

# I dough

## GET CRAFTY

Rachel Chan

**M**s Melanie Tan (right), 21, a second-year political science student from the Singapore Management University, made plenty of children and parents happy during the Mini Maker Faire at the Singapore Science Centre in August.

She had come up with her own version of homemade playdough with all-natural ingredients – artificial dye- and additive-free – unlike those sold commercially.

Ms Tan, a volunteer with social enterprise Sustainable Living Lab, spent a week experimenting with four playdough recipes she found online before settling on one that is elastic and firm enough to make “dinosaurs and weird-shaped things”.

Sustainable Living Lab is a lab and prototyping facility located in the Bottle Tree Park in Lorong Chen-charu. It conducts workshops on wood work, upcycling and has a 500 sq m terrace on which plants are grown. Go to [www.facebook.com/sl2square](http://www.facebook.com/sl2square) for details.

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ST PHOTOS: ASHLEIGH SIM

### Make it



#### What you need:

For the dough

- A deep non-stick pan
- A non-stick stirrer
- A fork
- Mortar and pestle (optional)
- 2 cups of plain flour
- 1 Tbs of cream of tartar
- 1 cup of fine salt
- 2 Tbs of vegetable oil
- 2 cups of hot water

For colouring

- Pandanus leaves, for green
- Beetroot, for pink

- Turmeric powder, for yellow ochre
  - Blue pea flowers, for light lavender
- Alternatively, you can use your choice of food dye for whatever colour you want

For scent (optional)

- Vanilla essence
- Mint leaves or other aromatic herbs



#### What to do:

■ Start by sifting the flour and cream of tartar into a clean and dry non-stick pan. Make sure all the lumps are broken up. Add the salt.

■ Add the oil.

■ Put your pan over a low flame and pour in the hot water very slowly. The ingredients will not bind with warm water, so make sure that the water is freshly boiled and very hot. Use a fork to break up lumps. If you want to scent your dough with herbs, boil them in the hot water before adding to the flour.

■ Stir the mixture well, scraping down the sides often, until the dough pulls away from the sides and clumps in the centre (above right). This might take about 10 to 15 minutes, or more. The aim is to get a dough that will not stick to your fingers and dry enough to cut cleanly with a cookie cutter.

■ Let it cool.

■ Dice half a beetroot and simmer it in a covered saucepan over low heat with a cup of water, until the colour is drained from the beetroot. Make sure that the water does not dry out. Sieve and discard the vegetables. You now have red colouring.

■ Cut two or three pandan leaves into small pieces and pound them to a paste with a mortar and pestle. Add 2 Tsp of hot water to the paste and press the resulting green colouring out through a sieve.

■ Pour hot water over a small handful of blue pea flowers and crush the petals. Use the liquid for blue dye (right).

■ Add some water to the turmeric powder to make a paste. You need only a little of this as turmeric is the strongest dye of the four.

■ If you want the dough to smell of vanilla, knead in a few drops of vanilla essence.

■ Pinch off balls of dough slightly larger than golf balls and press them into thick, flat rounds. Make a small depression in the middle of each round with your finger and pour in your choice of dye (right). Knead until dye is well incorporated and repeat the process until the dough is your desired hue.

■ If you have no time to make your own dye, you may use artificial food dyes which are more vibrant than homemade dyes.

■ Your dough will keep inside the refrigerator in an airtight container for three months.

