



# Make a Turnip Jack-O'-Lantern



## Introduction

Halloween is believed to have originated from the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain which welcomed in the harvest. The festival symbolised the boundary between the world of the living and of the dead and was when the souls of the dead were said to revisit their homes. In the era of Christianity, this tradition was absorbed into the celebration of All Saints Day which later became known as All-Hallows and the night before becoming All-Hallow's Eve which is where the term 'Halloween' comes from. Carving pumpkins is now common during Halloween, but using a pumpkin is quite recent and is originally an American custom.

Traditionally, people in the UK celebrated by carving faces into other hollowed-out vegetables such as swedes or turnips. The practice of making jack-o'-lanterns is thought to originate from an Irish folklore about a man named Jack who tried to trick the devil. As punishment, he was cursed to spend all of time roaming the earth with only a lump of burning coal (inside a carved-out turnip) to light the way.

People carved scary faces into turnips, or sometimes beets or potatoes, to frighten away Jack and other wandering evil spirits with their own versions of these lanterns. During the 19th Century, immigrants to the USA took these traditions with them. They swiftly discovered that pumpkins, the native American fruit, are far easier to carve into elaborate faces and shapes and make perfect jack-o'-lanterns.

## Materials Required

- Turnip (or Swede)
- Sharp Kitchen Knife
- Craft Knife
- Chopping Board
- Spoon
- Pencil
- Tea Light or LED Candle

## Safety Measures

Please get an adult to use the knife and craft knife. Please be careful when scraping the centre of the turnip as it is quite difficult



## Step by Step

1. Inspect the turnip and decide which side to use. Does it have any blemishes, lumps or bumps that make them look extra creepy!
2. Cut off the top. This will be used as a lid so make sure it's wide enough but don't cut too low as you need to be able to carve the face. Make sure to have an adult help you with this step as you will need to use a sharp knife. You might also want to cut a small amount of the bottom to make sure it doesn't wobble!
3. Use a knife to score around the inside edge leaving about a 0.5cm border and loosen the inside of the turnip.
4. Hollow out the turnip with a spoon until only a ridge around the outside of the turnip remains.
5. Draw your design on the front using a pencil.
6. Use a craft knife to carve out the lines of your design. Please ask an adult to help you with this step as you will need to use a sharp knife.
7. Place a tea light candle inside your turnip and light it. Then place the lid back on and display your turnip jack-o'-lantern for everyone to see! Do not leave lit flames unattended. You can use an LED candle instead to make it safer

