

Make an *Oni* Mask 鬼

THE JAPANESE HOUSE ACTIVITIES



Learn about *Setsubun*, the Coming of Spring celebration, and make your own *oni* (Japanese monster) mask.

1. Learn about *Setsubun*

Setsubun, celebrated on February 3rd, is the Japanese ritual of driving out bad luck and evil spirits and welcoming in good luck and good health in preparation for spring. On *Setsubun*, people have bean-throwing ceremonies called *mamemaki* and eat one soybean for every year old they are, which gives them good health and long life. Although *Setsubun* is a very popular custom in Japan, it is not a national holiday.

For most children in Japan, *Setsubun* is a fun holiday. They make or buy masks and pretend to be Japanese monsters called *oni* as part of the *mamemaki* ceremony. These monsters appear in old Japanese folktales and legends. They usually have one or two horns on their foreheads, wear tiger-skin pants and hold large spiked weapons in their hands. In some stories, they are humorous and kind, but more often they are mean and evil.



TIME:

20 minutes

MATERIALS:

- *Oni* mask activity sheet—on thick paper
- Rubber bands, string or ribbon
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Scissors
- Hole puncher

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE:

Setsubun: seh-tsu-boo-n

Oni: oh-nee

Mamemaki: mah-may
mah-key

2. Make Your Own *Oni* Mask

1. Color the *oni* mask.
2. Cut the mask out.



3. Cut the eyes out of the mask.
4. Punch a hole in each ear area.



5. Put a piece of string or ribbon or a rubber band through each ear hole and secure it to the mask.
6. Put the mask on!

3. Things to Talk about

- If you want to learn more about *oni*, here are some Japanese folktales and legends you might like! All titles are also available in Kamishibai Storytelling editions from www.kamishibai.com.
 - Peach Boy (*Momotaro*)
 - The One-Inch Boy (*Issun-boshi*)
 - The *Oni* Who Sank to the Bottom of the Sea (*Umi ni Shizunda Oni*)
 - The Magic Rice Paddle (*Fushigina Shamoji*)



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