Photoshop 5.5 & 6.0 Tips & Tricks

Introduction to Transparent GIF

In this example, we will explore two methods for saving a file to the Transparent GIF format. A transparent GIF is an image that has had a color designated to be invisible on a web page. In Photoshop, you can select a whole area to be transparent, not just a single color. By creating an image with a transparent background, you can remove the boxy look that often happens in web pages.

For this example, we used the hot air balloons image that came on the Photoshop 5.5 CD, but you may use any image you wish.

Method 1:

1.   Crop and Select out the Background

1. Open the hot air balloon image in the goodies folder.

2. Using the "Crop Too"l located in the Tool Bar, crop the image closely, so that only the big balloon in the bottom left corner is inside the selection.

3. Select the Magnetic Lasso.
    Double click (for 5.5 users) the icon to active the tolerance controls.
    Select the settings:
    feather = 0 & anti-aliasing is checked
    Lasso width =10 pixels
    Frequency = 57 & Edge contrast = 10%
Note: For 6.0 users; the controls are always available at the top of the Window. No double clicking is necessary.
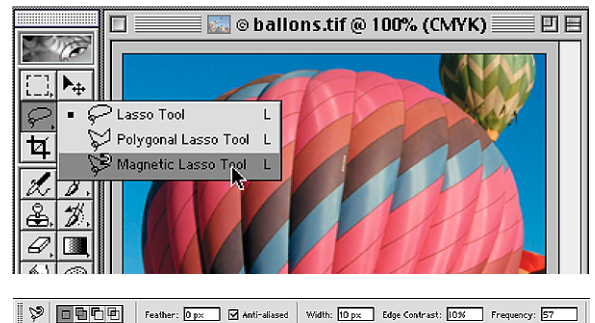
2. Select With The Magnetic Lasso

4. Starting at the top center of the balloon,
   click the mouse to set the starting point.
Move the mouse along the edge of the balloon.
Notice how the lasso snaps to the edges of the
balloon and automatically sets more points at
strategic areas in the selection.

Note: If the lasso starts straying and setting
points away from the desired selection area,
drag the mouse back up and use the Delete Key
to remove unwanted points.

5. Once the area is selected, connect the two
ends of the selection by moving the lasso tool
over the first point you set.
   A circle appears at the bottom of the tool.
Once this circle appears, click the mouse to set
the selection. The selection points disappear.
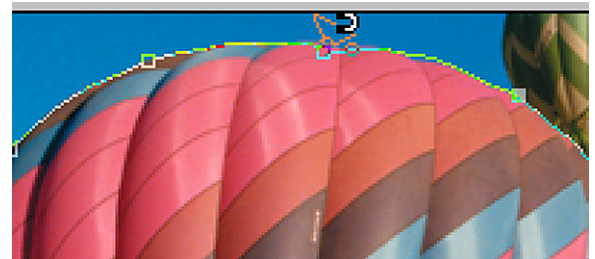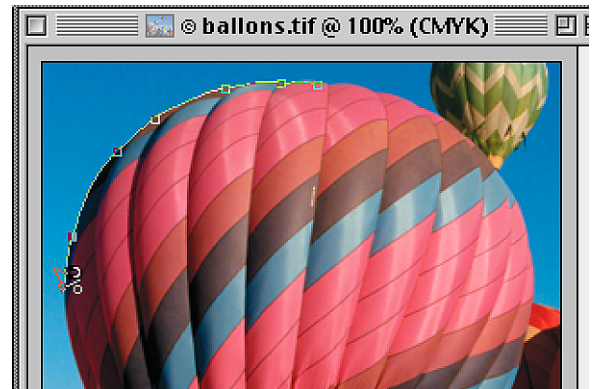
3. Fine Tune The Selection

 Use the lasso tool to fine tune your selection.
   1. Hold down the Option Key and encircle the
unwanted part of the selection to subtract areas
from the selection (the crowd and background
balloon in theexample to the right).
   2. Hold down the Shift Key and encircle areas
to be be included in the selection.

