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## To Catch a Leprechaun



by JoEllen Mitchell

**It's an alarming trend** that shows no sign of abating: every year, more and more Spoonful guests fall victim to leprechaun-related mischief around St. Patrick's Day. "It's never the same," reports Margaret Bentley, of Painesville, Ohio. "The children talk about it for weeks in advance, wondering what things the leprechaun will do when he visits our house."

Similarly, the kids in the Dezotell family of Seekonk, Massachusetts, can only imagine what the next St. Patrick's Day home invasion will bring. Green milk? Green toilet water? Green footprints? Trails of shamrock confetti? "One year the kids woke up with green kiss marks on

their foreheads," recalls mom Monique, still clearly shaken.

Is it any surprise, then, that kids like 8-year-old Jacob Dezotell have decided to fight back? Every St. Patrick's Day since he was in kindergarten, Jacob and his sister, Elise, age 7, have tried to capture a leprechaun. Despite powerful bait (Lucky Charms cereal!), their traps have caught only chocolate gold coins and candy bars, accompanied by notes taunting them with "Good try," or "Can't catch me!" As everyone knows, leprechauns hoard pots of gold, and if caught, must reveal the treasure's location to their captor. But that's not the payback Jacob seeks. Because the elusive elves are always leaving him chocolate, he figures they must have even more of that than gold!

It's for the sake of Jacob, Elise, and all the other St. Patrick's Day mischief fighters that we offer here three state-of-the-art leprechaun traps. Each is easily made from ordinary household materials and uses lures and baits drawn from the latest research in leprechaun psychology. But please take our designs and customize them to make something unique: leprechauns, as we all know, won't be fooled by the same trap twice!

## How to make it

### 1. LEPRECHAUN HAT PIT TRAP

Leprechauns have big egos, so a giant version of their own hat is irresistible to them. Once they step on the false top, you'll have caught a 10-gallon prize.

So that the top doesn't give way too soon, use a lightweight bait, such as a crumpled piece of gold foil.

Our hat, a recycled oatmeal container, is wrapped with green felt secured with double-sided tape. To make the trap, we cut a hole in the lid (see image), then cunningly concealed it with a circle of green felt that will give way when the leprechaun steps on it.

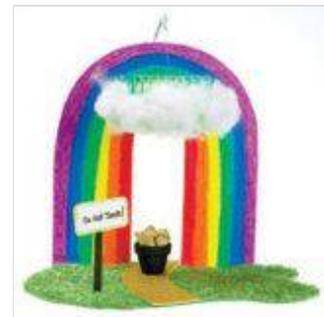
Leprechauns love to break rules. Warning signs are sure to lure them in.

Natural materials make these woodland creatures feel at home. Our ladder is made from twigs held together with wood glue.

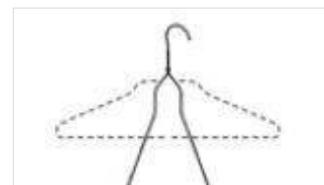


### 2. RAINBOW CAGE DROP

No self-respecting leprechaun can resist a giant rainbow. As he gets close and spies the gold bait, his curiosity will get the best of him. When he pinches the pot, down comes the cage!



3. A bent wire hanger hidden by a piece of poster board forms the support for the suspended cage. We bent the hook of the hanger into a loop to hold the line.

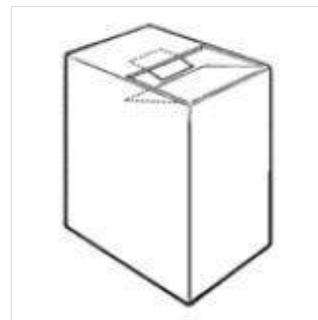


4. We tied fishing line to the top of a plastic berry basket, then threaded the line through the wire loop and back down through the basket. We pulled the line taut and secured it under the bait. To conceal the cage, we tucked fiberfill into the weave of the basket, giving it the look of a fluffy cloud.



