

Watermelon Fish

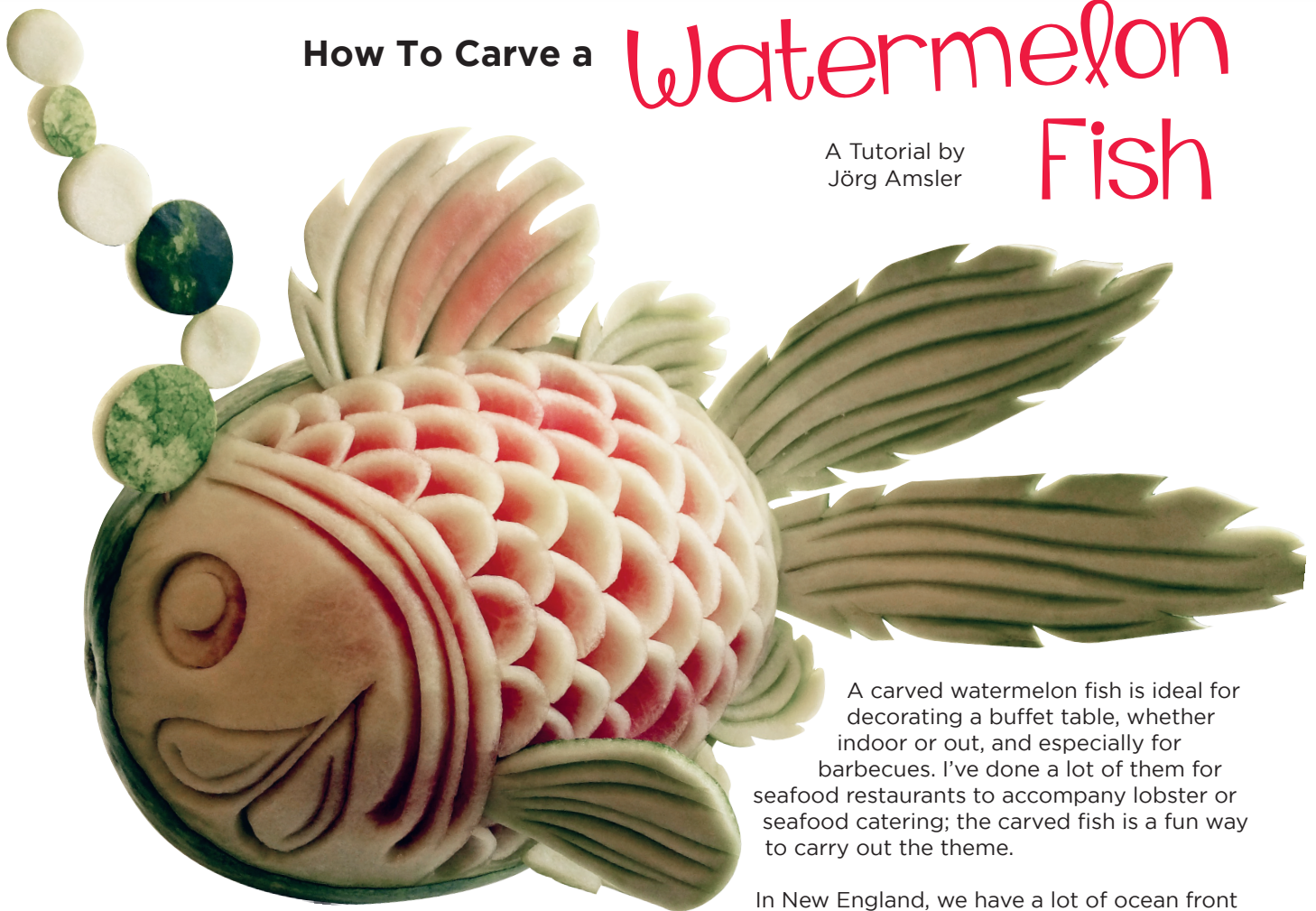
By Jörg Amsler

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NETWORK MAGAZINE

How To Carve a

Watermelon Fish

A Tutorial by
Jörg Amsler



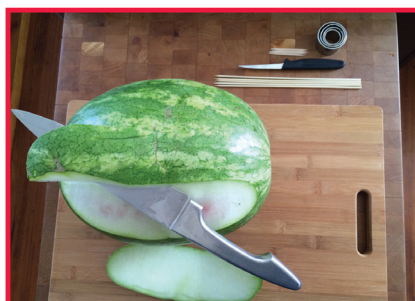
A carved watermelon fish is ideal for decorating a buffet table, whether indoor or out, and especially for barbecues. I've done a lot of them for seafood restaurants to accompany lobster or seafood catering; the carved fish is a fun way to carry out the theme.

In New England, we have a lot of ocean front weddings. Whenever I've met with a bride planning a beachfront or ocean theme wedding, I would show her food carvings. I have even stacked different carved melons on dowels to create a tower and a stunning presentation.