Note: 6.0 Users can use the selection controls
options in the Tool Options control bar at the top
of the window.
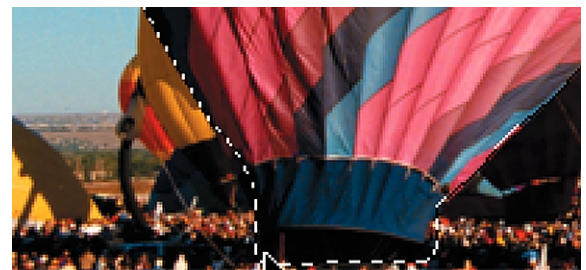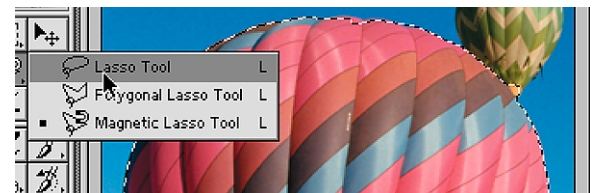
Selecting objects from within an image can be
time consuming and tedious. It's always a good
idea to save any selections made with the image,
in case they're needed in the future.
The selection you are making now will be used
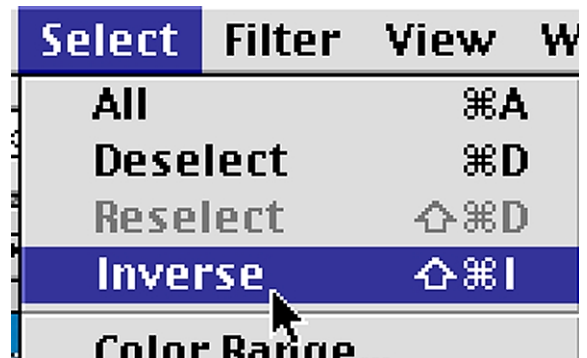later as the area to be transparent.

4. Save Selections.
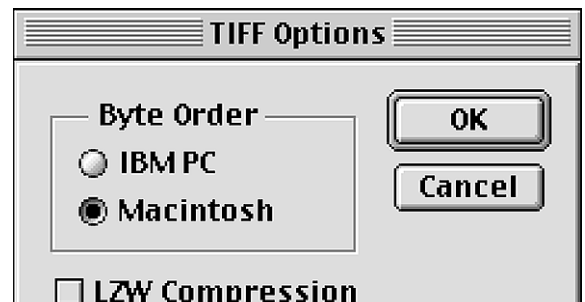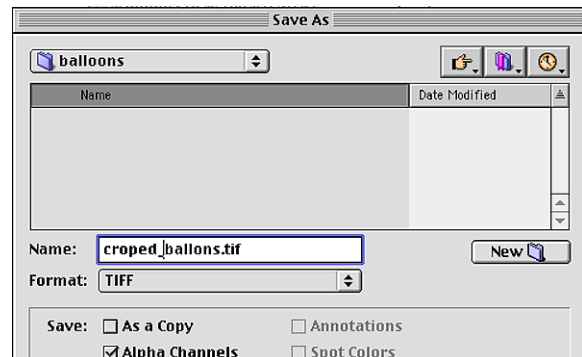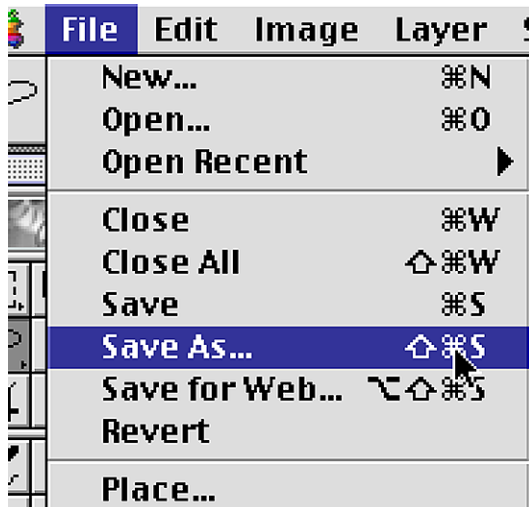
1. Once the selection is perfect, save the selection:
   From the "Select" Menu, choose "Save Selection".
   Name the selection "FGround." Click OK
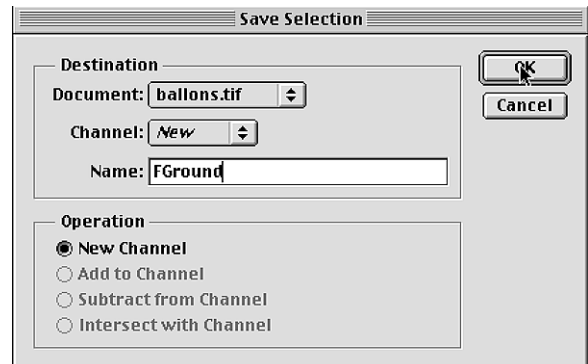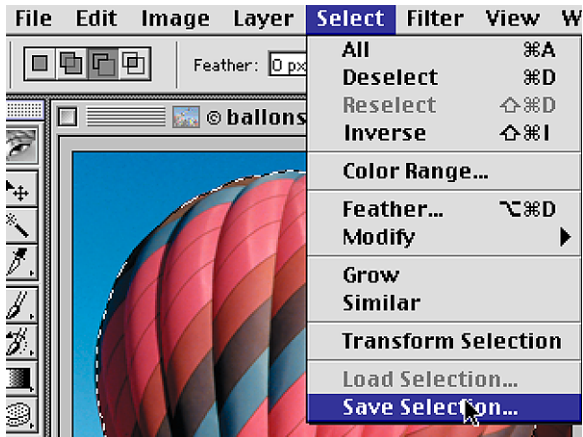
2. Inverse selection
   a. From the "Select" Menu, choose "Inverse."
   b. From the "Select" Menu,
      choose "Save Selection."
   c. Name the selection "bground."