#### 5. TRICKY TRAPDOOR

This trap draws on time-honored technology: a swinging door cut into the top of the box gives way when the leprechaun tries to make off with the bait.



6. You can never have too many rainbows on your trap. This one is made from pipe cleaners.

For bait, try chocolate coins, shiny jewels, or even a worn-out doll shoe! (Leprechauns are cobblers by trade.) We glued the coins in a pile to keep them secure when the trap is sprung.

Our trapdoor is a flap held up by a tab of card stock (taped in place after the box is decorated).

This climbing wall is sure to entice the wee adventurers.

Ours consists of small rocks affixed with tacky glue to the sponge-painted box.

We covered our box with tissue paper (green, of course) attached with glue stick.

Capture the look of the Irish countryside with stones and bits of moss.



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## Clay Pot Leprechaun



Ages school-age

by Amanda Formaro

With his cute floppy legs and bright orange beard, this darling clay pot leprechaun makes a great table or shelf decoration for St. Patrick's Day! Be sure to visit our main St. Patrick's Day index for more lucky fun including more crafts, printables and recipes. Take our quiz, What's Your St. Patrick's Day IQ?, to test your knowledge on all things Irish!

### What you'll need

2 ½" clay pot

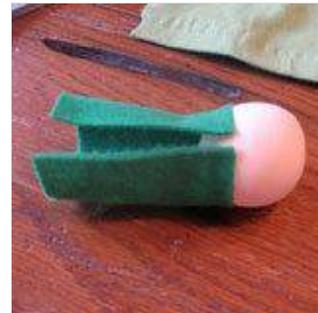
- 1 ½" wooden ball with a flat bottom
- Green fabric (cotton t-shirt is ideal), 9" x 9", cut into three equal strips
- Green, black, yellow and orange felt
- Black and flesh-colored (we used peach) paint
- 1 cardboard egg cup
- Scraps of yellow tissue paper or construction paper
- Scissors
- White craft glue
- Black fine point marker

**Helpful Tip:**

Try to use fabric that is flowing for the arms and legs so that it doesn't stiffen. Softer fabric will hang loosely and look better. Save old colorful t-shirts for projects such as these! If you don't have felt you can substitute construction paper.

## How to make it

1. Paint the clay pot green, let dry and repeat for a second coat.
2. Paint the wooden ball with flesh-colored paint, let dry and repeat for a second coat.
3. Trim the rough edges off of the egg cup and paint it black, inside and out.
4. Cut a piece of green felt, about 2" x 5" and pipe a line of glue along one of the long sides. Place the wooden ball onto the felt and wrap the felt around the ball gluing in place. This will form the hat.



5. Cut a strip of green felt about 1" x 5" (long enough to go around the hat for the brim). Pipe a line of glue along the long edge, fold the edge onto the glue, then glue and fold again to create the brim.



6. Cut a strip of black felt the same length as the green brim, about ½" wide.

7. Cut a small square buckle from the yellow felt and glue it centered on the black strip.

8. With the buckle facing downward, glue the black band onto the green brim and set aside to dry.



9. Cut a strip of orange felt about  $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 4". Add a dot of glue to the center of the orange strip and place the wooden ball on top of it, with the seam of the green hat facing toward the table.

10. Pipe some glue onto the remaining orange strip and wrap around the ball to form the hair. The orange strip should cover the back of the head and the sides of the face.



11. Turn the green hat brim with the black band face up and glue to the front of the wooden ball head. Wrap it around so that the seams meet or overlap in the back and glue in place.

12. Stand the wooden ball up onto its flat bottom. Tuck the top of the green felt hat into itself and use your fingers to adjust the black hat band if needed.



13. Cut a 1" oval from the orange felt for the beard and cut a small slit toward the top of the oval for the mouth. Glue the beard to the wooden ball.

14. Glue the head to the clay pot.





15. Cut a strip from black felt about ½" and long enough to wrap around the clay pot just above the rim (pot will be upside down) for the belt. Glue in place.
16. Cut a buckle for the belt from yellow felt glue to the center of the belt.
17. Roll up and glue the three green fabric strips, these will be the arms (1) and legs (2). T-shirt material works wonderful for this!



