

# Mindfully Celebrating Easter

## Dyeing Easter Eggs, *Naturally*

One of my fondest childhood memories of Easter is dyeing Easter eggs in my grandmother's kitchen, surrounded by family, while snacking on grandma's famous Paska (Polish Easter bread).

I recall the sweet, yeasty taste of the homemade bread, the smell of the local pickerel or ham we'd enjoy later at dinner, the whole boiled eggs carefully prepared for the dyeing and decorating - yet, in the middle of all of these wholesome parts of such a special celebration, a cardboard box is ripped open, some packets of chemical dyes are dumped down onto the counter and then carefully stirred into warm water with vinegar.

It wasn't until I was in high school or university that I started to wonder if the chemical dyes on our egg shells could affect our health. Often those bright colours would indeed make their way inside the shell and onto the actual egg.

I now have children who also love the excitement of decorating Easter eggs as part of our celebration. I'm thankful that we've learned the skill of making homemade plant and food based dyes that have beautiful results and provide us some peace of mind.



# Natural Easter Egg Dyes



## NOTE:

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Our family likes to experiment with various recipes found online and shared by friends - please play with these recipes. If your gut tells you to add more of an ingredient, do it! You really can't go wrong by adding more. Using less of the dye source will result in softer hues, while more concentrated dyes will yield a darker result.

## PREP

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- Begin by boiling your eggs. Place eggs in a pot of cold water, bring to a gentle boil and either turn to medium heat for 12 minutes, or completely turn off the element and let the eggs harden in the hot water for 20 minutes. Avoid a hard boil in order to protect your shells from cracking.
- Place cooked eggs in a bowl of cold water, and set aside if using shortly, or refrigerate for up to a week.
- Be prepared with paper towels or tea towels for drying on.
- For fun patterns, grab some white crayons for drawing and elastic bands for stripes. Look online for more ideas.

## NO-COOK DYES

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- **Turmeric {Yellow}**: 2 or 3 tablespoons of turmeric stirred into 2 cups of hot water, plus 1 tablespoon vinegar.
- **Blueberries {Blue-Grey}**: 1 cup of blueberries in 2 cups of hot water. Mash blueberries to release colour, then strain to remove seeds and skins, or leave them in for patterning.
- **Raspberries, Cherries, Cranberries {Pinks}**: 1 cup of berries in 2 cups of hot water. Mash berries to release colour, then strain to remove seeds and skins, or leave them in for patterning.

\* Simmering the berries may increase intensity of colour, but the cold-method is what we use.

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## COOKED DYES:

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- **Purple/Red Cabbage {Blue}**: 1 cup of cabbage boiled in 2 cups of water. Adding 2 tablespoons vinegar is recommended, though we found it turned the blueish liquid more purple. Aim to use the outermost cabbage leaves to reduce waste, since these are often discarded or composted.
- **Red Onion Skins {Sienna Red}**: 2 cups onion skins boiled in 2 cups water. Add 2 tablespoons vinegar. Check with your local produce shop or farmers' market vendor - you might be able to get a stash of onion skins for free - they pile up in the onion basket and make a mess for the vendor.
- **Coffee {Brown}**: 2 cups of extra-strong coffee. Add 2 tablespoons vinegar.
- **Beets {Pink}**: 1 cup beet peels boiled in 2 cups water. Add 2 tablespoons vinegar. We recommend using the peels to reduce waste.
- **Spinach {Green}**: 2 cups spinach boiled in 2 cups water. Add 2 tablespoons vinegar. Use the stems, and wilted parts first, then add what you need to make 2 cups. Note: It is difficult to get a deep green with spinach; you will likely get a soft hue.

\* Optional for all recipes containing vinegar: Add salt in an amount equal to the vinegar.





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