3. Save the file with another name. Doing this will protect your original file.

Photoshop 5.5 & 6.0 Tips & Tricks

5. Save As GIF Through The Help Wizard

If Image was closed, open it.
At this point, the Image is in CMYK format. This is the preferred mode for color printing. Images for screen display and the web should be in RGB format.
This Image **must** be in RGB format before it can be converted to a GIF.
　　From the "Image" Menu, select "Mode."
　　Then select "RGB Color."
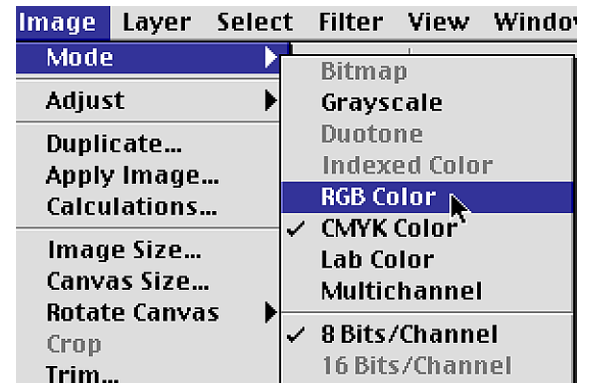
6. Activate Saved Selections

1. Select the background of the image from the saved selections in the previous exercise.
　　To do this, from the "Select"   Menu, choose "Load Selection."
　　Then choose the Background.

2. From the Help Menu,
　　choose "Export Transparent Image..."

An Assistant appears and leads you through the process.

