

Mini Koinobori, or Carp Kites

During the Japanese spring festival called Children's Day, carps are drawn on kites to signify the strength and perseverance koi demonstrate when they swim swiftly upstream against the strongest currents. Japanese parents hope that their own children will show these positive characteristics as they grow and flourish!

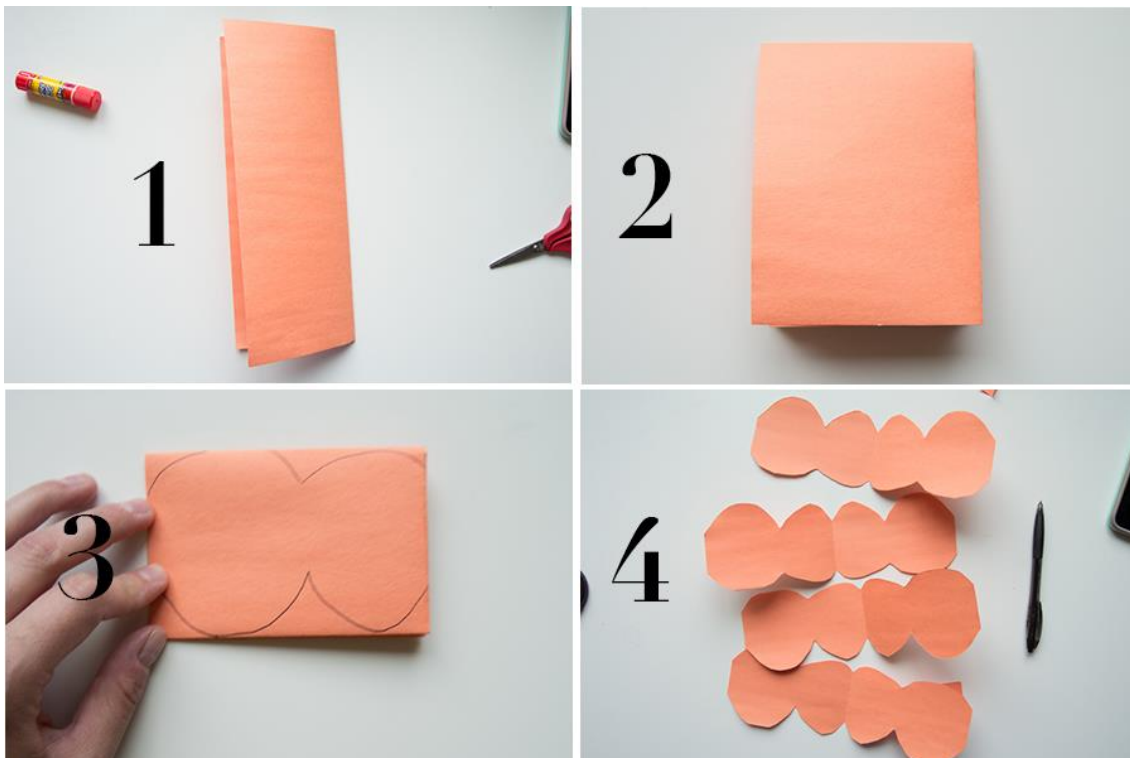
Our mini koinobori can be created with a few simple craft supplies you probably already have around the house:

- Toilet paper rolls
- Colorful construction paper
- Pencil or pen
- Double sided tape
- Colorful tissue paper or thin ribbon (optional)
- Googly eyes
- Scissors
- String and darning needle

Step 1: Create the Scales

Choose five or six various colors of construction paper. These will be the colors of the fish "scales" that decorate the body of our koinobori.

Fold a sheet of paper in half vertically once, then in half horizontally once, then once more again. Draw two scallops on each wide edge of this folded sheet, then cut out your scales.



Repeat this step on each color of construction paper until you have enough scales to cover each toilet paper roll.



Step 2: Create the Streamers

For our koinobori tails, cut construction paper, colorful tissue paper, or thin ribbon into roughly ¼” strips. Each material delivers a different, beautiful result; construction paper is colorful and somewhat sturdy, tissue paper floats nicely and creates a very flowy appearance, and ribbon tends to last better *and* flutter appealingly. Again, whatever you have at home will look great!

Step 3: Tape, Tape, Tape

Attach double-sided tape to the reverse side of each scale and strip of thick paper, tissue paper, or ribbon.

Step 4: Bring in the Kids and Attach Scales and Streamers!

Now your children can use the beautiful scales to cover the toilet paper roll “body” of their koinobori. Demonstrate that one straight row of scales overlapped by another creates a beautiful fish scale look!



Once they have decorated the bodies, they can attach their streamers to the inside of the toilet paper roll.



After they're finished taping, double-check to ensure that their scales and streamers are firmly pressed into the cardboard roll.

Step 5: Googly Eyes

Most children enjoy attaching googly eyes to their koinobori, but if your googly eyes need to be glued or hot glued, your child (depending on their age) may need help.

Now the carp looks complete!

Step 6: Strings

Use a thick darning needle or ice pick to carefully bore one hole through each side of the koinobori at the head.

Run string through these holes and tie it so that it will not easily slip back through the opening you've created.



Step 7: Twirl and Swing Your Koinobori!

Children love swinging these adorable rainbow carp kites around outside. At the end of the day, the koinobori can be hung from a wall or ceiling to decorate your child's room and remind them of the carp's strength and perseverance!