

How to make... salt dough feasts

Suitable for ages 8 - 11 with some adult help

You will need:

- 2 cups of flour
- 1 cup of salt
- 1 cup of water
- Mixing bowl
- Spoon
- Rolling pin
- Greaseproof paper
- Paintbrush
- Modelling tools (if you have play dough tools these are perfect, if not you could use your cutlery. A round bladed knife, a fork, scissors, cocktail sticks, anything you can find)
- Baking sheet
- Tupperware box (optional)



If you enjoyed Rachel Leonard's reading of *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse*, why not make your own picnic hamper inspired by the feasts the mice eat in the story? You will need to use the oven for this craft activity, so ask an adult to help you.

Instructions

Step 1:

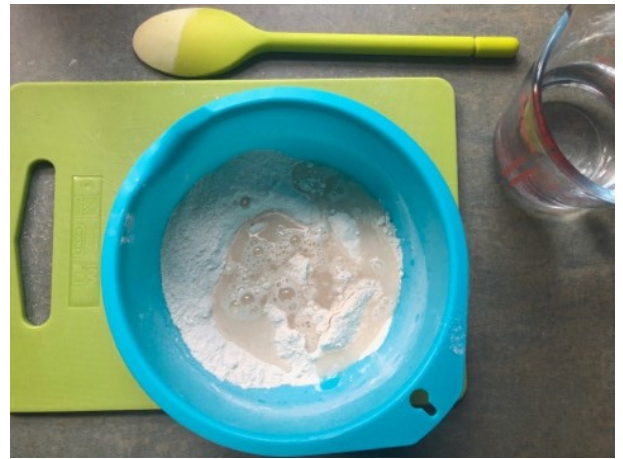
First you need to make your dough. Add the flour and salt into a mixing bowl and mix them together.



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Step 2:

Add the water and stir to bring the dough together. If your dough is dry, add a little bit of water to help. Get your hands in and squash it all into a ball.



Step 3:

Turn the dough out onto a surface and knead it a little to get a lovely smooth texture, similar to play dough.



Step 4:

Cut your ball of dough into four. You may want to put the dough you aren't using into an airtight container so you can keep it soft while you are working on other parts.

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Step 5:

On a sheet of greaseproof paper, roll out one of your balls into a shape about 5mm thick. This will be the base of your basket, make it any shape you like.

Take a knife and make a curve across the top of your basket.



Step 6:

Using another ball of dough, roll out lots of sausage shapes. Brush a layer of water over everything under the curve on your basket. Lay your sausages across your basket, following the curve you have drawn. Make sure that they are sitting snugly next to each other, sides touching. Using a paintbrush, wash a little water into the joins to make sure they stick together.



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Step 7:

Trim the ends of the sausages. Take your modelling tool and make little indentations all the way along your sausages.

You could experiment with different widths. Try going from wider at the top to thinner at the bottom of your basket to create a 3D illusion. You could also try twisting or plaiting your rolls of dough to create exciting textures.



Twist:



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Plait:



Step 8:

Take your third ball and roll out two or three quite thick and long sausage shapes. Lay them down side by side. Pinch the tops together then twist or plait them all the way down. This will be your basket's handle so measure your sausages against your basket to make sure they are long enough.



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Step 9:

To join your handle to your basket, add some water to where the two pieces will connect. Place one end of the handle on top of your basket and using either the rounded bladed of a knife or your modelling tool press the ends together. Smooth over the join and brush a little water over the top.



Step 10:

Now with your final ball of dough, create all the food in your basket. This will sit on the remaining dough above the curve you drew earlier. You could also place it so that it is spilling out over the top of the basket or stick up over the handle. Remember to always add a little bit of water to the dough beneath and to any connecting parts to help it all stick together.

Try rolling out balls to create apples, oranges, nuts and berries. Roll out some flat dough and cut leaf shapes. You could use a pair of scissors to snip into the leaves to make ears of corn, like the photos below.



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You could use your modelling tools to create different textures on your food. Here are some ideas:



Step 11:

Once you are happy with your basket of treats, ask an adult to preheat the oven to 120°C. Add one final thin wash of water over all your joins. Slide your creation onto a baking sheet using the greaseproof paper underneath to help you.

Ask an adult to put it in the oven and bake until dry and hard, about 2 or 3 hours.

Ask an adult to remove it from the oven and leave it somewhere safe to cool.

What next?

Once your creation is cool enough you could paint it.

You could make one for the Town Mouse and one for the Country Mouse. How would their feasts be different?