Pearl at Home

Art projects designed for family fun, for suggested ages of 5 and up to be completed at home with easily-accessible art materials.

CLAY TILES

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MATERIALS

• Air-dry or Fimo style clay (not Model Magic)
• Clay tools or items: various cookie cutters, a spoon, a butter knife, fondant tools, paper embossing plates, etc.
• A fondant roller (wood) or a 6-8 inch piece of clean PVC pipe
• Natural items like leaves, vines, hearty flowers
• Wax paper or foil as a work mat
• Acrylic or tempera paint • Brushes
• Optional: Styrofoam plate, pencil or pen, scissors

DIRECTIONS

Air-dry clay will take a nice impression but should be rolled into a thicker tile. Fimo clay will take a crisper impression and can be rolled into a thinner tile, but it may be harder to roll and emboss. The following directions are for air-dry clay but will work for both styles of clay.

1 Start with an adult palm-size lump of air-dry clay to make a basic tile:
  • Roll the clay in your hands to compress all the air out of it.
  • Smoosh the ball into a more flat pancake shape between your hands and put it on the work mat.
  • Use a roller to make the clay pancake flatter and more smooth. Try to make it no less than 1/4 inch thick.
2 Make impressions on your clay by using one of the following three methods. 
For any of these methods, you can leave the tile in its natural shape or use a cookie cutter at the end to shape it.

OPTION A
Use items from nature to make embossed impressions in your clay:

• Arrange a few leaves, vines, or flowers on the clay, leaving open space. Overlaps may not work well.
• Use the roller to press the plant material into the clay without pushing it all the way through.
• Carefully remove the plant material. You can use tweezers to help with any stubborn pieces.
OPTION B
Use various tools to make impressions in the clay:

- Use items like fondant tools or paper embossing tools to press into the clay.
- You can create stamps by cutting pieces from a Styrofoam plate. Use a pencil or pen to incise designs into the Styrofoam surface by drawing hard enough to create grooves in the Styrofoam.
- Use your unique stamp to make impressions in your clay.

OPTION C
Use tools to emboss some areas, and add clay shapes (for raised designs) in other areas.

- To adhere a piece of clay onto your tile, lightly spray the tile with water, then add a TINY amount of water to the back of the clay piece you are adding. Stick the piece onto the tile.
- If something falls off as it dries, you can glue it on later.

For any technique, allow the clay to dry at least 24 hours. You may want to carefully flip the tile over to be sure the underside is fully dry.
3 **Finishing your tile:**

- You can leave the clay it’s natural color, or paint your tile.
- Painting your tile can be done at any time. The clay will dry along with the paint. Just take care to not get it too wet.
- If you make a repair or add something with glue, allow the glue to dry before more painting.

4 **Display your tiles:**

For a more natural look, attach your tile(s) to a pair of sticks, earthtone burlap, or other materials.

For a more formal look, you can glue the tiles directly onto small gallery-wrapped canvases. Small objects displayed as a group become an art installation!