

Making Your Own Fossil Prints



What You Need (per person)

- Air Dry Modelling Clay

OR

- “Stone” Dough Mix

Ingredients

½ Cup of Salt
1 Cup of Flour
½ Cup of Brewed Coffee (COLD)
1 cup of used Coffee Grounds
Measuring Cups
Mixing Spoon
Mixing Bowl

Fossils to imprint

Twigs
Leaves (stiff bay leaves work well)
Dead hard shelled bugs like roly-poly's
Seashells
Chicken bones
Plastic Dinosaur models for skin texture
or footprints

What You Do

1. Measure salt, flour, coffee, and grounds; add each to bowl; and stir together until well mixed.
2. Turn this dough out onto a large sheet of waxed paper and knead it until smooth.
3. Break off a piece large enough for the imprint you want to make, roll it into a ball, and use the heel of your hand to flatten it out.
4. Press the object you wish to make a fossil imprint of firmly into the dough. You can use more than one object if you like. Carefully remove the objects to leave the prints behind. Let your fake stone dry overnight and you have an imitation fossil!

What Is Happening

What you are doing is very much like the way real fossil prints were created. A long time ago, plants, bugs, or animals left impressions in soft mud, which dried out and eventually became rock.

Much of what we know about ancient, extinct plants and animals comes from such prints. For example, that is how we know what the texture of dinosaur skin was, and how we are still tracking down the evolution of birds—since neither skin nor feathers are likely to survive as actual fossils, the way bones do.