**Page 4
Transparent
GIF**

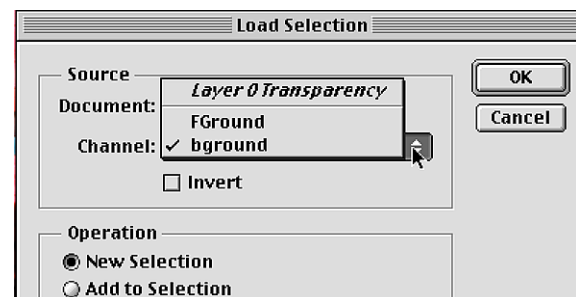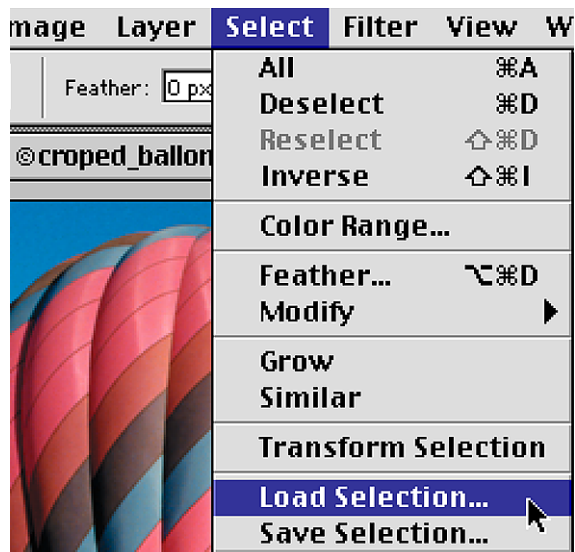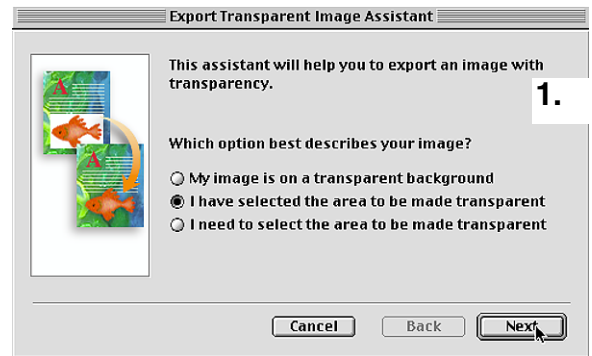## 7. Saving As GIF With The Help Assistant

The assistant window appears.
  1. What do you want to be transparent?
      Our Image has a Selected Area. Click "Next."
  2. How will the image be used?
      Choose "On-line." Click "Next."
  3. What Kind of file?
      Choose "Gif Format," Click "Next."
  4. Indexed Color Warning box appears.
  Click "Next."

Note: The GIF format is a very limited file format. Files can only contain 72 pixels per inch and 256 or fewer colors. To prepare an image in Photoshop for the GIF format, the image colors must first be indexed. This process subtracts colors from the image leaving 256 or fewer colors. You have some control over how many and which colors are removed.
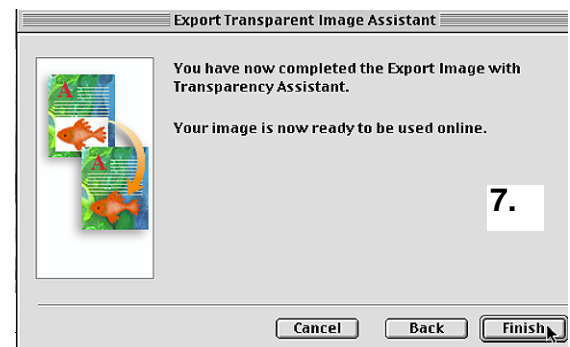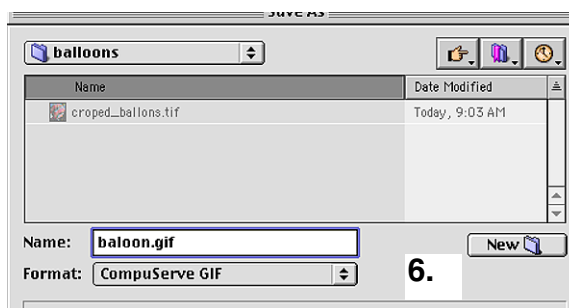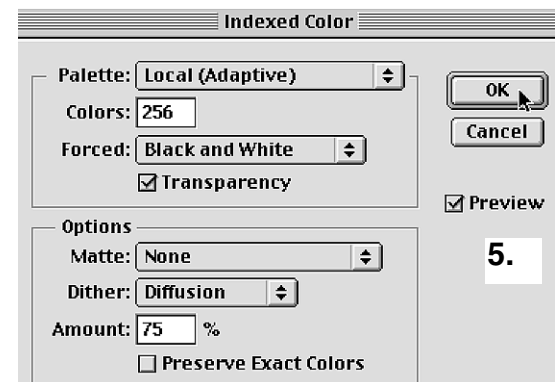
Note: It is never a good idea to try to enlarge GIF files, and they generally do not print well on a color printer.