Tools & Supplies:

- Watermelon
- Cutting knife
- Chef's knife
- Round cutters - 2 different sizes
- Skewers
- Cutting board
- Toothpicks



Step 1: Peel half of the watermelon on the best side. When you cut a melon in half you are looking at three colors: green on the outside, white inside the peel and red in the center. The first thing you need to do is peel half of the melon thinly so you don't cut into the red. You only want to expose the white, but you have to make your pieces big enough so they can make all the fins except the dorsal fins. Put the peeled pieces aside as we have to carve them into the two large tail fins, some smaller ones and some air bubbles.

Step 2: Begin cutting a few curved lines using v-cuts to create the gills. The gills will separate the face from the rest of the body.

Step 3: Using the two different round cutters, create the eye. The larger cutter creates the outside part of the eye. The smaller cutter is placed inside it. Remove the cutters and then cut out the section of melon in between the two cut circles.

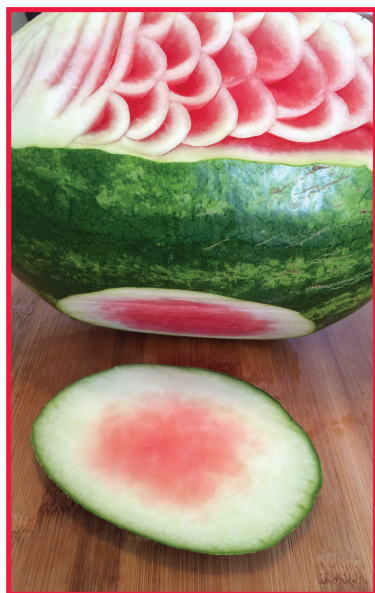
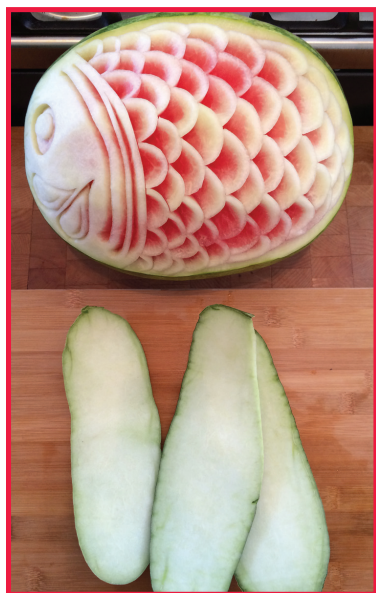
Step 4: Using the cutting knife, create a v-cut. These are two cuts that meet at both ends, creating a v-shape. Remove the melon in between the two cuts. Free style the lips. One upper and an under lip and give the fish a big smile using the same technique.



Step 5: Next to the gills, opposite the face, begin cutting half circles in a row all the way across the fish. Repeat the process of creating rows of half circles on the rest of the fish's body, beginning the next half circle at the midpoint of the circle above it. This creates a scalloped pattern which will form the fish scales.



Step 6: Now we have to repeat this and cut a smaller half circle within every half circle and remove that piece. By doing so we are cutting into the red meat off the melon and creating the color contrast between the red meat and the exposed white layer, after peeling the watermelon. The knife will be at a steep angle so you are cutting through to lift the melon out easily.



Step 7: The peels you set aside are now cut into fins. Cut the peels into the shape of a fin, creating two long ones for the tail fins. Carve out a couple of notches along the edges and make several v-cuts across to create the lines, removing the melon in between the cuts. Repeat the process with a smaller piece to create the dorsal fin.

Step 8: For the dorsal fin, which is the large fin right behind the head on top, we will use the bottom of the melon and cut a piece off. This will act as our dorsal fin and it will make our melon sit nice and flat on the surface. You want to cut it so it sits slightly backwards, not perfectly straight to give a better view of the fish.

Step 9: Here, all the parts of the fish are laid out in the positions they will go on the fish.



Step 10: Insert two skewers in each back fin and push it into the back of the fish.

Step 11: Insert two skewers in each back fin and push it into the back of the fish.

Step 12: Cut circles out of the extra peel to form the bubbles rising from the fish's mouth. Stack them upwards from the mouth by sticking them together with toothpicks.

Tips: People often peel little tiny pieces and don't have thick enough pieces to form the fins. Be sure you peels are thick enough.

Be sure to use sharp knives.

Very often, people see the watermelon and ask if they can eat it. You can cut the watermelon right down the center and keep the whole fish intact. You just lay the fish down flat and take the other half and make wedges to lay around a platter around the fish.

You can create an alcohol infused melon by making a hole behind the dorsal fin large enough to insert a bottle. Insert the opening of a vodka bottle into the hole upside down so it stands up. The alcohol will be absorbed by the melon overnight.

If you have a party for a few nights, you can put the carved fish out and then take it back to the kitchen and remove the fins. Take the watermelon, put it under the sink with the fish facing up, run cold water over it for a few minutes, cover the fish with paper towel and douse it with water. Put the fins carved side down on the paper towel. Everything will be wet. Put it in the fridge and everything will stay fresh looking for up to three days as long as you keep hydrating it each day.



Jörg Amsler is a renowned pastry chef and former owner of Truly Jörg's Patisserie who has made numerous appearances on Food Network Challenge. Jörg has worked in every type of culinary environment nationally and abroad from restaurants, cruise ships, hotels, resorts, supermarkets, retail, airline and catering. Currently he travels internationally teaching cake artistry and offering consultation to new businesses.