



Festive salt dough ornaments

Make beautiful festive salt dough ornaments for your tree. You'll need: 120g All-purpose Flour, 200g Salt, 1 cup of Warm Water, Baking Tray, A Large Spoon, Cookie Cutters, Baking Paper, A Rolling Pin, A Mixing Bowl and a Straw or Toothpick



METHOD

- Pre-heat the oven to 150°C.
- Mix the flour and salt in a bowl and slowly stir in the warm water
- When it's too hard to stir, use your hands to mix it well
- Knead until smooth and pliable
- Roll out the dough until 3mm thick - if too thin it will split or break easily because of air pockets trapped in the middle
- Add some texture if you like with a fork
- Poke a hole with a straw for hanging
- Bake for 1 hour until dry
- Decorate however you like, or leave for a rustic, classic look
- Adorn the tree



Jolly marshmallow snowmen

Preparation and cooking time

•**Prep:**40 mins

•**Easy**

•**Makes 6**

Young children will love making these marshmallow treats with liquorice, chocolate and icing decorations.

kcal **456**

fat **1g**

saturates **0.5g**

carbs **112g**

sugars **100g**

fibre **0.2g**

protein **2g**

salt **0.2g**



Ingredients

- 18 white marshmallows
- 250g ready-to-roll white fondant icing
- 18 strawberry laces
- 250g icing made from royal icing sugar
- 6 Pontefract cakes
- black writing icing
- 3 round black Liquorice Allsorts , halved
- 6 orange Tic Tacs
- 18 mini chocolate beans
- 24 mini white marshmallows
- mini candy canes or pretzel sticks
- roughly crushed sugar cube

Equipment

- 6 lolly or cake pop sticks



Method

- STEP 1**Take one cake pop stick and thread on a marshmallow, narrow end on first. Thread on a second marshmallow, wide end on first so the two wide ends meet in the middle. Thread a third marshmallow on sideways so the narrow round end makes the snowman's face.
- STEP 2**Knead the white fondant icing and divide into 6. Shape each one into a rough mound and stick the snowmen into these bases.
- STEP 3**Take three strawberry laces and twist together. Tie around a snowman's neck and then trim off the excess with scissors. Repeat for the other snowmen.
- STEP 4**Using a little royal icing stick a Pontefract cake on each head. Using a little black writing icing, stick a Liquorice Allsort on top of each Pontefract cake.
- STEP 5**Pipe on two eyes using black writing icing. Using royal icing, stick a Tic Tac on each face for a carrot nose. Stick mini chocolate beans on the bodies as buttons.
- STEP 6**Using royal icing, stick four mini marshmallows on each snowman to represent arms. Stick a candy cane or pretzel stick to the end of one of each of the snowmen's arms, attaching the bottom end to the icing mound.
- STEP 7**Take a little royal icing and thin with a few drops of water. Brush or dab on the base and sprinkle over the crushed sugar cubes. Leave to set.



CHOCOLATE SPOONS

To make simply scoop melted chocolate onto a spoon and decorate with toppings. Place it in the fridge until hard and gift wrap with a bow. Then just stir it into hot milk or coffee and enjoy!





Rudolph shortbread

These simple shortbread triangles are a great edible gift for kids to make over Christmas - decorate with Smarties or other sweets and wrap up with pipe cleaner 'reindeer' antlers



- **Prep:** 35 mins
- **Cook:** 25 mins
- plus chilling
- **Easy**
- **Makes 8 big biscuits**

kcal 411
 fat 22g
 saturates 14g
 carbs 49g
 sugars 19g
 fibre 1g
 protein 4g
 salt 0.4g

Ingredients

- 200g salted butter, softened
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 85g golden caster sugar
- 85g ground rice
- 225g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- 3 tbsp icing sugar
- 8 red Smarties
- 16 white sweets or white chocolate buttons, for the eyes

- black writing icing tube

You will also need

- 8 cellophane bags (15 x 25cm) or 8 x 40cm cellophane squares
- 8 brown pipe cleaners
- labels and string or ribbon
- 22-23cm round plate, cake tin or cardboard template