Export Transparent Image Assistant

This assistant will help you to export an image with transparency.

1.

Which option best describes your image?
○ My image is on a transparent background
● I have selected the area to be made transparent
○ I need to select the area to be made transparent

Cancel   Back   Next

Export Transparent Image Assistant

What will this image be used for?   **2.**
○ Print
● Online

Export Transparent Image Assistant

Which image format would you like?   **3.**
● GIF
○ PNG

Description
GIF format only accepts 8 bit color but is widely accepted in browsers.

Export Transparent Image Assistant

The GIF format only supports 8 bit images. The next step will be to reduce the number of colors in your image by using the Indexed Color dialog.

4.

5. The "Indexed Color" options dialog box appears. Choose "adaptive Palette.
For Dither, choose "none" or "diffusion."
Click "Next."

6. Name and save your file.

7. The Assistant reappears and tells you you're finished with the process. Click "Finish."

Indexed Color

Palette: Local (Adaptive)
Colors: 256
Forced: Black and White
☑ Transparency

OK
Cancel
☑ Preview   **5.**

Options
Matte: None
Dither: Diffusion
Amount: 75 %
☐ Preserve Exact Colors

SAVE AS

📁 balloons

Name	Date Modified
🖼 croped_ballons.tif	Today, 9:03 AM

Name: baloon.gif   New 📁
Format: CompuServe GIF   **6.**

Export Transparent Image Assistant

You have now completed the Export Image with Transparency Assistant.

Your image is now ready to be used online.

7.

Cancel   Back   Finish

8. Indexed Color Options

As mentioned above, the process of indexing colors removes colors and pixels permanently from an image. The process can result in very ugly images.
What happens during the index process is this: you select a palette to map your image to. The program looks at the colors in your image and tries to match them to the chosen palette. It will pick and replace the best matches between palette and image and throw away all but 256 colors or whatever number under 256 you define.
Photoshop offers a number of options to choose from when creating indexed color images. Knowing which options to choose will give you the best possible image.

Here is an example of the choosing index to Web palette. The Web palette is limited to the 216 colors available on both the Mac and Windows machines. This option will give you a very dotty image. The same is true if the either of the systems' palettes is chosen. This is because these palettes do not contain the same colors that are in the balloon image and the program is forced to substitute colors available in the chosen palette.
This options is best used on images with limited color such as buttons and icon graphics.
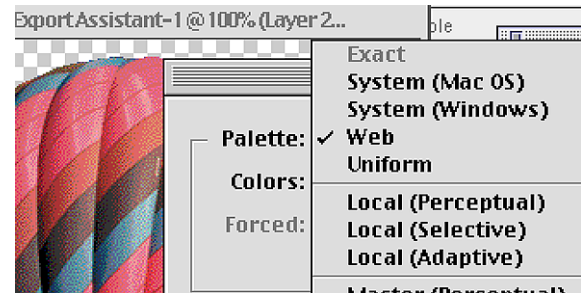
Here is an example of an image with the Adaptive palette option chosen. This options looks at all the colors in the image, chooses the best 256 from the image and throws away the rest. Because it's not trying to match a substitute color from a foreign palette, the transitions are smoother and the image looks cleaner.
Choosing this option is particularly important when indexing images of people, especially of faces and photographic or painterly images.
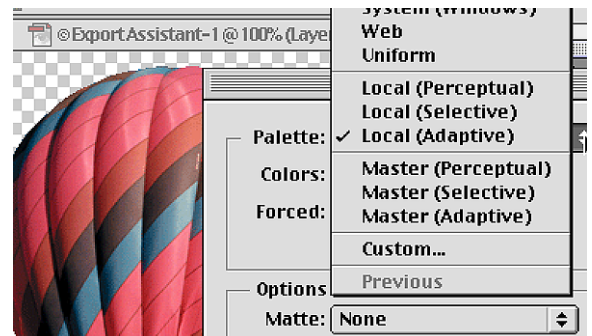
Method 2:

1. Save for Web Option

Photoshop's second option for saving a GIF file offers you a few more choices for deciding the quality and size of the final image.   Follow Steps 1-5 in the previous exercise to prepare an image or open the saved file if you've already created on in the last exercise.