18. Place one of the strips onto the work surface, dot some glue in the center and lay the clay pot on to it, leprechaun's face should be facing up.
19. Lay the other two fabric strips on to the table. Pipe about 2" of glue on one end of each fabric strip and press them inside the clay pot so that the legs will dangle when upright.
20. Fill the egg cup with yellow tissue or construction paper.
21. Sit the leprechaun upright and wrap the fabric strip on the back of the pot around to the front to form the arms. Add some glue to the ends of the arms and stick them to the black egg cup (pot of gold).
22. Use a black marker to dot on the eyes.

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## Ferb's Lucky Clover Pin



Leave it to Ferb to deliver a charming Saint Patrick's Day greeting without ever uttering a word. Inspired by young Fletcher's ingenuity, this whimsical pin is certain to have Irish eyes smiling. The directions here are for making the pin from polymer clay, but you can also use the template pieces to create one from paper -- just glue the pieces together and use a fine-tipped marker to draw on the eye pupils and grin.

### What you'll need

Template for Ferb's Lucky Clover Pin

Scissors

Polymer clay (green, skin tone, white, and black)

Disposable kitchen gloves (to wear while working with the clay)

Wax paper

Aluminum foil

Clay rolling tool, disposable plastic knife, and baking pan no longer used for cooking\*

Toothpick

Clay or glue sealer and paintbrush (optional)

1-inch bar pin (check the jewelry section of the craft store)

\*Note: When working with polymer clay, be sure to use only utensils and pans that are not used for food preparation

## How to make it

1. Print the template and cut out the head and shirt pieces.
2. Knead the clay until it is soft and flexible enough to work with easily.
3. Individually roll out hunks of green and skin tone clay to about 3/16-inch thickness. Use the template pieces and a plastic knife to cut the head and shirt pieces from the clay. Taper the very bottom of the neck, as shown. Then place the upper edge of the shirt on top, gently pressing down to stick the two pieces together.
4. For the eyes, roll two 1/4-inch balls of white clay and two tiny dots of black clay. Roll a bit of black clay into a thin grin shape about 3/8 inch long and about the thickness of a sprinkle (the kind that goes on ice cream).
5. Gently flatten the white clay balls into disks, one about 1/2 inch wide and the other slightly smaller (you can also use the template as a guide). Overlap the eyes slightly with the smaller one on top. Then place the tiny black dots on the white disks and gently flatten them so that they stick in place and resemble pupils.
6. For Ferb's clover hair, roll four balls of green clay, varying them from 3/8 to 1/4 inch in diameter. Arrange them as shown, adding a tiny tail of green clay for the clover stem. Gently flatten the balls to create the leaves, shaping them roughly as shown on the template. Use the plastic knife to score the center of each leaf.
7. Gently press the clover hair, eyes, and mouth in place on the head.
8. Bake the assembled Ferb pin according to the clay manufacturer's directions. Then allow the baked clay to cool completely. If any of the pieces are loose, use tacky glue (applied with the tip of a toothpick) to secure them. Once the pieces are firmly attached, you can coat the pin, front and back), with one or more applications of sealer if you like.

9. Finally, glue the bar pin to the back of the pin. When the glue is thoroughly dry, the pin is ready to wear.

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## Mickey & Minnie St. Patrick's Day Headbands



Total Time 1 to 2 hours

Ages all-ages

by Cindy Littlefield

Topped with a leprechaun hat (properly cocked to one side, of course) and a bright green shamrock bow, these Mickey and Minnie headbands are earmarked for young Disney fans to celebrate Saint Patrick's Day in fine Irish style.

What you'll need

Template for Mickey and Minnie St. Patrick's Day Headband

Scissors

Stiff black felt for the ears

Regular felt scraps (yellow and two shades of green)\*

Low temperature hot glue gun

Small piece of thin cardboard or cardstock (for the Mickey headband)

Green pipe cleaner (for the Minnie headband)

Thin black headband(s)

**Helpful Tip:**

Sticky-back yellow felt works especially well for the buckle on Mickey's hat. If you use regular felt, you can apply glue with the tip of a toothpick when it's time to stick the buckle in place.

