

How to blow and dye eggs for Easter



(i)



(ii)

If you're lucky enough to be able to lay your hands on eggs and can spare some for decorations (or dye them before an Easter breakfast or tea time), they are definitely a fun, creative and colourful activity to try. You can also blow eggs and decorate them and possibly keep them for many years.

If eggs just aren't available for you, try the 'egg-less decorations' sheet for ideas that are just as much fun!

You can dye

1. Freshly boiled eggs which are then dyed- some people eat these straight away
2. Previously boiled eggs that may/may not have been treated with wax before dyeing -DO NOT EAT THESE, KEEP THEM IN THE FRIDGE & JUST USE THEM TO DECORATE THE EASTER TABLE
3. 'Blown eggs' which can be dyed and decorated in many different ways. In theory, they will last indefinitely (unless you break them!) and sterilising them will ensure no bacteria or other germs present a hazard or an unpleasant smell (see below). Also see the 'decorating ideas for eggs' sheet

Blowing eggs



When I prepare eggs for my Outreach sessions, I start 'blowing' just after Christmas so that I can prepare enough for my sessions running up to Easter. Both brown and white eggs are fine but white eggs are good, especially if you want to do some really decorative work on the shells afterwards. I also use goose eggs.

In the past, people blew eggs by pressing their lips against a hole made in an egg and forcing the yolk and white out through a hole at the other end of the egg. Since then, there was a time when uncooked egg was seriously considered to be a major health hazard (and for good reason). Nowadays, we aren't quite that worried about raw eggs, but nonetheless, I **never eat any raw egg or touch my face with it**. I also use baby sterilising tablets to clean and soak my eggs in overnight after blowing them for all my Outreach work and at home. I also thoroughly clean all my equipment in hot soapy water. Better safe than sorry!

Equipment



A: Blowing kit from www



B: Syringe with a blunt ink nozzle



C: Hole makers are important

A blowing kit works well and is popular elsewhere in the world. The green shell 'drill' makes a good hole with almost no breakages. Make a hole at each end of the egg. Breakages aren't a disaster- bits of dyed shell are useful for trying new decorative ideas or materials



The yellow pump comes with a needle-like tip so take care. You gently pump the 'bellows' end and the egg begins to come out of the other end. A bamboo skewer inserted into the egg helps break the yolk sac and the egg to come out quicker. Keep a sink of warm soapy water ready for hand washing and a cloth for wiping up

If you use the syringe technique (ink nozzles and syringes available online), get a big one but go gently. You can push air in to the egg and also suck egg out into the syringe. This is quicker and more effective at getting all the egg out. You can also squeeze in a syringe of sterilising solution speeding up the 'sinking' process



D



E

Follow the manufacturer's instructions to create a large bowl of sterilising solution (D). Wash your egg with tap water and then gently submerge it into the sterilising solution. Bubbles should come out of the hole in the egg as the hollow shell fills with sterilising solution. You can speed this up by syring liquid from the bowl in to the hole in the egg. Only when the egg sinks to the bottom of the bowl can you go on to the next egg. If it floats at all (E), there's still air in there that needs to come out.

Leave overnight and then drain in a colander with a hole pointing downwards for 12 hours.

Keep everything and yourself very clean throughout



If you have been scrupulously clean and hygienic, you may be able to preserve your egg yolks for cake making (if you have access to the ingredients!). This is ideal as not only are cakes delicious (I made four on this day) but it is respectful of the value of food and also the hen that created and laid each egg

Boiling (and possibly waxing) eggs then dyeing them

Pace Eggs have been eaten for centuries and were a simple and much-loved way of not only celebrating Easter, but symbolising rebirth and also bringing some colour to the celebrations. You can use string and onion skins to create patterns or many other ideas from all over the world.

F. To boil an egg ready for dyeing depends on whether you are happy to eat it/ for your family to eat it. The simple dyeing process uses food colouring and white wine vinegar, all of which may sound acceptable to you but others may prefer not to eat an egg that has been dyed. So, if you are going to eat the egg, cook it for your preferred time. If you're not going to eat it, cook it for 10-12 minutes to make sure it is really hard-boiled.



F



G



H

I



G. When cool, you can draw a design in wax crayon ahead of the dyeing process

H Food colouring is what I use to dye (elsewhere in the world, you can buy egg dyeing tablets at Easter time).

I. The very best colouring for dyeing is in the tiny bottles that you can buy online. They give a consistent result and an intense

colour plus they come in boxes of a wide range of colours (ii at the top of the page). H tube colours or traditional bottles give paler colours and are more hit-and-miss (i). You may want to wear gloves, an apron and old clothing

- 1. Put 20 drops of food colouring in a heat resistant container that isn't precious (eg a small old mug)**
- 2. Add 2 tablespoons of white wine vinegar**
- 3. Top the container up with boiling water (get help if you don't normally use a kettle alone)**
- 4. Get a spoon and lower the egg in gently. If you are using blown eggs, you will need to let the egg fill with the liquid so that it sinks and stays covered**
- 5. The longer you leave it, the deeper the colour. I leave mine for about 20 minutes but if you want a soft-boiled egg for tea, try dyeing it for just a short while then serve in an egg cup**
- 6. Carefully take each egg out and allow to dry away from each other on kitchen roll overnight**



Why not experiment? Dribbling tube food colour all over goose eggs and leaving them overnight not only looked amazing (X, Y) but were a real treat to see the next morning after they'd been rinsed off (Z)



X

Y

Z

Try decorating the eggs using chalk pen before dyeing them- that's how the pattern on the blue egg (ii) at the top of the sheet was created

So, lots to try out. Don't forget to look at the sheet on 'decorating ideas for eggs including home-made cord and other 'hanging' ideas' Please do share your dyed egg images with us on social media too.

*Text and images by Heather, Outreach Officer,
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