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Origami: Choosing your materials

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Give Origami: Choosing your materials 5/5 ?

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Origami is an art available to all. The proof: the creation of most classic projects only requires a single sheet of paper! But careful, the choice of paper determines the success of your folding projects.

Origami works with many types of papers so long as they are supple, strong and hold the folds well.

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1. Size and grammage (weight)

Most projects are made with square paper of 15 or 20 cm per side. But you can also easily use another size that you cut to the correct size.

Origami also lends itself well to lightweight papers (table napkin, crepe paper, printer paper, magazine pages, foil paper...) or even heavy papers (card stock, post cards, photo paper...) Lighter weight papers (grammage below 80 g/m²) make detail work easier.

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2. Papers specifically designed for folding

- Manufactured in Japan for 1300 years, Washi is the traditional paper of origami: made from long interwoven fibers, it combines lightness (60 g/m^2), flexibility and sturdiness.
- Of the same grammage but much easier to find, origami paper holds folds well and offers an excellent resistance to tearing. The square sheets have faces with different colors or different textures.
- Even thinner (25 g/m^2), tissue paper is the most delicate to manipulate. Available in many colors and textures (fake fur, hair, vegetables...), it will give a more realistic appearance to your projects.
- A simple sheet of aluminum or wrapping paper with one foil face, foil paper has a unique capacity for shaping and holds fold perfectly over time.

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3. ? and others!

- Inexpensive, very strong and available in many colors, Kraft paper can be used to create large sized projects.
- With many designs, wrapping paper is also interesting for large folding projects.
- For small projects (like the frog or the bird), cigarette paper can be a good solution.
- Drawing paper is an excellent compromise Choose a paper with high rag content, stronger and suitable for folding.

Good to know: when origami verges on an obsession!

Some folders do not hesitate to use original sizes or materials, and easy to find anywhere.

- A4 size paper, rectangles, triangles, hexagons...
- dollar bills (perfect for leaving a restaurant tip!)
- fabric (not so simple, but so smooth...)
- wire
- a subway ticket

? ?and even sheets of pasta!

4. Why not your own paper?

Purists often make their own paper. A choice of two techniques:

- The paper sandwich technique (back coating): attach, with spray glue, a sheet of tissue paper to each side of a sheet of foil paper. You combine the delicacy of tissue paper to the rigidity and the shapeability of aluminum: perfect for creating delicate models such as, for example, insects.
- Wet folding paper technique makes drawing paper (or any other thick paper that absorbs water well) easier to fold. You must dampen the paper with a sponge or a sprayer. Once the design is finished, the paper will dry and recover its resistance and rigidity.

Note: and for the most dedicated...

Confirmed origamist, you can choose:

- The bone folder, to smooth and score the fold with precision.
- Wallpaper paste (methyl cellulose glue) to stiffen the most delicate papers.
- CP (crease pattern): shows the folding instructions for a project on the same sheet, which serves as the base for the model.

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Bring a frog, a flower or a Tyrannosaurus out of a simple sheet of paper? And why not?! But be aware, origami is a demanding art, with rules to be followed closely. Scissors and glue forbidden!

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