Method

- **STEP 1** Put the butter, vanilla and sugar in a big mixing bowl and stir together with a wooden spoon until really smooth. Stir in the ground rice first, then the flour. If it starts to get dry, you might need to use your hands to squish everything together to make a smooth dough.
- **STEP 2** Put a piece of baking parchment on a baking sheet. Make the dough into a round ball in the middle of the parchment, then use your hands to push it down and flatten it. Get a rolling pin and dust it with some flour so it doesn't stick to the dough. Use the rolling pin to roll the dough out to a big circle.
- **STEP 3** Get your 22-23cm round plate, cake tin or cardboard template and place on top of the dough when you've rolled it big enough. Use a cutlery knife to trim round the edges to make a neat circle. Use the offcuts to make smaller biscuits or freeze the dough for another time.
- **STEP 4** Use a knife to mark the giant biscuit into 8 smaller wedge-shaped biscuits – pretend you are cutting a pizza into slices but don't actually cut it. Prick lines from the edge to the centre of the dough. Use the back of a fork to press all around the top of the circle along the edge to make a line pattern (it's going to be hair for your reindeer!)
- **STEP 5** Cover with cling film and put the tray in the fridge for 30 mins to get cold. Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Cook the chilled shortbread for 25 mins until golden. Cool completely on the tray, then use a sharp knife to follow the lines you made with a fork and cut into 8 wedges.
- **STEP 6** Mix the icing sugar with 1-2 tsp of water to make a thickish icing. Dunk each Smartie in and use like glue to stick one on the pointy end of each biscuit to make red noses. Dunk in your white sweets or chocolate buttons and stick them 2cm in from the edge at the other end to be eyes. Use the black writing icing tube to add dots to the white eyes, then let all the icing dry and go hard.
- **STEP 7** Carefully wrap each biscuit in a square of cellophane or put in a cellophane bag. Twist the middle of a pipe cleaner in a loop around the top of the bag or gathered cellophane to enclose the biscuit. Now twist each end of the pipe cleaner so it looks like the reindeer's antlers. Add labels and give to your friends and family, or hang on the tree. Will keep for up to 3 days in a cool, dry place.





Handprint Christmas Tree

This Christmas handprint craft is only one of many we plan to post this year – so be sure to come back often to see our new Christmas handprint ideas that we’ll have for this holiday season!

- Green cardstock
- Green, white and red pom poms
- Tape
- Gold glitter paper
- Red felt or Christmas tea towel
- Cardboard



1. First paint your paper plate gold (or use a gold paper plate) and paint your paper towel roll brown.
2. Cut out a triangle shape from cardboard for your body of the Christmas handprint tree. The size we used was 10 inches wide by 11 inches tall. This is important if you want it to look like our version as you’ll need it to be this size to match the # of handprints included. Adults only should do this part.
3. Cut two slits into the paper towel roll so that you can slide the triangle cardboard piece into it. Cut three slits on the opposite end so you can use this part to tape down to your paper plate. If you have younger kids, adults should do the cutting here.
4. Now tape your paper towel roll to your paper plate from the opposite end.
5. Now you can slide your cardboard triangle into your paper towel roll, where you made the two slits.
6. Now you can trace and cut your handprints. Once you have 15 handprints you can start to glue or tape to your tree! We taped them down as we found it easier to stick to the cardboard.
7. Here is the # of handprints you’ll need: 5 on the bottom, then 4 above those, then 3 above those and then 2 and then 1. You should have a total of 15 handprints on your tree when you’re done!
8. Now you can decorate your handprint Christmas tree! We kept it simple with some glittery pom poms and a gold glittered star. But feel free to get creative here! You can add stickers, gems, colour in some bulbs, make ornaments out of construction paper there are so many ideas kids can do to decorate!
9. As a finishing touch to cover the taped bottom, we added a Christmas tea towel to make it look like the Christmas tree skirt. You could also use a large piece of red or gold felt here as well.

Wooden Spoon Christmas Crafts for Kids

Turn an old spoon into a cute Christmas character! From Santa to a snowman, we will show you how to transform a spoon in 4 different ways. We love how each spoon is unique and you only need a handful of supplies to make them!



Wooden Spoons – we used these wooden spoons.

Small googly eyes

Sharpie

Acrylic Paint – we used green, white, red, brown and pink. You can get an assortment of colours for the face of the elf and Santa here. Or you can leave the face the colour of the spoon.

Felt– red, green and orange

Red Ribbon

String or Baker's Twine

Small Buttons – black and red

Pipe Cleaners – red and brown

Pom Poms – small red, medium red and small white. Note: we link to the small size for the nose but you may want slightly larger for the hat pom poms.

White Cotton Balls

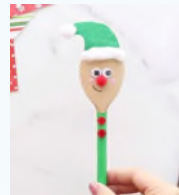
Hot glue – using hot glue will help the hat and other elements stay on better.

