel a little Irish. If you fail to wear green, though, you might feel a little pinch--was it your friend or a leprechaun or fairy bent on mischeif? (And can you really tell between the two after a green beer or two?)





f movies or pop culture in general has made you curious about Indian culture, the upcoming festival of Holi (March 12-13, 2017) is a great place to start. It's a festival of joy and colors, welcoming spring. You may have seen facets of the festival—the color throwing—as far back as Ke\$ha's 2010 video for Take It Off or more recently in the Color Runs that take place all over the world—but there's more to Holi than being pelted with colored powder or colored water.

There are several stories that go into the whys and hows of the two day festival. The bonfires that light the night are often attributed to the story of Holika and symbolize the victory of good over evil. The colored powder comes from the story of Krishna applying color to Radha's face. The colors themselves carry meanings: red for purity, green for vitality, blue for calm, and yellow for piety.

Some facets of Holi are reminiscent of other modern festivals where fun is the order of the day. Similar to Carnival's

laissez les bon temps rouler (let the good times roll), Holi has 'Bura na mano Holi hai' (don't feel offended, it's Holi). Young love is celebrated, reminding me a lot of classic May Day celebrations. It's a time when public intoxication is permitted, social norms are ignored, and mischief rules—ideals common in old world April Fool's antics.

Of course, Holi is not celebrated the same way throughout the entire country of India—different regions and states have their own traditions. Celebrations in the southern part of India could be described as a bit more reserved, ending the evening visiting friends and relations and trading sweets.

To find a local, public celebrations, check with the local cultural commission in your area. Area colleges and universities may host one through the International Student Union. Get creative but remember, be respectful—it's someone else's culture, after all.

READ | LISTEN | WATCH

One way to gain perspective on a culture not your own is to read and watch works created by members of that culture. Here are some books, music, and movies to get you started learning about modern Indian culture:

Born Confused and **Bombay Blues** by Tanuja Desai Hidier

A pair of young adult novels about a girl from an Indian family trying to find her place in American and Indian societies. Tackles the usual coming-of-age angle with a dose of cultural identity and appropriation thrown into the mix.

The story continues in the sequel, Bombay Blues, with the main character traveling to India for a family wedding. Both books are available in print and digital versions and the author is also a singer-songwriter and has created "booktracks" for each novel (find out more at http://thisistanuja.com/).



Malkit Singh

http://www.malkitsingh.com/
(be forewarned, this site has auto-play enabled)

Indian music is wide and varied, to sum it up is probably impossible. Bhangra is a style that originates in Punjabi folk dance music, incorporating strong rhythms and chantlike lyrics that is hard to resist moving to.

Outsourced (2006)

An indie film that was later adapted for a television show about a company whose sales department is outsourced to India. Filmed on location in Mumbai, it includes the celebration of Holi as well as gorgeous scenery along with a relatable story.

Bride & Prejudice (2004)

A Bollywood-style treatment of Austen's Pride and Prejudice by Gurinder Chadha, the same director behind *Bend it Like Beckham*. Bollywood is synonymous with musicals, so expect some large-scale music numbers and choreography. There's even a cameo performance by Ashanti. A great example of how well a good story can transcend cultural lines.

A LOOK AHEAD

Tarot cards are a way to gain deeper understanding and further insight into a situation. Instead of telling the future, I like to think of them as reminders that there are numerous ways to look at a problem or puzzle. Different spreads can tell different stories, give different advice, and the same cards can say different things depending on where they are in the spread. What do the cards have to say for this quarter?

January: XXI - The World (reversed)

The final card in the Major Arcana, the World often represents the victorious end of the Fool's journey, as told through the first 22 cards of the Tarot. Of course, at the end of each journey, the beginning of the next is just around the corner. That the card is reversed doesn't always mean the exact opposite, but could mean delay or disappointment in an outcome.

In the United States right now, there are mixed feelings about the changes going on in our political leadership. The UK is sorting out the whats and hows of Brexit. There is a lot of change going on that will only be survived if we keep a cool head and work towards our goals peacefully.

February: 7 of Cups (reversed)

Cups or Chalices is the card of water, closely tied to emotional responses. The 7 of cups is another victory card, but in the realm of love and imagination. Fitting for the month that includes Valentine's Day, wouldn't you say?

Reversed, this card points to futile desires or vain ambitions. Frivolity and fun are fine in their time and place, but it's important to remember to make sound, considered decisions and take the steps and actions needed to achieve those ends.

March: V - The Hierophant

Another Major Arcana card, The Hierophant (or the Pope in some older decks) represents spiritual leadership as well as the traditions and knowledge we need to successfully navigate this world. Other meanings of this card are inspiration, clarity, relief, and patience.

In light of the previous two cards, this card could also symbolize hope and reunification; a coming together for common purpose. The turmoil of January and make-or-break decision time of February lead to a sense of belonging and purpose as we conclude winter and move onto the renewal of spring.