## How to make it

1. Print the template and use the pieces to cut out shapes from the specified types and colors of felt. Note: It's easier to cut out the center of the belt buckle if you snip through one of the corners, as shown. The cut will be hardly noticeable once the buckle is glued to the hat.
2. Working with one ear piece at a time, apply a line of glue across the center of the connecting band (specified on the template piece). Stick the glued portion to the underside of the headband, positioning it about 1½ inches left of the center point of the band. Now glue the two round ear flaps together, as shown. Attach the second ear piece to the headband in the same manner, this time positioning it an equal distance right of center (you should end up with about 2½ inches between the two ears).
3. For Mickey's hat, first glue a small rectangle of cardboard atop one of the pieces, as shown (this will make the hat stand upright once it is attached to the band). Now glue the second hat piece atop the first, sandwiching the cardboard between them. Fold the hatband around the hat and glue it in place. Then stick the buckle to the center of the hatband.
4. To attach Mickey's hat to the headband, glue the left edge of the brim to the left ear. Then glue the center of the brim to the headband. Do not attach the hat to the right ear — otherwise, the hat will buckle each time your child puts on the headband.
5. For Minnie's shamrock bow, glue a 3-inch pipe cleaner stem to one of the felt shamrocks, as shown. Next, glue a 2-inch length across the lower leaves. Glue the matching shamrock piece on top.
6. Bend the leaves slightly forward to make the completed shamrock look more dimensional. Then glue it to the base of one ear.

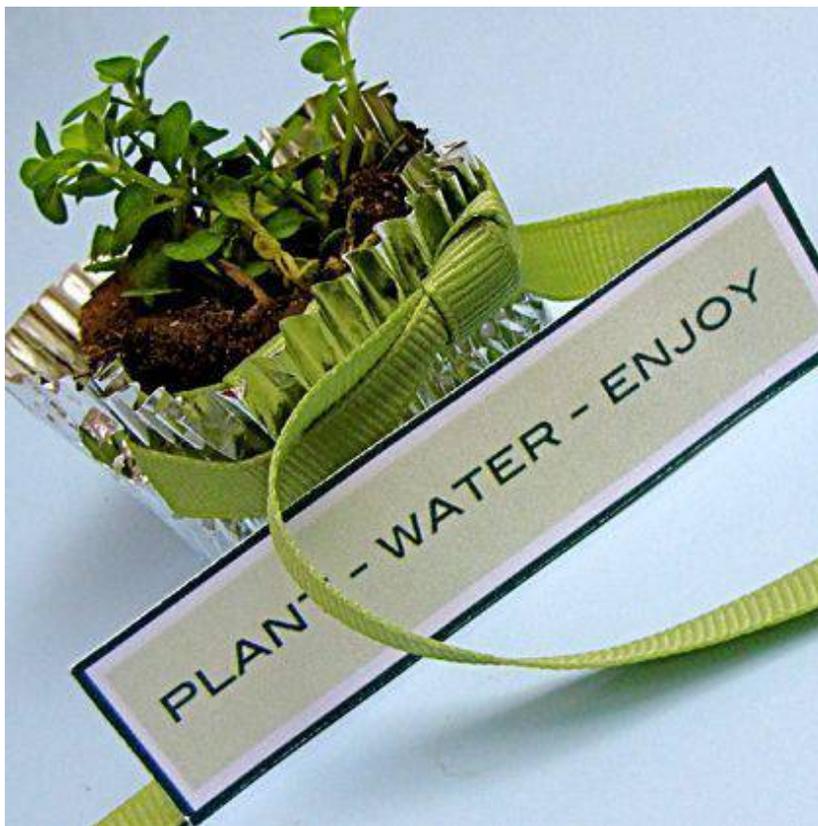
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[Click here to hang with Mickey and his friends at the official Mickey Mouse site!](#)



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## Shamrock Flower "Cupcakes"



by [Victoria Hudgins](#)

Make a simple bunch of Shamrock flowers stand out this year by placing a small batch in cupcake liners. Your kids will have a blast handing out the creative creation and they can be replanted at home to lend a bit of luck year around.

