

Impressions of Summer

If you go down to the beach this summer, take some salt dough in your picnic basket. It's not for eating—it's for making nature impressions!

Recipe for salt dough:

Ingredients:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup salt
- ½ to ¾ cup of warm water.

Stir the flour and salt together. Add the water and blend. Then turn the dough out on the kitchen counter and knead it for about a minute. (To knead the dough, pull the ball of dough toward you, fold it over, then push it away.)

Extra things to take with you to the beach:

- A bucket so you can rinse off the shells before making the impressions.
- Some extra flour in case your dough is too soft to take a clear print.
- A baking sheet and parchment paper. (This will make it easier for you to carry your impressions home from the beach.)

To make an impression:

When you get to the beach, go looking for shells with interesting shapes and textures.

Rinse the sand off your shells. Make sure they are dry before you start printing. Salt dough gets slimy if you have wet hands or objects.

Lay the parchment paper on the baking sheet, and put the sheet on a flat surface.

Take a small amount of salt dough and roll it into a ball. Put the ball on the parchment paper. Flatten the ball with your hand.



Then press the shell into the dough. Press carefully and steadily.

Try other things you find on the beach – we made an impression with a crab claw!

Don't take the shells home. Leave them on the beach and take home your impressions.

Saving your Impressions:

When you get home, put your impressions in a warm place and let them dry for 3 to 5 days. Turn them every day or so. Or put them in the oven at 200°F (95°C) for about two hours.

You can make summer impressions of all kinds of things. Here's one we made with a tansy seed head.



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