Adult supervision required.



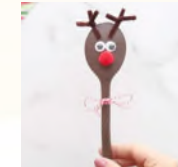
Santa

1. Cut a triangle shape out of red felt and glue it to the top of the spoon to make Santa's hat.
2. Fold the tip of the hat down and add glue. Attach a small white pom pom to the folded tip of the hat.
3. Add white cotton balls to the bottom of the hat and around Santa's face for his beard and hair.
4. Attach googly eyes and a medium red pom pom to the face with glue.
5. Add 2 small black buttons to the spoon handle.



Elf

1. Cut a hat shape out of the green felt and glue a small white pom pom to the tip of the hat. Glue the hat to the top of the spoon.
2. Add small googly eyes and a small red pom pom to the Elf's face.
3. Add a smile with a black sharpie.
4. Glue 2 small red buttons to the wooden spoon handle.



Reindeer

1. Glue 2 small googly eyes and a red pom pom for the nose.
2. Twist 2 brown pipe cleaners together to form an antler.
3. Glue the antlers to the top of the spoon.
4. Tie the string around the handle of the spoon, just below the reindeer's head.

Snowman

1. Cut the red pipe cleaner to measure approximately 3 inches and bend it to form an upside down "U".
2. Glue the pipe cleaner and the white pom poms to the sides of the top of the spoon to create earmuffs.
3. Cut a triangle carrot shape out of the orange felt and glue it to the spoon.
4. With a sharpie, make 2 dots for eyes and dots for the snowman's smile.
5. Glue the red ribbon around the handle for the snowman's scarf.
6. Glue 2 small black buttons with glue to the handle.





Bird Feeders

www.messyplaymonster.com

To make homemade bird feeders you will need:

Bird seed mix,
Gelatine,
Boiling water,
Mixing bowl and spoon,
Cookie cutters,
Tray covered in foil,
Ribbon



HOMEMADE BIRD FEEDERS

How to make homemade bird feeders:

Mix the gelatine and boiling water

Pour boiling water into a bowl (*adults only*). We used 1 pint of water, but if you only want to make a few bird feeders use less water as we made a LOT !!! You need roughly the same amount of water as bird seed.

Pour 2 sachets of gelatine into the boiling water and stir until all the gelatine had dissolved. If you are letting kids help with this step you will need to supervise them very closely.

Add bird seed

Slowly tip your bird seed mix into the liquid. Add a small amount of the bird seed at a time and give it a stir. It is important to make sure that all of the bird seeds are fully coated in the water and gelatine mix as this is what will help the bird feeders stick together when the mixture is added to the cookie cutter moulds.

Add the homemade bird feeder mixture to cookie cutter moulds

Place the cookie cutters on top of a tray covered in foil and fill each of the cookies cutters with the homemade bird food mixture. Use the back of a spoon to make sure the mixture is packed into the cookie cutter tightly.

Make a hole in the diy bird feeders

Push a cut up straw through the bird food mixture in each cookie cutter to make a hole ready for hanging your bird feeders once they have dried out.

Dry out the homemade bird feeders

you need to place the tray full of bird feeders in the fridge for a few hours and then take them out and leave them in a warm room to dry overnight.

Push the bird feeders out of the cookie cutters

You need to really take your time with this step to avoid breaking any corners or delicate areas of your shaped bird feeders. REALLY carefully and slowly push the bird feeders out of the cutters using your fingers.

Add Ribbon and hang up your homemade bird feeders

Thread ribbon or twine through the holes that you made at the top of your bird feeders. Tie a knot in the top of the ribbon or twine and you are ready to hang your homemade bird feeders out in the garden.



A Christmas Light Walk



Get yourself outside....the joys of going for a walk when sun goes down and the lights go on. As a child, looking at all the window displays and Christmas trees lit up in people's homes was a special part of Christmas. It's magical.

Before you go out, have a think about what the purpose of lights are and what you look for in a light display which makes you "glow within."

Create your own private Christmas Lights Awards. This may include:

- The cosiest and most welcoming display
- The one with the most impact
- The one that makes the biggest statement
- The smallest and most loveable display
- The most imaginative display
- The one that lights up a dark place in a friendly way
- The "Just Because" award, which is given to the display you feel deserves it for no special reason other than "just because."

So, if you are looking for a breath of fresh air and need to get out in spite of all the wet and windy weather, then make the most of this time of year to enjoy these free works of electronic art, culture and seasonal tradition.