### What you'll need

A bunch of shamrock (or clover) herbs planted

Cupcake liners

Green ribbon

## How to make it

1. First take the planted shamrock (or clover) plant and gently separate it into smaller bunches. Carefully, replant each bunch in a cupcake wrapper.

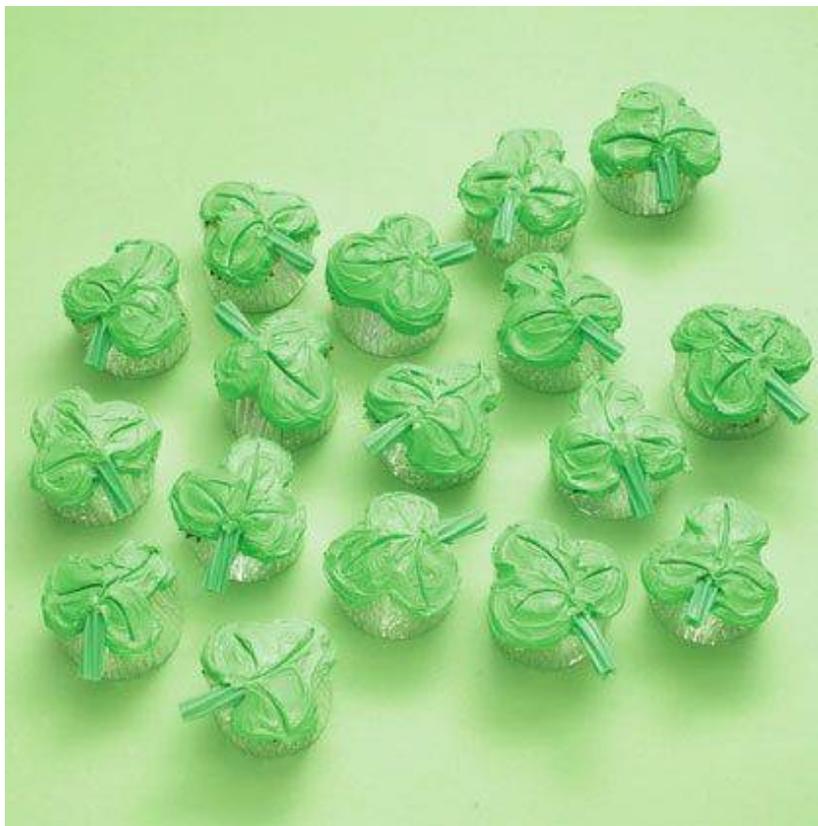


2. Using the green ribbon tie the cupcake liner around to secure the small plant inside. Mist with water, attach a simple tag, and deliver to give luck to those around.



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## Clover Cupcakes



It doesn't take the luck of the Irish to make these St. Patty's Day treats look so sweet — just a clever baking technique.

### What you'll need

- Cupcake batter
- Cupcake tins and liners
- Aluminum foil
- White frosting

Green food coloring

Toothpick

Green licorice (we used Twizzlers Rainbow Twists sold in a pack with other colors)

## How to make it

1. Place paper liners in 32 standard muffin cups, then fill each halfway with the batter.

2. For each cupcake, roll three balls of foil (ours were  $\frac{2}{3}$  inch in diameter) and insert them evenly around the perimeter between the liner and the tin, as shown.



3. Bake the cupcakes for a few minutes less than the package suggests (because there's less batter per cup than usual), or until a toothpick comes out clean.

4. Allow the cupcakes to cool, then remove them from the tin.

5. Cover each with green frosting (our ratio was 1 teaspoon of green food coloring to one 16-ounce can of white frosting).

