

Information for teachers / parents

Making bath bombs



Why do this version rather than others available online?

Most bath bomb methods aimed at children are simpler, with fewer ingredients. They generally use just water as the binder. This results in a fairly poor-quality product. Using only water makes it fizz immediately and children generally can't work with it fast enough. The end result is not satisfying.

This method makes a good quality product that could be proudly given as a gift or sold at the school summer fete or Christmas fayre. It scales up well once they've got the hang of it, so do experiment with a batch made with cups full rather than tablespoons if you're going into mass-production.

The instructions here are long, but that's because I'm giving detailed advice on the ingredients & equipment.

You will need:

Bicarbonate of Soda (Sodium Bicarbonate) – Americans know this as 'baking soda'. It's NOT the same as 'baking powder' in the UK though. Baking powder contains both bicarb of soda and an acid – we'll be adding the acid separately). For home use, the little pots & sachets sold in the baking aisle are ideal. For larger groups & fetes, well-known online retailers sell various sizes of tubs and buckets.

Citric Acid – or use Cream of Tartar if you can't get citric acid easily. Powder or crystals. Often marketed for 'natural' cleaning products or for bath bomb making by well-known online retailers. Little sachets & pots of cream of tartar can be found in baking aisles.

Epsom Salts – often sold alongside 'natural' health & beauty products. Hard to get in very small amounts, so share the tub/bag between families.

Cornflour – perfectly standard kitchen cornflour. Make ooblek if you don't use it in cooking.

Essential Oils – the scent. Lavender & peppermint are common. Children love citrus fruits or vanilla. Adults often like florals, such as rose or geranium. Cedar, lemongrass and rosemary are also popular. Sold as aids to relaxation: look alongside 'natural remedies'. Do NOT use air freshener versions, such as oils for burners. These are NOT suitable for skin use. Essential oils are not cheap, so share a small bottle with other families or classes. You'll use only a few drops per pupil, unless you go into batch production.

Colour – optional, but desirable. Liquid cosmetic colours are sold for soap making: look online. Children tend to like purple, pink, yellow and blue, but most suppliers offer mixed boxes. Don't bother with black: it's always disappointing sludgy grey unless you use loads of it. Loose mica powders sold for make-up are another option. As for the oils, a little goes a long way so supplies can be shared.

Olive oil – mix 3 parts oil to 1 part water in a spray bottle, or a bottle than does SMALL squirts.

Tablespoons for measuring

Something to level the measure – back of a table knife at home. Coffee stirrer sticks in class.

Small gripseal **bag** to mix in

Moulds – paper sauce pots are perfect for large batches: cheaply available online or ask a parent who works in catering. Paper cake cases look pretty: stack a few together to make them less floppy and work inside a bun tin for

support. Or any small pot or tub: the small section of 'corner' yoghurts, the pots that push stock concentrates come in. Proper moulds can of course be used.

Step-by-step points

General point – Work neatly & tidily to minimise the risk of anything being knocked. If working as a class, do it step-by-step, all at the same time. Nothing to be eaten or drunk in this session. Avoid touching face, especially eyes. Wash hands well afterwards.

Allergies – In a classroom group, check for any pupils with allergies and skin sensitivities. Wearing gloves can be a good idea if they're sensitive and likely to make spills. Some cheaper essential oils are diluted in carrier oils, often almond. Checking for nut allergies is therefore vital or ensure that your oils are 100% and from a reputable brand.

Measuring – all spoons are level. Leave the cornflour until last because it's the potentially messy one!

Adding scent & colour – I am not joking about how few drops you need. This stuff is concentrated. Lids back on pots immediately.

The colour will look pale at the rubbing in stage. Don't be tempted to add extra.

Adding the oil/water mix is the tricky bit. SHAKE the bottle WELL every use, or you'll add too much water. Squirt & rub quickly – don't sit admiring the fizzing. Aiming for the texture of kinetic sand – it just holds together when you squeeze it hard inside the bag.

If you're sharing the mix between several moulds, do share it out first before pressing down, otherwise one gets short measure. Press down HARD.

Safety messages on packaging are important – don't skip that activity, especially if you're planning to sell or give the products.

Recipe summary:

2 tbsp bicarbonate of soda

1 tbsp citric acid

1 tbsp Epsom salts

1 tbsp cornflour

4 drops essential oil

3-6 drops colouring

3 parts olive oil to 1 part water – just enough to bind it together.