2. Rename Layer

Rename the background layer by double clicking on the layer name in the Layers Window.
The default name that appears in the dialog box is fine. Click OK.

Note: When an image is opened, the image layer is always called the Background Layer by default. To change this so that the image is on a transparent canvas, the layer has to be renamed.
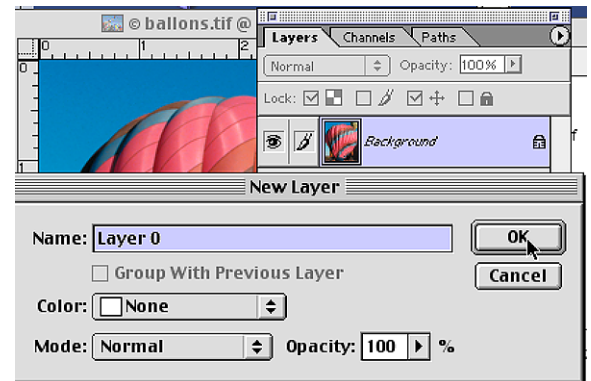
10. Select And Delete The Background

1. Load the Background selection.
2. With the background of the image selected, press the delete/backspace key to remove the backgrond.
You should now see a checkerboard pattern behind the balloon image.
If the background is white, you did not rename your layer.
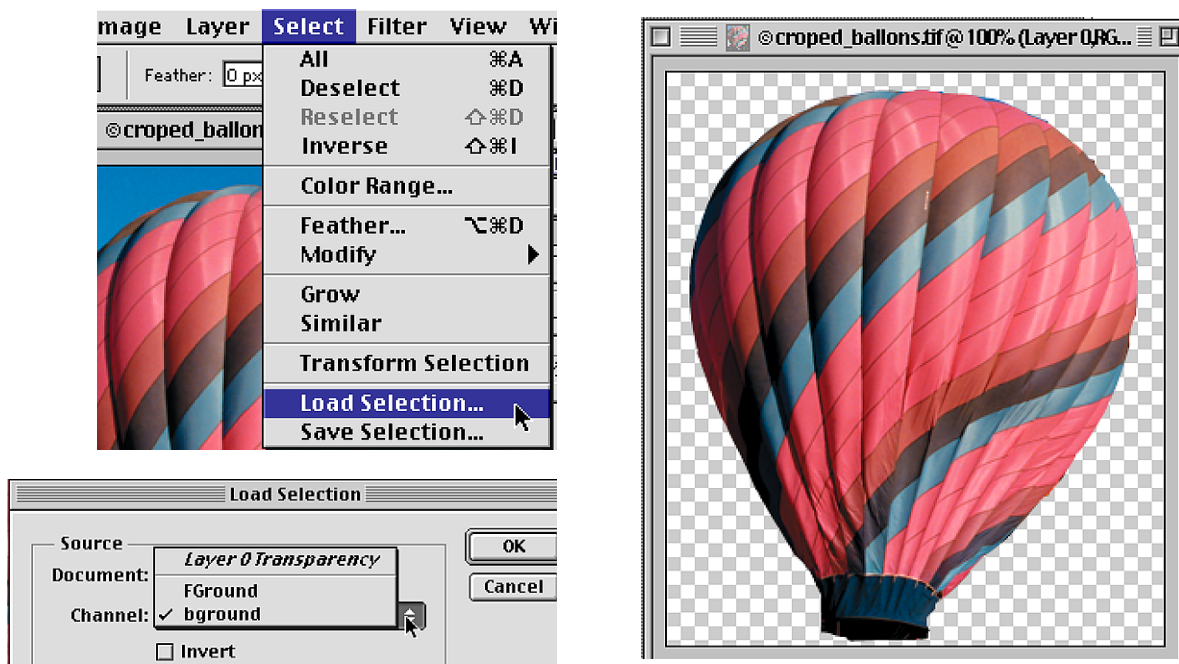
4. Save For Web