6. Use a toothpick to draw leaf veins, and insert a 2-inch-long piece of green licorice for a stem.

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## Easy Ice-cream Pie



For a holiday treat, make pie with your favorite green ice cream.

### What you'll need

- 1 1/2 cups finely crushed graham crackers or chocolate wafers
- 5 tablespoons butter (melted)
- 1 quart pistachio or mint chip ice cream
- 1/2 cup hot fudge sauce
- red and green candies

## How to make it

1. Place 1 1/2 cups finely crushed graham crackers or chocolate wafers into a 9-inch pie pan.
2. Stir in 5 tablespoons of melted butter, then press the mixture into the bottom and sides of the pan.
3. Freeze for 30 minutes.
4. Fill with 1 quart pistachio or mint chocolate chip ice cream, layer on 1/2 cup hot fudge sauce, top with 2 cups whipped cream, and sprinkle with red and green candies.
5. Freeze before slicing and serving.



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## St. Patrick's Pot of Gold



Surprise your favorite little people on March 17th with these wee emerald pots filled with sweet, edible gold.

### What you'll need

- 3-ounce box of lemon-flavor gelatin
- 6 limes
- Sugar
- 1 teaspoon of whipped cream

## How to make it

1. Line an 8-inch square baking dish with plastic wrap, leaving several inches of overhang on each side (this will make removing the gelatin easier). Combine a 3-ounce box of lemon-flavor gelatin and 1 cup of boiling water in a medium bowl, stirring until the gelatin is dissolved. Stir in 1 cup of cold water, then pour the mixture into the baking dish. Cover the dish with plastic wrap and chill the gelatin for 4 hours or until firm, then slice the gelatin into 1/2-inch cubes.
2. Cut off the top quarter of each of 6 limes, then, without cutting into the fruit, slice a thin layer of peel from the bottom of each one to help them stand upright. With a small knife, cut around the inside of each lime's rind to loosen the pulp, then spoon it out to make a shell.
3. Place a pinch of sugar and 1 teaspoon of whipped cream in the bottom of each shell, then fill each lime pot with gelatin gold. Makes 6.

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## Shamrock Cupcakes



Everyone's Irish on St. Patrick's Day, so get the family together to make a batch of these festive cupcakes.

### What you'll need

- Cooled cupcakes (baked from your favorite recipe)
- White icing
- Green gum drops or spearmint leaves
- Heart-shaped cookie cutter

Rolling pin

## How to make it

1. Frost a cooled cupcake (baked from your favorite recipe) with white icing.
2. For the shamrock, flatten 3 green gumdrops or spearmint leaves with a rolling pin (sprinkle on a little sugar, if necessary, to keep the candies from sticking).
3. Use a small heart-shaped cookie cutter (ours was 1 1/2 inches across) to cut a heart from each flattened leaf.
4. Place the hearts together on the cupcake to form a shamrock.
5. Cut a stem from the excess of one of the flattened candies and set it in place below the 3 hearts.

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## St. Pat's Potato Candy



Yes, there really is potato in this classic Irish treat, though you'd never know by tasting. Rolled in coconut, these mini spud-shaped sweets make a perfect St. Patrick's Day dessert.

### What you'll need

- 1 large potato
- Pinch of salt
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

4 to 5 cups confectioners' sugar

5 cups sweetened coconut flakes

## How to make it

1. Peel the potato and boil it in water until soft. In a mixing bowl, mash the cooked potato with the salt and butter. Then -- this is key -- let it cool completely, or else it will melt the sugar when you add it.
2. Mix in the vanilla extract and 4 cups of sugar. At this point, the mixture should be stiff. If it isn't, add more sugar.
3. Sprinkle half of the coconut onto a waxed-paper-covered surface and turn the potato mixture onto it. Roll the batter until all of the coconut has been mixed in, then shape teaspoonfuls into small balls.
4. Roll the balls individually in the remaining coconut. Chill the finished candies until you're ready to serve them. Makes about 4 dozen.