

Homemade Food Coloring

courtesy of NourishingJoy.com and *The DIY Pantry*

A few tips for success using homemade food coloring:

1. Start with a small pinch or a few drops of these colorants and add more according to your desired shade.
2. Remember that these may impart flavor as well, so – for example – if you want to make black frosting, choose black cocoa, but for black pasta, choose the squid ink – and not the other way around!
3. For texture, keep your final product in mind and choose powder or liquid colorants accordingly.

RED:

- pure beet juice
- pure pomegranate juice
- beet powder

PINK:

- pure beet juice
- pure cranberry juice

ORANGE:

- pure carrot juice
- carrot powder
- paprika

YELLOW:

- fresh turmeric juice
- ground turmeric
- saffron

GREEN:

- liquid chlorophyll
- matcha powder
- spirulina powder – use sparingly
- parsley juice
- wheatgrass juice
- spinach juice
- spinach powder
- parsley powder

BLUE:

(FYI: Blue is notorious for being one of the most difficult dyes to produce, either naturally or in a lab!)

- red cabbage juice
- stir a bit of baking soda in with red cabbage juice or a purple dye for a brighter blue

PURPLE:

- purple sweet potatoes
- pure blueberry juice
- purple grape juice, concentrated

TAN:

- bentonite clay powder – use very sparingly

BROWN:

- cocoa powder
- pure espresso
- instant coffee granules
- heavily steeped black tea
- cinnamon

BLACK:

- black cocoa powder
- activated charcoal powder
- squid ink

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How to Make Vegetable Powders for Homemade Food Coloring

To make any herb or vegetable powder called for here, slice the desired vegetable paper thin (or merely place whole herbs or berries on a tray) and dehydrate in a food dehydrator or oven set at about 150° until fully, absolutely, completely dry (2-6 hours, depending on the vegetable).

Place dried vegetable/fruit chips or herbs in a coffee grinder or blender and grind until you have a fine powder.

Store in an airtight container for up to 1 year.

How to Make Concentrated Liquid Homemade Food Coloring

Another option for making a more concentrated dye is to reduce a deeply colored liquid, such as beet juice or the juice from purple sweet potatoes, into a syrup. This will allow you to make more vivid colors without affecting the flavor or texture quite as much.

To make a concentrate, place about 1 cup of freshly squeezed juice over very low heat. The only way I've been able to do this successfully is with a mini-crockpot.

Leave the lid off the pot so the liquid can evaporate and heat until the juice begins to thicken and drips slowly off a spoon rather than running off easily, about 24 hours, give or take 8 hours depending on your climate and pot. The liquid will be less than 1/4 of its original volume.

Use this concentrated liquid as your colorant directly OR mix it with a bit of glycerin in a 2:1 ratio (colorant:glycerin) and store in the refrigerator for 2-4 weeks.