

POPSICLE STICK HARMONICAS



If there is an official food of summer, it may very well be the popsicle. There isn't anything quite like the allure of a cold treat on a hot day, and this project is a perfect excuse to indulge (in the event that you are looking for one). Sit on the shady front porch with your popsicle in hand, and when you've either eaten it or watched it melt away, reuse the leftover sticks to make some funky music.

These wooden “harmonicas” are a project pulled from the “oldie but goodie” department. A thorough search through kids’ crafts books from eras gone by may yield at least a handful of variations on these instruments, each with different features designed to help you to get sound out of what is basically a pile of sticks and some rubberbands. To give this classic craft the Glue treatment, we’ve come up with a popsicle stick harmonica procedure that blends the best of those features together in one instrument, and added in some snappy paper slider templates as well. Now all you have to do to get started is eat a pile of popsicles!

MATERIALS:

- three popsicle or craft sticks
- slider templates from page 9, printed on card stock
- three rubberbands (two small and one medium)
- scissors
- tape

MAKING POPSICLE STICK HARMONICAS



Begin by soaking two of your three popsicle sticks in a bowl of water for just a few minutes. This will soften the wood a bit. Pat the sticks dry and then very gently, bend them a little so that they are slightly curved.

Cut out one of the paper slider pieces from page 9. If you are using regular popsicle sticks, cut a smaller sized one. If you are using a larger sized craft stick or tongue depressor, cut out a larger slider. Wrap the slider around one of the bent popsicle sticks loosely enough that it can still move and tape it closed. Do not tape it to the stick- it should be able to slide back and forth.



Now take the largest of the rubberbands, and stretch it around the third (unbent) popsicle stick, end to end. This stick will be the middle piece of your harmonica.

Now sandwich the stick with the rubberband wrapped around it between the two other sticks. The rounded curve in the two curved sticks should be facing away from the center stick. Secure the stack of sticks together by wrapping the smaller rubberbands around each end of the harmonica. It is okay for them to be a little loose.



These harmonicas can be made with regular popsicle sticks leftover after a treat, or with store-bought craft sticks.

And that's about it! You now have yourself a nice little harmonica to play, or to pocket for later.

To play your harmonica, put it up to your lips and blow air through like you would a regular harmonica. You may have to try blowing at different angles, or in different places along the harmonica in order to get the best sound. You can also try moving the slider back and forth to see how that affects the sound coming from the harmonica.



PAPER SLIDERS

