

Moroccan Lanterns



Introduction:

Morocco is a tiny country that is located in the northwestern part of Africa. It is just one tenth larger than California in size yet has a fascinating history. Originally a stronghold of the Romans, its ethnic people known as *Berbers* have lived there since 2 BCE. In 7 AD the Arab conquest introduced Islam to the country. Today, the majority of the Moroccans are Muslims. However, due to its close proximity to Europe, especially to the *Iberian Peninsula*, Spain and Portugal played an important role in its political and cultural development from the 15th century onwards. In 1912, it became a French *protectorate* until 1956 when Morocco finally became an independent country. Its capital is *Rabat*.

Nestled between the Mediterranean and the Aegean seas, Morocco is a beautiful country, attracting visitors from around the world.

The famous traveler *Ibn Battuta* on visiting Morocco remarked, "*It is the best of countries, for in it fruits are plentiful, with running water and nourishing food which is never exhausted.*"

With the blend of so many interesting cultures, Moroccan arts and crafts emerged into a unique style of its own. Artifacts like Moroccan lanterns became popular world over for their beauty.

Being inspired by their unique art, our project focuses on creating paper lanterns to complement Moroccan Lanterns.

Materials:

- White sheet of paper (Keep an extra one handy if required).
- Pencil and eraser
- Colored pencils, markers, OR crayons (anything that is available)
- Scissors
- Glue stick /scotch tape
- *Optional* - Tissue paper or any colored paper
- *Optional* - small battery operated tea lights
- *Optional* - Sequins, acrylic gems or glitter

DIRECTIONS:



- * **You may wish to watch the video accompanying the directions. It can make the project simpler and more meaningful to follow. However, the steps below also explain.**
1. Take a sheet of white paper. Keeping it horizontally, fold it in half and repeat by folding it further in half, to get 4 folded sections.
 2. Keeping the sheet folded into fourths, fold it once more. (See image showing the thin folded sheet).
 3. **On its folded side**, draw just half a motif. (example, a semi circle, half triangle, half a flower, heart etc.) (See image)
 4. **Keeping the sheet still folded**, cut out the motifs (shapes you have just traced).
 5. **Open the sheet**. Draw a design on the first section. Repeat the pattern on the rest of the three sections, as seen in the image above. Color the pattern.
 6. *Optional*. Place a tissue or a colored paper under your cutwork sheet and carefully paste it down.
 7. Join the two ends of the sheet using the glue stick or scotch tape. (It will resemble a cylinder).
 8. Carefully pinch each fold to create a 4-sided shape.
 9. *Optional*- embellish your lantern with sequins, gems or glitter if desired.
 10. *Optional*- place a small battery operated tea light for a "lit up" effect OR hold your paper lantern over a flashlight for similar effect!
 11. Enjoy the *noor* and let your light shine!

