



Museum of
Natural
History

Salt Dough Starfish Decoration

**Explore the incredible variety
of starfish by creating your
own salt dough hanging
decorations.**



Did you know?

There are around 2,000 different species of starfish living in the world's oceans. To protect themselves from predators, they have tough, bumpy skin. Many starfish are also brightly coloured with striking patterns to camouflage them amongst the coral and plants, or scare away potential threats.

You will need . . .

- Tablespoon
- Bowl
- Baking paper
- Baking tray
- Cocktail stick or pencil
- 6 tbsp of plain flour
- 3 tbsp of salt
- 3 tbsp of water
- String or ribbon
- An oven (if baking, rather than air drying the dough)



Starfish specimen
from the Museum

Instructions

This recipe makes enough dough for 4 or 5 decorations. The dough is not suitable for eating and must be kept away from pets due to the high salt content. You will need an adult to help with step 9 if using an oven to bake the salt dough decorations.

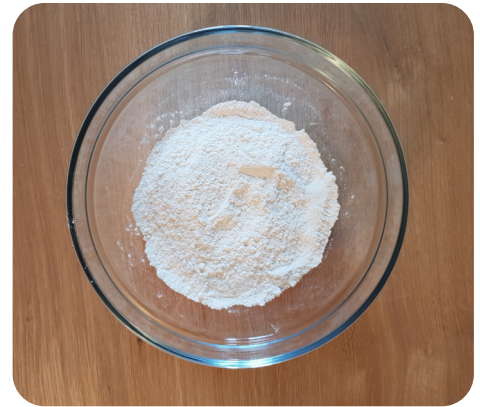
To make the dough . . .



Carefully measure out the ingredients for your dough using a tablespoon. You will need 6 tbsp of plain flour, 3 tbsp of salt and 3 tbsp of water.



In a bowl, mix the flour and salt together. Gradually add the water and mix with a spoon, or your hands, and watch the dough come together.



When you can shape the dough into a smooth ball with your hands it is ready to use!



Divide the dough into 4-5 equal sized pieces and place on a sheet of baking paper. Each of these pieces will make one hanging decoration.

Now we can start to shape the starfish!

To shape the starfish . . .



Roll a piece of dough in your hands to form a ball. With the palm of your hand, push down and flatten the ball to make a circle.



Using your fingers, pinch the side of the circle to make a point. Repeat this action 4 more times around the edge to create the 5 points of our star shape. Pull the 5 points slightly to make the arms of your starfish.



With your finger, gently push down and flatten the arms to complete your basic star shape. Now it's time to shape the star into the starfish of your choice. Take a look at our *'Have Yourself a Merry Little Starfish'* interactive activity for inspiration!



Once you are happy with your starfish design, make a small hole at the top using a cocktail stick or pencil - we will need this later to hang the decoration.



The dough decorations now need to dry and harden. For best results, leave them in a warm room to air dry, this can take 2-3 days depending on the size of your starfish. Don't want to wait? You can bake your decorations in the oven at 120°C for 3 hours. Ask an adult to help with this step. Baking times will vary depending on the size of your starfish.



Once cool and dry, tie some ribbon through the hole at the top and your starfish is ready to hang or decorate as you like. Take a look at these decorations for inspiration and see what spectacular starfish you can create!