

Tips for Making Clay and Playdough :

If you are new to making playdough, then there is a little more to it than just throwing all the ingredients into a bowl and mixing!

Here are some tips on how to make clay that will help you get the best results.

1. We all have slightly different ways of measuring things, different flours absorb at different rates, and even things like humidity can effect your recipe. So **use the ingredients as a place to start** rather than expecting things to be exact. Measure out your ingredients carefully - then **slowly** add the liquid to the dry ingredients. Keep mixing and then adding a little more liquid until you get a nice firm clay. If the results are too sticky, add more flour. Too flakey and dry? Add a little more water.
2. If you want colored clay you can add food coloring or tempera paint. If you are happy for all the dough to be the same color then just add the coloring to the water before you mix the ingredients. If you would like different colored batches then make up the dough first, divide into portions and knead in the colors separately. This will give you more of a marbled effect at first, but the color will spread as you keep kneading it in.
3. **Store in an airtight container and keep in a cool place.** It should keep for a couple of months but homemade clay doesn't have the preservatives of shop bought stuff. If mold develops - it's time for a new batch!
4. Feel free to experiment and develop your own recipes. Try different oil or flour. The cream of tartar in the recipes is optional, but it does help with the elasticity. You can find it in the store with the baking ingredients (usually with the baking powder and bicarb).

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Clay Recipes

Air Hardening Modeling Clay

2 cups baking soda
1 cup cornstarch (cornflour)
1.5 cups cold water
(makes about 2 pounds - the recipe can be halved).

Baking soda and cornstarch make a smooth, pliable play clay that can be colored with everyday food coloring - or left white and painted once it hardens. **When you have made your model, leave it to air dry**- turning every 12 hours or so.

Place ingredients in a pan and stir until smooth. Set the pan over a medium heat and stir until boiling. Stir out any lumps and cook until it is the consistency of mashed potatoes.

Turn out onto a plate and cover with a damp, well-wrung kitchen towel - let cool. Dust a work surface with cornstarch and knead until pliable.

Baking Clay

4 cups plain/all-purpose flour
1 cup salt
1 teaspoon powdered alum (optional)
1.5 cups water

Mix ingredients in a bowl.

This clay bakes best if the ornaments are not too thick - about 1/2 inch is best.

Bake your ornaments on an ungreased baking tray for 30 mins, then turn and bake them for another 90 minutes until they are hard and dry. When they are cool you can smooth them with fine sandpaper before decorating and varnishing.

Playdough Recipes

Emily's Fantastic No Cook Playdough Recipe

This one was doing the rounds when my children were toddlers. **Not sure who Emily is - but her recipe is great!**

2 cups of plain/all-purpose flour
1 cup salt
1 cup cold water
1 tbspn oil (vegetable oil is fine - baby oil smells lovely).

Drop the ingredients into a plastic bag and seal. Let the children knead them together inside the bag - then tip it out for modeling fun.

Kool Aid Playdough

2 ½ cups of plain/all-purpose flour
½ cup salt
1 Tbsp. cream of tartar
2 pkgs of unsweetened Kool-Aid

Just measure everything into a bowl and mix together.

Homemade Playdough

This is a cooked recipe. I find I get better results with this one, but it takes a bit longer.

2 cups plain/all-purpose flour
1 cup salt
2 tablespoons cooking oil
2 teaspoons cream of tartar
2 cups of water

Put all dry ingredients in a saucepan. Add water, oil and color. cook slowly and stir all the time. As it gets hot it will begin to thicken up. Knead on a floured surface.

Alternatively, microwave on high for up to 6 minutes. Remove frequently and stir. Knead on a floured surface.