



Snow Carving

Explore snow carving outdoors and indoors!

Carving is the act of shaping something by scraping or cutting away portions of material. Try introducing carving to young children with snow carving activities. Snow is softer and more easily carved than other materials such as wood or bone.

Materials:

Fresh snow, stick, large mixing bowl, tray, plastic spoon or popsicle stick.

Instructions:



Outside:

Step 1: Look around and find a short stick. Make sure it does not have splinters, and the ends are not sharp.

Step 2: Use the stick to carve lines in the snow. Experiment with shapes and designs.

Step 3: Snow carving lasts only a little while, so take a picture to remember and share your artwork!

Inside:

Step 1: Collect snow in a large mixing bowl. Let it warm up for about 30 minutes.

Step 2: Turn the bowl over on a tray. Remove the bowl to leave a snow dome on the tray.

Step 3: Use a spoon or popsicle stick to carve the snow. Scrape snow away to make an interesting shape, or etch designs on the surface. Notice how the snow changes as it warms up. Reshape the snow into a dome to continue exploring!

Step 4: Take a picture of your sculpture before it melts into water.

Carving Snow and Ice

In regions where winter temperatures are below freezing, sculptors often carve artwork from snow and ice. There are many ice and snow carving events around the world each year.

Snow and ice can be challenging to carve, so sculptors use sharp chisels, special saws, and chainsaws. Artists have to pay attention to the temperature, as the characteristics of snow and ice change as they get warmer.

In Alaska, long winters allow many opportunities for ice carving. Since 1989, Fairbanks has hosted the World Ice Art Championships. Almost 100 ice carvers from around the world participate every year, in multi-block and single-block categories.

by Abel Ramirez Aguilar and Anita Tabor
Image: Wikimedia Commons.

Snow carvings are made from blocks of densely packed snow. Snow carvers use some of the same saws and chisels as ice sculptors, as well as tools to give the snow different textures. The largest snow carving festival in the world takes place every year in Harbin, China.

Moomins in snow, Harbin International Ice and Snow Sculpture Festival. Image: Wikimedia Commons.

Left: Junichi Nakamura works on his entry for the 2020 World Ice Art Championships.

Right: Nakamura completed sculpture, titled