In the "Edit" Menu, choose "Save for Web."
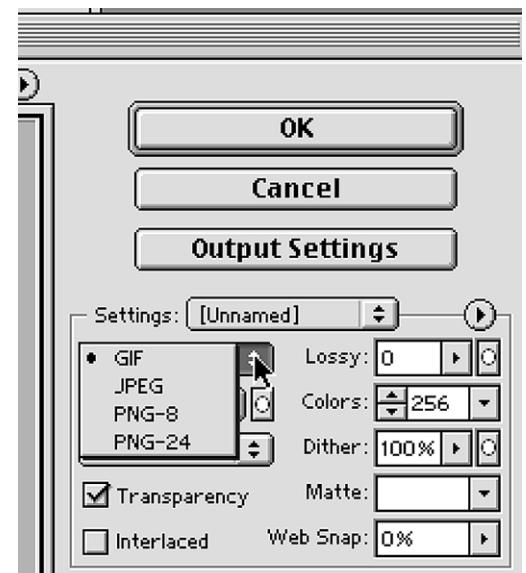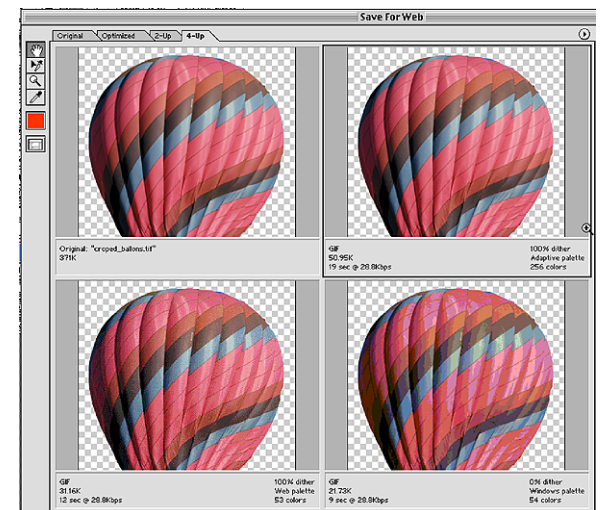The "Save for Web" options window appears.
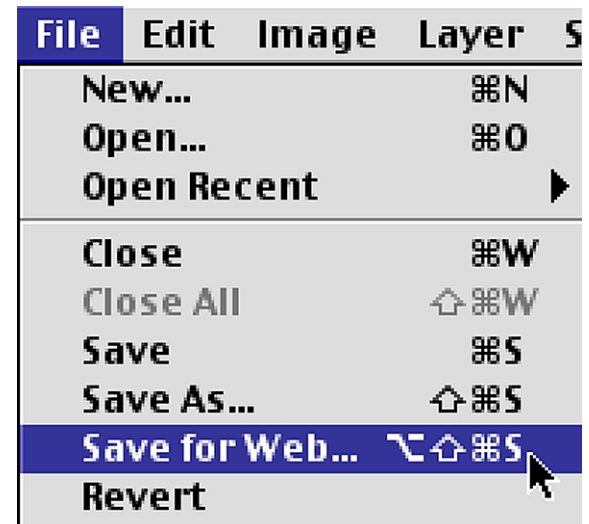
You have a choice of views. "4-up" gives you the most viewing options. The original image is always on the top left. You can select the other windows by clicking on them. Once selected, you can apply different quality options to each one. This allows you to compare image quality, size and modem download times for each setting chosen.

The options are available through a drop down list and various settings boxes to the right of the 4-up window.

Once you have tested different settings on the image, select the best one:
1. Click that image box.
2. Check the Transparency and Interlace Boxes.
3. Click OK.

The "Name File" window appears. Name the file.

**End
Transparent
GIF**