Wedge Cuts:  
THE MAKING OF WINGS

The biggest pitfall in cutting wedges is pushing your knife too far. When this happens, the sides of the next wedge you cut in that set will come out separately rather than in the normal joined position. However, even if this happens once or twice in a set, you can still succeed. Just keep your individual pieces together and when you are putting your bird wings back into the body, go ahead and use the separated sides in their proper position as if they weren't disconnected. Gravity and the tendency for moist food to stick to itself will hold your broken wing sections in place. Now, if every wing in the set happens to come away in two pieces, well, you've just made a rather arduous start on a wonderful salad, but you won't have come very far as a bird carver. Start over and DON'T PUSH ON THE KNIFE. USE A GENTLE SAWING MOTION.

THE V CUT
1. In most cases, you'll be cutting wings out of a piece of food from which you've already cut a slice to make the bird's head. Rest the food on the flat side from which the slice was taken, whenever possible. Whatever you're cutting, hold it firmly on the board.
2. Hold your blade level and over the center of the top of the food, going from front to back. Move the blade 1/8 inch to the right and angle in toward the center. The slope of this angle should be just like the slope of the right half of the letter V. Saw cut your way into the food. Stop when the cutting edge of your knife is right under the center of the food. Withdraw the blade.
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3. Now make the opposite cut in from the left. It is a mirror image of the first and completes the letter V. Lift the resulting wedge out on the side of your blade and set it on your board.

4. All successive wedges in this wing set are cut the same way. Just begin each cut a little to the outside of the V-shaped cavity and finish each cut directly under the bottom of the V-shaped cavity.

5. If you find it hard to make the cut from the Wit but can do it well from the right side (or vice-versa), it’s perfectly all right to give the food a half turn between each cut so you will always be cutting in from the right.

THE L CUT

1. The L-shaped wedges differ only in the angle of the slopes. Otherwise, follow the saw technique for the V-shaped wedges. Cut the more vertical stroke first. Then make the second cut aiming for the bottom of the vertical ice.

2. Be sure the second cut (the more horizontal one) does angle down into the food slightly. If you cut up into the food, the side wings will tend to slip down and out of their cavity. The exact distances between cuts and the recommended angles for the wedges vary a little from bird to bird.
**USING PATTERNS**

When you make apple birds and melon birds, use the traceable drawings that follow to carve the heads. Simply copy the design you need onto ordinary tracing paper. Then cut out your traced design with a pair of scissors and use the pattern as outlined in the instructions. If the apple or melon that you use is unusually small or large, you may need to make the heads slightly smaller or larger than the pattern to keep the correct proportion. If you intend to carve some or all of the birds rather often, you should tape your paper pattern onto a sheet of colored plastic acetate and then cut pattern out of acetate. The acetate is available at art supply stores. These plastic patterns will last through dozens of uses. Simply wipe them dry after each use and store them flat in your book.