

CORN HUSK DECORATIONS

Corn is also known as maize. The relationship between corn and the Americas goes back 10,000 years when indigenous tribes in the highlands of southern Mexico cultivated and selectively bred the tiny, rock-hard ears into the vegetable we know and love today. Over time the crop has spread to all reaches of human society, cementing its place as one of the most widespread crops on earth. The versatility of maize is difficult to overstate. In the US, corn is roasted on the cob, creamed, made into cornbread, popcorn and various cereals for a start. It is used to create ethanol fuel, cornstarch, grain alcohol, animal feed, and so much more.

Every part of the ear of corn is used. They braided the husks for rope and twine and coiled them into containers and mats. Shredded husks made good kindling and filling for pillows and mattresses. The corncobs served as bottle stoppers, scrubbing brushes, and fuel for smoking meat. Corn silk made hair for corn husk dolls.

When we have a *tamalada*, there are always left over *hojas* so we will use them to make Christmas decorations. Here are a few ideas!

MAKE A CORN HUSK TREE

MATERIALS:

- foam cone, any size
- straight pins, T-pins or hot glue
- Rit dye in red and green or colors of your choice
- corn husks (*hojas*)
- plastic gloves



HOW TO:

1. Separate the *hojas* and cut them into 1" strips.
2. Immerse your *hojas* in a Rit dye. The amount of dye to water ratio and the length of time the *hojas* are soaking will determine the intensity of the color. Be sure you cover your workspace to protect all surfaces where you will be working and wear your plastic gloves!
3. Take the *hojas* and place them on wet paper towels or an old damp towel so they are kept damp and malleable as you work.
4. For the rounded Christmas tree you can fold the *hojas* and pin or glue them starting at the bottom and making your way around the tree. Continue with each layer and fold the corn husks into smaller sizes until you reach the top of the tree.
5. Decorate with ornaments.
6. For the leafy Christmas tree cut the *hojas* with pointed ends. Working your way from the bottom up, pin or glue the wider *hojas* at the bottom and work your way around the tree. Continue with each layer and pin or glue wide to thin *hojas* as you work your way up the tree all around. See the photos for ideas.
7. You can be creative with how you choose to decorate your tree by adding bows and ornaments and a tree topper.

MAKE A CORN HUSK WREATH



MATERIALS:

- foam or wire ring wreath, any size
- straight pins or hot glue
- Rit dye in red and green or colors of your choice
- *hojas*
- plastic gloves

HOW TO:

1. Immerse your *hojas* in a Rit dye. The amount of dye to water ratio and the length of time the *hojas* are soaking will determine the intensity of the color. Be sure you cover your workspace to protect all surfaces where you will be working.
2. Take the *hojas* and place them on wet paper towels or an old damp towel so they are kept damp and malleable as you work.
3. You can start with the green *hojas* and fold them in half as you place each one around the foam ring and pin it in place.
4. Work your way around the wreath as you fold and pin the *hojas* creating a chevron pattern.
5. Use the red *hojas* to decorate around the outside of the wreath.
6. Fold and pin the red *hojas* as you cover the outer side of the wreath.
7. You can be creative with how you choose to decorate your wreath by adding bows, ornaments or gluing red glitter dots to resemble holly berries.